

Chapter Sixteen

“I Have Been Elected Mainly on the Cry ‘Honest Old Abe’”:

The Presidential Campaign (May-November 1860)

Shortly after the Chicago Convention, Joshua Giddings assured Lincoln with “certain knowledge” that “your selection was made upon two grounds,” first that “you are an honest man,” and second that “you are not in the hands of corrupt or dishonest men.”¹ Seward suffered by contrast, and some of the senator’s backers acknowledged that they “must not blame the people of the United States for being afraid that the election of a leading New York politician to the Presidency would only displace the existing corruption at Washington by a new importation of venality and political knavery from Albany.”² A New York delegate, former Lieutenant-Governor Henry R. Selden, acknowledged that all the forces working against Seward would have been insufficient to defeat him “had not his opponents strengthened their arguments by allusion to the corruptions practiced at Albany during the past winter. No man entertained the idea that

¹ Giddings to Lincoln, Chicago, 19 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. Giddings also argued that “Lincoln was selected on account of his location, not from objections to Seward or to Chase, but because of being a Western man located in Illinois he was supposed able to carry that State and Indiana and was acceptable to Pennsylvania. It is also true that some of the dough-faces seemed to think him more popular, because his antislavery sentiments had been less prominent.” Giddings to George W. Julian, Jefferson, [Ohio], 25 May 1860, Giddings-Julian Papers, Library of Congress.

² “Candidates for the Presidency,” The Independent (New York), 24 May 1860.

Mr Seward was connected with them, but it was charged that his friends were, and it was pretended that if elected the same practices would be transmitted to Washington.”³

Hostility to corruption not only led to Lincoln’s nomination, it also helped assure his victory in one of the most crucial elections in American history. The public was fed up with steamship lobbies, land-grant bribery, hireling journalists, the spoils system, rigged political conventions, and cost overruns on government projects. At a New York ratification meeting, Horace Greeley introduced a resolution proclaiming that there were two irrepressible conflicts, one pitting freedom against “aggressive, all-grasping Slavery propagandism” and the other, “not less vital,” between “frugal government and honest administration” on the one hand and “wholesale executive corruption, and speculative jobbery” on the other.⁴ Samuel Bowles of the Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican accurately prophesied that on “an issue likely to rival, if not to overshadow, that of the irrepressible negro – that of honesty, simplicity and economy in public affairs,” Lincoln would run well, for he “is a man of the most incorruptible integrity” whose forte is honesty. “‘Honest old Abe’ will mean something serious, as well as prove a taking campaign cry.” Because Lincoln had not been a prominent seeker of the office, he seemed unlikely to be indebted to “friends picked up on the line of a long life, and clamorous for more or less dirty work, and a great many enemies to punish.”⁵ Along with several other newspapers, the Cincinnati Commercial lauded the candidate as a “straight-

³ Speech at Rochester, n.d., quoted in the Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, 5 June 1860. See also William Cullen Bryant. “Mr. Seward and the Chicago Convention,” New York Evening Post, 23 May 1860, and Frank W. Ballard to Charles Sumner, New York, 14 November 1860, Sumner Papers, Harvard University.

⁴ David E. Meerse, “Buchanan, Corruption, and the Election of 1860,” Civil War History 12 (1966):124.

⁵ Chicago correspondence by Samuel Bowles, 16 May, Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, 19 May 1860; “Abraham Lincoln as a Candidate,” ibid., 26 May 1860.

out and decided Republican” whose “administration of the government would be honest, economical and capable.”⁶ William Cullen Bryant pledged that his New York Evening Post would “do all it could” to “turn out the present most corrupt of administrations, and install an honest administration in its stead.”⁷

New Englanders stressed the corruption issue heavily. The Concord New Hampshire Statesman argued that Lincoln’s lack of national political experience was “an element of strength,” for it meant that he had not succumbed “to the gross corruptions so prevalent in Washington.” The nation “is suffering for want of an incorruptible Chief Magistrate; a man who will indignantly crush out . . . and drive into perpetual exile the inexorable army of blood-suckers that hang around the democratic camp at Washington. This troop is Legion, and hover over the Treasury like Cossacks in the rear of the French army on its retreat from Moscow. . . . A change cannot be for the worse, and may be for the better; then let us have a change. Abraham Lincoln is ‘honest, capable and friendly to the constitution.’ Let us put him in [as] president, and drive all the treasury rats away.”⁸ In Connecticut, the Hartford Courant declared that “[o]ne of the strongest arguments in favor of the election of Lincoln to the Presidency is his HONESTY” and “old-fashioned integrity and firmness.” The people “all want the government administrated with integrity and economy. We have tried two dishonest Administrations of the Democratic party. Let us try them no longer, but place the government in the hands of uncorrupted and uncorruptible men.”⁹

⁶ “The Republican Nomination,” Cincinnati Commercial, 19 May 1860.

⁷ Charles H. Brown, William Cullen Bryant (New York: Scribner, 1971), 418.

⁸ Concord New Hampshire Statesman, 26 May, 14 July 1860, in Lex Renda, Running on the Record: Civil War-Era Politics in New Hampshire (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 91-92.

⁹ Hartford Courant, 24 May 1860.

After winning the presidency, Lincoln told a visitor: “All through the campaign my friends have been calling me ‘Honest Old Abe,’ and I have been elected mainly on that cry.”¹⁰ His reputation as an honest man was as important as his reputation as a foe of slavery.

NATIONAL REACTION

As word of Lincoln’s nomination spread throughout the North, jubilant Republicans set off fireworks, rang bells, ignited bonfires, illuminated buildings, erected rail fences, paraded by torchlight, cheered speakers, and fired cannons with the same high spirits that had characterized the Harrison campaign of 1840. An Illinois delegate freshly returned from the Chicago Convention predicted accurately that “the coming campaign will not be a whit behind that of [18]40 in point of enthusiasm.”¹¹

There was, in fact, a great deal of hoopla all during the canvass, provided largely by Rail-splitter and Wide-Awake organizations which led countless demonstrations. (Wide-Awakes, groups of young Republican activists, made their debut in Connecticut that spring during the gubernatorial campaign. They were best known for nighttime parades, during which they carried tin torches on poles which they deemed “rails.”) Lincoln said “he was not particularly fond of show and parade, and personally did not care much for such demonstrations,” though he acknowledged that the organizations were useful in turning out crowds for speakers and in providing opportunities for partisans to

¹⁰ J. K. Morehead, interview with John G. Nicolay, Washington, 12 and 13 May 1880, Michael Burlingame, ed., An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln: John G. Nicolay’s Interviews and Essays (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 41. Cf. Ward Hill Lamon, The Life of Abraham Lincoln: From His Birth to His Inauguration as President (Boston: Osgood, 1872), 460.

¹¹ A. L. Chetlain to Elihu B. Washburne, Galena, 23 May 1860, Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Library of Congress.

take an active role in the campaign.¹² “Principle composed only about ten per cent of our political contests,” he told a New Yorker.¹³

Sharing Lincoln’s aversion for hoopla was New York attorney George Templeton Strong, who eventually voted for Lincoln, though not enthusiastically. A month after the Chicago convention he confided to his diary: “I am tired of this shameless clap-trap. The log-cabin, hard-cider craze of 1840 seemed spontaneous. This hurrah about rails and rail-splitters seems a deliberate attempt to manufacture the same kind of furor by appealing to the shallowest prejudices of the lowest class.”¹⁴ Fellow New Yorker Hamilton Fish agreed, sarcastically exclaiming, “Hurrah for Lincoln & Hamlin!!!! . . . We want a log-splitter, not a hair splitter – a flatboatman, not a flat statesman. Log cabin – coon skins – hard cider – Old Abe & dark Ham – hurrah!”¹⁵ A Seward backer feared that Lincoln’s nomination would tend “to direct public attention from the great principles involved, and to substitute another hard-cider and coon-skin campaign for a free & fair & educating discussion of national interests.”¹⁶

In Washington, Republican members of Congress keenly awaited news from Chicago. When at first it seemed that Seward would win, they were steeped in gloom, but when the final result was announced, they received it “with great enthusiasm,” while the

¹² Springfield correspondence, 4 September, New York Evening Post, 8 September 1860.

¹³ On February 18, 1861, he told this to the mayor of Albany. Albany correspondence, 18 February, New York Herald, 19 February 1861.

¹⁴ Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., The Diary of George Templeton Strong, 1835-1875 (4 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1952), 3:33 (entry for 16 June 1860).

¹⁵ Hamilton Fish to Lt. Henry A. Wise, New York, 24 May 1860, letterbooks, Fish Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁶ Richard S. Storrs, Jr., to his brother, n.p., 18 May [1860], Schoff Civil War Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

Democrats' faces fell.¹⁷ Senator William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, who had favored Ben Wade of Ohio for the presidency, reported that Lincoln's nomination "surprised us all, but, on the whole, has given general satisfaction to the Republicans, & frightened the democrats."¹⁸ Most members had expected the convention to choose Bates or McLean if they wanted a moderate and Seward or Wade if they wanted a "rugged issue" candidate.¹⁹ Wade himself said on hearing of Lincoln's nomination: "We are all safe if Old Abe is on the track." A Representative from Wade's state was reminded of a traveler in the Southwest who once asked a black man how distant a certain town was. "Well, sah," came the answer, "wid an oddinary hoss, it am 'bout sixteen mile; wid a right smarht nag, it 'ud be 'bout eight mile; but wid massa Jim's horse, you dar now!" Said the congressman: "So, with Seward we should have had a hard road to travel; with Ben Wade, we should have been pretty sure of winning the race, having no dead weights; but with Honest Old Abe, 'we're there now!'"²⁰ A New York lawmaker, Francis E. Spinner, predicted that if Lincoln "can be made to say 'no' to the importunities of those who will largely contribute to his election, he will become the founder of a party that will endure like those formed by a Jefferson and a Jackson."²¹ Congressman Charles Francis Adams, who thought Seward deserved the nomination, expressed some reservations about the man who won it. "I believe him honest and tolerably capable," Adams wrote, "but he has

¹⁷ E. B. Washburne to C. C. Washburn, Washington, 18 May 1860, C. C. Washburn Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society; Schuyler Colfax to Charles M. Heaton, Sr., Washington, 21 May 1861, Colfax Papers, Northern Indiana Center for History, South Bend.

¹⁸ William P. Fessenden to Elizabeth Warriner, Washington, 20 and 27 May 1860, Fessenden Family Papers, Bowdoin College.

¹⁹ John A. Gurley to Friedrich Hassaurek, Washington, 16, 22 April 1860, Hassaurek Papers, Ohio Historical Society.

²⁰ Washington correspondence, 18 and 19 May, Chicago Press and Tribune, 23 and 24 May 1860.

²¹ Spinner to Timothy C. Day, Mohawk, New York, 10 July 1860, in Sarah J. Day, The Man on a Hill Top (Philadelphia: Ware Brothers, 1931), 228.

no experience and no business habits.” Yet, Adams noted, many Republican colleagues in the House seemed delighted.²² Schuyler Colfax estimated that at least 100 of the 112 Republican members of the House rejoiced at the news.²³

Because every Republican faction found Lincoln acceptable, the party enjoyed a great advantage over its badly divided rivals. Already the candidacy of the cold, reserved, colorless, sixty-four-year-old Tennessee slave-holder and former senator, John Bell – standard bearer of the new Constitutional Union party, comprised mostly of Southern ex-Whigs – threatened the Democrats’ ability to carry the Upper South. (In fact, he was to win his own state plus Kentucky and Virginia.) When in June the Democratic national convention reconvened in Baltimore, Northern and Southern delegates continued the bitter fight that had begun at Charleston weeks earlier. Unable to compromise their differences, they each nominated a candidate: Douglas won the endorsement of the Northern Democrats and Vice-President John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky the favor of their Southern counterparts. Facing an opposition divided into three parties, Lincoln appeared to have an excellent chance of winning.

Lincoln doubted that the Northern and Southern wings of the Democracy could reconcile their differences. Alluding to the split within the opposition ranks, he said he was reminded of a story: “I once knew a good, sound churchman, whom we’ll call Brown, who was on a committee to erect a bridge over a very dangerous and rapid river. Architect after architect failed, and at last Brown said he had a friend named Jones who had built several bridges and could build this. ‘Let’s have him in,’ said the committee. In

²² Charles Francis Adams, diary entry for 18 May 1860, Adams Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

²³ Schuyler Colfax to Charles M. Heaton, Sr., Washington, 21 May 1861, Colfax Papers, Northern Indiana Center for History, South Bend.

came Jones. ‘Can you build this bridge, sir?’ ‘Yes,’ replied Jones; ‘I could build a bridge to the infernal regions, if necessary.’ The sober committee were horrified, but when Jones retired, Brown thought it but fair to defend his friend. ‘I know Jones so well,’ said he, ‘and he is so honest a man and so good an architect that, if he states soberly and positively that he can build a bridge to Hades, why, I believe it. But I have my doubts about the abutment on the infernal side.’ So, when politicians said they could harmonize the northern and southern wings of the Democracy, why, I believed them. But I had my doubts about the abutment on the southern side.”²⁴

Republican newspapers rejoiced at the nomination of “just the man that this sorely swindled and disgraced nation needs for President,” for Lincoln “is a man of stainless purity – his whole life is as spotless as the driven snow. He is no corruptionist, no trickster, no time-server, but an honest, brave, straight-forward, able man, who will restore the Government to the purity of practice and principle which characterized its early days under the administrations of the Revolutionary patriots.” A pro-Seward journal assured its readers that Lincoln was “no expediency candidate, but one who early embraced the Republican cause, has always labored consistently for its success, has, from the beginning, stood, and stands now fair and square on its national and conservative platform.” It was a cause for celebration that “a candidate is fixed upon who has so many recommendations as Abraham Lincoln, whose character embraces so many excellent qualities, and whose personal history gives him so strong a hold on the good will of the people.” He would attract voters “who float loosely between the two parties.” The party

²⁴ Springfield Correspondence by Henry Villard, Cincinnati Commercial, n.d., copied in the New York Times, 27 December 1860. Cf. Chicago Tribune, 9 January 1864.

had wisely picked two candidates “fresh from the people, of broad and statesmanlike qualities, of unquestioned abilities, and of tried patriotism.”²⁵

Northern Democrats demurred, alleging that the “platform and the head of the ticket are a shrewdly disguised, abolition whig move.” Lincoln was, they sneered, “an obscure lawyer, confessedly lacking the culture and capacity which are requisite to the creditable occupancy of the high office for which he has been nominated,” an “extreme abolitionist of the revolutionary type,” a “weak and unfit man for so high a place,” a “third rate country lawyer,” an “uneducated man – a vulgar village politician, without any experience worth mentioning in the practical duties of statesmanship,” an “honest, well-meaning man of less than average mental caliber . . . who is almost a monomaniac on the subject of negro slavery,” a “fourth rate lecturer, who cannot speak good grammar,” a “man whose only merit consists in splitting rails or splitting the sides of a village audience with his smutty stories,” an “obscure partisan,” and a “bigot and extremist” who was “brim full of nigger.”²⁶ The Philadelphia Evening Journal complained that Lincoln’s “record as a statesman is blank. He has done nothing whatever in any executive, judicial, or legislative capacity, that should entitle him to public respect.”²⁷ A former colleague in the Illinois Whig party shared this dim view of Lincoln’s résumé: “His experience is only that which has been acquired in the worst governed State in the Union – he himself being

²⁵ The New Haven Palladium, New York Courier and Enquirer, Boston Atlas and Bee, and New York Evening Post, all quoted in “Voice of the Republican Press,” Albany Evening Journal, 22 May 1860.

²⁶ Washington Constitution, 6 September 1860, in Howard Cecil Perkins, ed., Northern Editorials on Secession (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1942), 1:34; Chicago Herald, 21 May 1860; New York Herald, 19, 22 and 30 May, 28 August, 6 and 8 September 1860; Washington Constitution, n.d., copied in the Albany Evening Journal, 23 May 1860; Boston Courier, n.d., quoted in the New York Tribune, 24 May 1860; Freeman’s Journal (New York) 26 May 1860; Hartford Times, n.d., quoted in the Hartford Courant, 23 May 1860.

²⁷ Philadelphia Evening Journal, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 24 May 1860.

identified with its worst blunders and follies.”²⁸ Another quondam ally, Benjamin S. Edwards, publicly “asked what had Lincoln ever done to stamp him as a statesman worthy to be at the head of a great nation like ours?” Politically “he is as rabid an abolitionist as John Brown himself, but without the old man’s courage,” jeered the New York Herald.²⁹ The Albany Argus and Argus chastised the Republicans for nominating an obscure man who “represents no principle and no sentiment except hostility to Seward.”³⁰ Democratic Congressman Charles Drake Martin of Ohio called Lincoln the originator of a “treasonable heresy,” the irrepressible conflict doctrine.

Above all, Democrats objected to Lincoln as an antislavery radical. Citing Lincoln’s 1837 vote against the resolution condemning abolitionists and his protest stating that slavery was based “on injustice and bad policy,” the Illinois State Register said he “is as much an abolitionist as are [William Lloyd] Garrison, Gerrit Smith, or Wendell Phillips.”³¹ Don Morrison of Illinois called Lincoln a Kentucky abolitionist, “infinitely worse than a Yankee Abolitionist.” To illustrate the candidate’s devotion to the doctrine of racial equality, Morrison quoted passages from his Chicago speech of July 10, 1858:

- “I should like to know if taking this old Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are equal upon principle and making exceptions to it where will it stop. If one man says it does not mean a negro, why not another say it does not mean

²⁸ An “old gentleman residing in this city [Chicago] who was a companion of Lincoln in all the early political struggles of the State,” interviewed by a correspondent of the New York Herald, Chicago correspondence, 30 May, New York Herald, 19 June 1860.

²⁹ “A Birdseye View of the Chicago Convention,” New York Herald, 22 May 1860.

³⁰ Quoted in Hans L. Trefousse, First Among Equals: Abraham Lincoln's Reputation during His Administration (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 4.

³¹ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 24 August 1860.

some other man? If that declaration is not the truth, let us get the Statute book, in which we find it and tear it out!”

- “Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man – this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position – discarding our standard that we have left us. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal.”

- “I thank you for this most extensive audience you have furnished me to-night. I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal.”³²

Democrats also cited passages from Lincoln’s 1854 Peoria address:

- “What I do say is, that no man is good enough to govern another man without the other’s consent. I say this is the leading principle, the sheet anchor of republicanism.”

- “I have quoted so much at this time merely to show that according to our ancient faith the just powers of governments are derived from the consent of the governed. Now the relation of slave and master is pro rata a total violation of this principle. The master not only governs the slave without his consent, but he governs him by a set of rules altogether different from those which he prescribes for himself. Allow all the governed an equal voice in the government, and that, and that only, is self-government.”³³

³² Speech of J. L. D. Morrison, 2 June 1860, Missouri Republican (St. Louis), 4 June 1860.

³³ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 19 September 1860.

“In what speech of Seward are such violent sentiments as these set forth?” asked a correspondent of the New York Herald. “Where can anything be found to exceed them in the ferocious abolitionism of Phillips or Garrison?”³⁴ Repeatedly Democratic papers also cited Lincoln’s “House Divided” speech and his 1854 Peoria address to prove that he was as devoted to the extermination of slavery as any abolitionist. They even falsely ascribed to him an 1856 speech calling for black suffrage in Illinois.³⁵ As further proof of Lincoln’s radicalism, it was alleged that he had subscribed funds to help John Brown in Kansas.³⁶ (Lincoln had signed a document pledging financial aid to the “peaceful inhabitants of Kansas” who were being attacked by Missouri border-ruffians; the money was never collected.)³⁷

The bitterest denunciations of Lincoln were flagrantly racist. John Cochrane of New York declared that Lincoln and his party engrafted “negrology” onto “their political stock,” producing thereby “its natural fruit – nigger – the eternal nigger. They ate nigger – they drank nigger – they (at least the amalgamationists) slept nigger. They saw him in their dreams – they saw him in their waking hours – all over, everywhere, they saw the sable gentleman. Ubiquitous, this black principle was becoming attenuated through the exhaustion of mere extension. But the Convention at Chicago rescued their party from this new peril. When nominating a rail splitter for the Presidency they were really resolved that they saw a nigger in the fence.”³⁸ The Springfield Register claimed that if

³⁴ Chicago correspondence, 12 June, New York Herald, 26 June 1860.

³⁵ See, for example, “Mr. Lincoln the Anti-Slavery Candidate,” New York Daily News, 17 August 1860; “Negro Equality,” New York Morning Examiner, 2 November 1860.

³⁶ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 28 July 1860.

³⁷ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 28 July 1860.

³⁸ John Cochrane, speech in New York, 8 October, New York Times, 9 October 1860.

Lincoln's principles were carried out in a community where the majority of residents were black, those blacks "not only should vote but prescribe terms of citizenship for the whites, [and] should be the legislators, judges and governors. In this way might be brought about Lincoln's doctrine of 'compensation;' and abolitionism be gratified in making the whites take their turns in serving the 'niggers,' a state which Lincoln says 'under a just God' they cannot long avoid." If Lincoln were elected, "we shall have the nigger at the polls, the nigger on our juries, the nigger in the legislature."³⁹ The Cleveland Campaign Plain Dealer made a similar prediction: "Give black Republicanism the power, and they will leave no effort spared to reach that 'practical equality of all men,' which Mr. Lincoln tells us is the great 'central idea' to be 'labored for.' Successful, we shall have the nigger at the polls, the nigger on our juries, the nigger in the Legislature, in our public offices, and, with political power, it is but one step, with those who think with them, to concede them that social position which will realize the 'central idea' of a common mulattodom."⁴⁰

In an attempt to undermine Lincoln's reputation for integrity, the Chicago Times accused him of illegally billing the federal government for three pairs of boots while he served in Congress. The charge was refuted by Josiah M. Lucas, Lincoln's friend who was serving as the postmaster of the U.S. House and had access to expense records of the Thirtieth Congress.⁴¹

Southern Democrats were even more contemptuous than their Northern counterparts, calling Lincoln the nominee of a "free-filth and wool-gathering

³⁹ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 17 July, 22 August 1860.

⁴⁰ Campaign Plain Dealer (Cleveland), 1 September 1860.

⁴¹ Chicago Times, 29 May 1860; public statement by Lucas, 7 June 1860, Albany Evening Journal, 25 June 1860.

Convention,” a “recreant son of the South – a traitor to the mother that bore him,” a “nigger in principle,” “coarse, vulgar and uneducated,” a “mere politician, of small calibre,” and a “third rate Western lawyer.”⁴² A former governor of South Carolina told his wife that the Republicans “have selected a wretched backwoodsman, who have [sic] cleverness indeed but no cultivation; who is a fanatic in his policy and an agrarian in his practice. Nothing but ruin can follow in his trail.”⁴³ The Missouri Republican asserted that Lincoln’s nomination meant that “the ‘irrepressible conflict’ between the free and the slave States [is] to be kept up until the free States drive slavery out of all the slave States.”⁴⁴ A letter in that paper charged that Lincoln was “narrow-minded – full of prejudice and bigotry,” had “brooded over what he supposes to be the great wrong inflicted on the negro, until he appears to think the only mission of the white man is to rescue, by any means, the negro from bondage.” The doctrine of “the entire and complete ‘equality of races’” has been “long and religiously believed by Mr. Lincoln; believed and proclaimed by him long, long before the rise of the Republican party.” Though members of that party hesitated to commit themselves to racial equality openly, Lincoln understood that they “must and would, whenever they deemed they had sufficient strength, not only proclaim, but put into practical action” that radical doctrine. Lincoln was “a much more dangerous man than Mr. Seward,” for he lacked “the sense and intellect of Mr. Seward;

⁴² Charleston, S.C., Courier, n.d., quoted in the New York Tribune, 23 May 1860; Augusta Dispatch, n.d., copied in the New York Herald, 8 June 1860; Newberry, S.C., Rising Sun, n.d., quoted in Manisha Sinha, The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 229; Newbern, N. C., Weekly Progress, 29 May 1860, quoted in Donald E. Reynolds, Editors Make War: Southern Newspapers in the Secession Crisis (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970), 57-58; John Rutherford to “My dear Hawkeley,” Richmond, 19 December 1860, Rutherford Papers, Duke University, typescript, Allan Nevins Papers, Columbia University.

⁴³ John L. Manning to his wife, 29 May 1860, quoted in Stephen A. Channing, Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 230.

⁴⁴ “Mr. Bates – The Democracy,” Missouri Republican (St. Louis), 22 May 1860.

nor yet is he as wily or as politic as Seward; he is not such a statesman as Seward, nor has he Seward's suavity of manners nor breeding; nor is he as well versed in the practical working of our complex government; nor does he know just as well how far to go with safety, nor when to relax, lest their tension becoming too great, the cord should snap; but he has all of Seward's sectional ideas, and even more, and if in power would inevitably press them to their utmost."⁴⁵

Southerners made dire predictions about the future under a Republican regime. "As soon as Lincoln is installed into office . . . he will wave his black plume Southward," speculated a Texas newspaper. "With the army and navy, and the fanatical North, he will invade us. He will issue his ukase, enfranchising the negroes, and arming them; he will confiscate property, and commend us to the mercy of torch and steel."⁴⁶ The Richmond Enquirer accused Lincoln of wanting "to sink the proud Anglo-Saxon and other European races into one common level with the lowest races of mankind." In the other city destined to serve as the capital of the Confederate States of America, the Montgomery, Alabama, Mail also emphasized the miscegenation theme: "If the North chooses to mullatoize itself, that is all right Let the North . . . be the home of the mixed race; and let the South be the home of the white man, proud of his race, and proud of his race's superiority! . . . If Lincoln and his free nigger outrider are elected, we must not submit. We must leave the North with its vile free-negroism, to shift for itself. . . . Southern men are white men and intend to continue such!"⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Letter by "National Democrat," n.p., n.d., Missouri Republican (St. Louis), 1 June 1860.

⁴⁶ Corsicana (Texas) Navarro Express, 2 June 1860, quoted in Reynolds, Editors Make War, 58-59.

⁴⁷ Richmond Enquirer, 17 August 1860, Montgomery Weekly Mail, 26 October 1860, quoted in Reynolds, Editors Make War, 124, 125-26.

A few realistic Democrats understood that the Republicans had chosen well. J. Henly Smith thought that the Lincoln-Hamlin “ticket is a strong one” which “will get up such an amount of courage and effort on their part as will be hard to overcome.”⁴⁸ A New Yorker sensibly pointed out to Stephen A. Douglas that Lincoln had an advantage because he “is little known except by the notoriety you gave him, & there are few prejudices against him.”⁴⁹ The New Orleans Crescent praised Lincoln for conducting the 1858 campaign “with distinguished ability” and said “no other man in the State was so capable as himself of encountering the intellectual ‘giant’ of the North-West. We regard this nomination as perhaps the strongest the Republican party could have made.”⁵⁰ A Kentucky newspaper accurately predicted that there were “some things in the personal character and career of Mr. Lincoln, which will give him great popularity Born of humble parentage, and passing the years of his childhood, youth and early manhood amid the hardships of the backwoods of Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, acquiring an education by his own labors as best he could, and gradually working his way to distinction, his life has been one well calculated to excite the admiration and sympathy of voters, most of whom are themselves working men. When to this is added the purity of his private life, the general recognition of which has given him, in his own State, the sobriquet of ‘Honest Old Abe,’ we are compelled to admit that the Chicago Convention has nominated the very hardest man to beat it could possibly have given us.”⁵¹ Douglas as well as James

⁴⁸ J. Henly Smith to Alexander H. Stephens, Washington, 19 May 1860, Stephens Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹ H. G. Warner to Douglas, Rochester Bank, New York, 19 May 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago.

⁵⁰ New Orleans Crescent, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 28 May 1860.

⁵¹ Paris, Kentucky, Citizen, n.d., copied in the Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 2 June 1860.

Guthrie of Kentucky opined that “the Republicans have made the very best nomination that could have made.”⁵²

But many Democrats rejoiced at Lincoln’s nomination. “Next to Seward, we have all earnestly desired Lincoln’s nomination,” a correspondent told Douglas. “You have beaten him once & will beat him more surely again.” The editor of the Chicago Times considered Lincoln “weaker than any other candidate” before the Chicago Convention.⁵³

PLACATING RIVALS

One of Lincoln’s first tasks after winning the nomination was to placate disgruntled losers. Chase presented no problem, for he quickly assured the candidate of his support.⁵⁴ Lincoln graciously replied to the Ohio governor: “Holding myself the humblest of all whose names were before the convention, I feel in especial need of the assistance of all; and I am glad – very glad – of the indication that you stand ready. It is a great consolation that so nearly all . . . of those distinguished and able men, are already in high position to do service in the common cause.”⁵⁵ Chase and his supporters, who were indignant at Wade, thought Lincoln “honest & will no doubt be true to our principles,” and that his nomination was “perhaps as good as under all the circumstances could have

⁵² Washington correspondence, 18 May, New York Herald, 19 May 1860; J[ames] G[uthrie] to [Samuel J. Tilden], [Louisville?], 21 May 1860, copy, Tilden Papers, New York Public Library.

⁵³ J. G. Wright to Douglas, Chicago, 18 May 1860; G. W. Sheahan to Douglas, Chicago, 21 May 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago.

⁵⁴ Chase to Lincoln, 17 May 1860 [obviously misdated; probably written on 19 May], Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. On May 22, Chase gave a warm endorsement of Lincoln in a ratification speech in Columbus. Ohio State Journal (Columbus), 22 May 1860, copied in the Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 29 May 1860. He told a friend that “I am all the more content [with Lincoln’s nomination] because he was the only one of the prominent candidates whose friends had not been engaged in the dishonorable attempt to bring out a candidate in Ohio, without the . . . wish of Ohio Republicans to divide our delegation. Chase to Richard C. Parsons, Columbus, 30 May 1860, Chase Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁵⁵ Lincoln to Chase, Springfield, 26 May 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:53.

been expected & will no doubt succeed,” for “he had the elements of popularity in him that would make him successful in the Campaign.”⁵⁶ A pro-Chase Congressman was relieved that “the Convention gave us men so unexceptionable.”⁵⁷ (Ex-Governor Chauncey F. Cleveland of Connecticut, however, told Chase that he was “disgusted with this Whig ingratitude,” which led to the nomination of “the man who has done the least for the Party & the cause.”)⁵⁸

Edward Bates and his followers were also happy to support Lincoln. Bates said the candidate was “Personally unexceptionable; his integrity unimpeached; his talents known and acknowledged; and his industry and moral courage fully proven. Politically, (aside from the negro question) all his antecedents are right – square up to the old Whig standard. And as to the negro question (which ought not to overrid[e] and subordinate all others) his doctrines, as laid down for use, are, in my judgment, substantially right.”⁵⁹ Bates’s principal supporter in the press “was consoled by the knowledge that Judge Bates’ principles have triumphed, and that the patriotism and conservatism embodied in him has been recognized by the assembled Convention.”⁶⁰ From St. Louis, a Bates enthusiast wrote that “Our friends accept the ticket cordially and will give it an earnest

⁵⁶ Chase to Wade, Cincinnati, 21 November 1860, Wade Papers, Library of Congress; Robert Hosea to Chase, Chicago, 18 May 1860, Thomas Spooner to Chase, Reading, Ohio, 21 May 1860, and David Taylor to Chase, Bryan, Ohio, 22 May 1860, Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Chase to Homer G. Plantz, Columbus, 30 May 1860, Chase Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society.

⁵⁷ John A. Bingham to Chase, Washington, 2 June 1860, Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁸ Cleveland to Chase, Hampton, 28 May 1860, Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁹ Howard K. Beale, ed., The Diary of Edward Bates, 1859-1866 (Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1930, vol. 4; Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 131 (entry for 19 May). See also Bates to Orville H. Browning, St. Louis, 11 June 1860, New York Tribune, 22 June 1860.

⁶⁰ Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), n.d., copied in the Albany Evening Journal, 26 May 1860.

support.”⁶¹ To secure Bates’s formal endorsement, Lincoln counted on Orville Browning. On May 21, David Davis and other Illinois Republican leaders urged the Quincy attorney to induce Bates to campaign actively.⁶² Browning visited St. Louis, where Bates rejected as undignified the suggestion that he take the stump for Lincoln, whose character he “appreciated and admired” and for whom “he entertained the highest regard.” He would “warmly and zealously support Mr Lincoln” but “wanted a little time for reflection.” Three weeks thereafter he released a public letter praising the candidate as “a sound, safe, national man” who “could not be sectional if he tried,” and who “has earned a high reputation for truth, courage, candor, morals, and amiability.”⁶³ In October, Bates wrote that he and Lincoln “are old acquaintances and friends We know each other very well, and I take pleasure in believing that our mutual confidence, which is of long standing, is not disturbed by any serious doubt.”⁶⁴ On May 22, Frank Blair, who had served as Bates’s campaign manager, heartily endorsed Lincoln.⁶⁵ The support of Bates and his followers helped offset Millard Fillmore’s endorsement of Bell, which disappointed Lincoln.⁶⁶ Cassius Clay, a very dark horse at the Chicago convention,

⁶¹ Henry T. Mudd to John G. Nicolay, St. Louis, 23 May 1860, Nicolay Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶² David Davis, O. M. Hatch, Ebenezer Peck, Thomas Marshall, and Norman B. Judd to Browning, Springfield, 21 May 1860, in Theodore Calvin Pease and James G. Randall, eds., The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning (2 vols.; Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925-33), 1:409-10n.

⁶³ Pease and Randall, eds., Browning Diary, 1:410-11 (entry for 24 May 1860); Bates to Browning, St. Louis, 11 June 1860, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 19 June 1860; Browning to Ozias M. Hatch, Carthage, 1 June 1860, Hatch Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield; Beale, ed., Bates Diary, 132, 136 (entries for 19 May and 16 June 1860); Marvin R. Cain, Lincoln’s Attorney General: Edward Bates of Missouri (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965), 116.

⁶⁴ Bates to Worthington G. Snethen, St. Louis, 27 October 1860, William Henry Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁶⁵ Speech of F. P. Blair, St. Louis, 22 May, St. Louis correspondence, 23 May, New York Tribune, 28 May 1860.

⁶⁶ Lincoln to Trumbull, Springfield, 5 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:71

rejoiced that the delegates had chosen “two very good and available candidates” who would “make us an honest administration.”⁶⁷

Cameron was less enthusiastic. At a ratification meeting in Harrisburg a week after the Chicago Convention, he delivered a speech praising Seward and rather perfunctorily endorsing Lincoln as a Republican who, “when demands have been made upon his zeal and patriotism, has borne himself bravely and honorably.”⁶⁸ But unlike Chase, he delayed a long while before congratulating the nominee personally. On August 1, the Winnebago Chief finally did so in a letter which predicted that the Keystone State would go Republican in November. “We need no help here of any kind,” he assured Lincoln.⁶⁹ Cameron’s tardiness may have reflected his contempt for a man he considered his inferior.⁷⁰ His letter was mailed only after he had met with David Davis and Thurlow Weed at Saratoga, N.Y., to discuss cabinet appointments. They agreed that Seward would be secretary of state (a foregone conclusion) and Cameron secretary of the treasury.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Cassius M. Clay to William C. Bryant, White Hall, Kentucky, 22 May 1860, Bryant-Godwin Papers, New York Public Library.

⁶⁸ Harrisburg correspondence, 25 May, Philadelphia Press, 26 May 1860. Joseph Casey explained that Cameron’s praise of Seward “was due to their intimate personal relations” and predicated that Cameron “will give to the nominees all the benefit of his exertions & his influence.” Joseph Casey to Leonard Swett, Harrisburg, 26 May 1860, David Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

⁶⁹ Cameron to Lincoln, Harrisburg, 1 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷⁰ Erwin Stanley Bradley, Simon Cameron, Lincoln’s Secretary of War: A Political Biography (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966), 165.

⁷¹ Gideon Welles, “Recollections in regard to the Formation of Mr Lincoln’s Cabinet,” undated manuscript, Abraham Lincoln Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University;

Harry E. Pratt, “Simon Cameron’s Fight for a Place in Lincoln’s Cabinet,” Bulletin of the Abraham Lincoln Association, no. 49 (September 1937), 4; Willard King, Lincoln’s Manager, David Davis (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 154; David Davis to Weed, Albany, N.Y., 18 August [1860], Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

Sewardites were “very much disappointed, & very cross” as well as “mortified and disgusted” at the defeat of “the greatest living statesman on the footstool of God.”⁷² Many were “paralyzed by the action at Chicago.”⁷³ A “heartily chagrined & angry” Seward backer announced that he would rather “the Republican party should be beaten with him [Seward] for [its] leader, than win with any other man.”⁷⁴ A New Yorker reported that the “nominations have fallen like an iceberg upon us here, & some have already said in my hearing, that they will not support them.”⁷⁵ Varying the image, another wrote that Lincoln’s victory “comes over N.Y. and New England like a driving March storm over the rising July of our hopes. We may huzza to the nomination, but our hearts reproach us with the emptiness of the sound – a bride pronouncing the nuptial vow, while her heart is far away with another.”⁷⁶ A similar feeling was detected by a Rochester Republican, who said that when he and his friends learned the convention results, “our hearts died within us. We were speechless with amazement. Men wept or cursed as grief or indignation swayed the heart. We could not credit it. We called the Telegraph a liar, and we . . . refuse to be comforted. If we vote for Lincoln, it will be purely a mechanical act Our zeal is quenched, our enthusiasm dead, our hearts are broken.”⁷⁷ Sewardites would dutifully vote for Lincoln but, one of them predicted, “there will be a lack of that

⁷² Hamilton Fish to Lt. Henry A. Wise, New York, 24 May 1860, letterbooks, Fish Papers, Library of Congress; Richard S. Storrs, Jr., to his brother, n.p., 18 May [1860], Schoff Civil War Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan; Oliver B. Peirce to Thurlow Weed, Rome, N.Y., 27 August 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁷³ William Lansing to Thurlow Weed, Keesville, N.Y., 3 September 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁷⁴ C. S. Henry to Charles Sumner, Newburgh, N.Y., 20 May 1860, Sumner Papers, Harvard University.

⁷⁵ Clark B. Wheeler to Seward, New York, 25 May 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁷⁶ O[liver] B. Peirce to Seward, Rome, New York, 25 May 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester; Oliver B. Peirce to Thurlow Weed, Rome, N.Y., 27 August 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁷⁷ Henry A. Bloss to Seward, Rochester, 18 May 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

spontaneous free spirit & consequently less of exertion & labor.”⁷⁸ More bitterly, an Albany resident told Seward: “Let those who nominated Lincoln Elect Him. We are against him here.”⁷⁹ From the New York capital came a prediction that because Seward was passed over, “we have lost the entire Irish democratic vote which would have gone for him though it will go for no other Republican.”⁸⁰

Some Seward backers disparaged Lincoln as “coarse and illiterate stump speaker.”⁸¹ A Philadelphian rhetorically asked: “What are the acquirements of Mr. Lincoln? Is he a man of varied accomplishments and long tried public experience? Is he what the President of the United States should be without exception – a pure, upright, firm, learned, classical, accomplished, dignified, and respected man? Where in the records of our National history is there one act to warrant, or by which he may claim, a Presidential nomination?” Scornfully he predicted: “If we descend to nominate such men as Lincoln, we will have before long 5000 upstarts claiming the nomination.”⁸²

One despondent Sewardite felt as if he “didn’t want to have any thing more to do with white man’s politics” and was therefore “about ready to go out and live among the Potawattomies.”⁸³ A Baltimore Republican denounced the “timidity” of the

⁷⁸ John L. Cunningham to Thurlow Weed, Essex, N.Y., 2 August 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁷⁹ Gilbert C. Davidson to Seward, Albany, 18 May 1860, telegram, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸⁰ E. Peshine Smith to Henry C. Carey, Albany, 17 June 1860, Henry C. Carey Papers in the Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁸¹ Richard S. Storrs, Jr., to his brother, n.p., 18 May [1860], Schoff Civil War Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

⁸² Frank M. Coxe to Seward, Philadelphia, 22 May 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

⁸³ Frederick W. Seward, ed., Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State: A Memoir of His Life, with Selections from His Letters, 1846-1861 (2 vols.; New York: Derby and Miller, 1891), 1:453.

“‘negrophobic’ politicians” in the swing states who determined the outcome at Chicago.⁸⁴

The junior editor of Thurlow Weed’s Albany Evening Journal sourly remarked that the outcome of the convention “is less a defeat of William H. Seward than a triumph of his personal enemies.”⁸⁵ When Lincoln men lobbied Seward’s supporters immediately after the convention, they were told: “Let us alone awhile; we will come into line after a little, but you must not crowd the mourners.”⁸⁶

At Chicago, as Lincoln’s managers were discussing ways to deal with the Sewardites, the humorous James W. Nye of New York, a Seward delegate, dropped by and jocularly asked them to “please send an Illinois school-master to Albany to teach Thurlow Weed his political alphabet.”⁸⁷ Similarly, when John B. Haskins was told that the Lincoln managers had spent no money to secure the nomination, he exclaimed: “You had better come down to Albany and teach us fellows something!”⁸⁸ Another Seward backer called on them at Weed’s request and suggested that they visit the Wizard of the Lobby. Davis and Swett complied, hastening to Lord Thurlow’s hotel, where “with much feeling” he told them: “I hoped to make my friend, Mr. Seward, President, and I thought I could serve my country in so doing.” Swett recalled that Weed “did not talk angrily” or “complain of any one. He was a larger man intellectually than I anticipated, and of finer fiber. There was in him an element of gentleness and a large humanity.” Swett and Davis

⁸⁴ Worthington G. Snethen to Seward, Baltimore, 20 May 1860, Seward papers, University of Rochester.

⁸⁵ Chicago correspondence by G[eorge] D[awson], 19 May, Albany Evening Journal, 21 May 1860.

⁸⁶ Correspondence by Joseph Howard from the Steamboat Metropolitan on the Mississippi River, 20 May, New York Times, 25 May 1860.

⁸⁷ Isaac N. Arnold, The Life of Abraham Lincoln (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg, 1885), 168.

⁸⁸ John M. Palmer, interviewed by J. McCan Davis, undated typescript, Ida Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College.

urged Weed to visit Lincoln before returning home.⁸⁹ According to Gideon Welles, the Dictator (as Weed was known in some circles) “greedily availed himself of the courtesy, but deemed it polite to postpone his visit for a few days until after the first rush from Chicago was over and the members of the convention had dispersed.”⁹⁰ (Weed claimed that he accepted the invitation “very reluctantly.”)⁹¹ So the Lord Thurlow inspected land he owned in Iowa and did some sightseeing on the prairies of Illinois where, he quipped sarcastically, “candidates for president grew, expanded and developed without the polishing aid of eastern refinement, and the aid of the educating influence of her colleges.”⁹² After a week in Iowa, Weed’s spirits were, he said, “measurably tranquilized in contemplating the mighty Rivers and beautiful Prairies of the bountiful and boundless West.”⁹³ On May 24, he met with Lincoln, who reported that his visitor “asked nothing of me, at all. He merely seemed to desire a chance of looking at me, keeping up a show of talk while he was at it. I believe he went away satisfied.”⁹⁴ Lord Thurlow “showed no signs whatever of the intriguer” and “said N.Y. is safe, without condition.”⁹⁵ Martin F. Conway, who met with the candidate on July 21, told Weed that Lincoln “expressed perfect confidence in you, and respect for your character. He attaches no importance

⁸⁹ Leonard Swett to the editor, Chicago, 13 July, Chicago Tribune, 14 July 1878; Swett’s reminiscences in Thurlow Weed Barnes, Life of Thurlow Weed including His Autobiography and a Memoir (2 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884), 1:602, 2:292.

⁹⁰ Gideon Welles, “Recollections in regard to the Formation of Mr Lincoln’s Cabinet,” undated manuscript, Abraham Lincoln Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

⁹¹ Weed to the Lincoln Club of New York, 12 February 1879, in Barnes, Memoir of Weed, 296.

⁹² Weed, Autobiography, 602; Barnes, Memoir of Weed, 271, 293, 297; Jeriah Bonham, Fifty Years’ Recollections (Peoria: J. W. Franks & Sons, 1883), 182.

⁹³ Albany Evening Journal, 28 May 1860.

⁹⁴ Lincoln to David Davis, Springfield, 26 May 1860, Basler and Basler, eds., Collected Works of Lincoln: Second Supplement, 20.

⁹⁵ Lincoln to Trumbull, Springfield, 5 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:71.

whatever to the statements of your enemies. . . . He admires your caution in requesting him not to answer any letter you may write him.”⁹⁶ Gideon Welles, however, believed that Lord Thurlow “was somewhat presuming and officious” at this interview.⁹⁷

During their five-hour conversation, Weed found Lincoln “sagacious and practical,” with “so much good sense, such intuitive knowledge of human nature, and such familiarity with the virtues and infirmities of politicians,” that he “became impressed very favorably with his fitness for the duties which he was not unlikely to be called upon to discharge.”⁹⁸ Two days after the meeting in Springfield, Weed’s newspaper praised Lincoln warmly: “There is no more thorough or bolder Republican on the continent – not one of more sturdy integrity, or of more unflinching purpose.” It predicted that backers of other candidates would soon “forget their disappointment” and added that “whoever holds to the extremest doctrines of undiluted Republicanism can find in Mr. Lincoln a fearless and an uncompromising exponent.”⁹⁹

According to Henry Villard, Weed and other New Yorkers “produced quite a favorable impression” during their brief visit to Springfield: “They were thought to be clever, to have plenty of the needful [i.e., money], and a disposition to spend it freely.”¹⁰⁰

The Dictator counseled Seward that “a prompt and cheerful acquiescence in the

⁹⁶ Martin Franklin Conway to Weed, Springfield, Illinois, 22 July 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester. Conway was the Kansas representative on the Republican National Committee. Among the New Yorkers complaining directly to Lincoln about Weed’s unsavory reputation was James H. Van Alen. Van Alen to Horace Greeley, St. Louis, 21 December 1860, Greeley Papers, New York Public Library.

⁹⁷ Gideon Welles, “Recollections in regard to the Formation of Mr Lincoln’s Cabinet,” undated manuscript, Abraham Lincoln Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

⁹⁸ Barnes, Memoir of Weed, 603.

⁹⁹ Albany Evening Journal, 26, 23 May 1860.

¹⁰⁰ Springfield correspondence by Henry Villard, 17 November, New York Herald, 22 November 1860.

Nomination . . . is not only wise, but a duty.”¹⁰¹ George M. Grier offered similar advice from Chicago: “It would be best perhaps for your friends to keep their temper, and act wisely.”¹⁰² But the mortified, bitter, frustrated senator found it difficult to comply.¹⁰³ Along with his neighbors and his aides, he had been poised to uncork champagne bottles and fire off cannon salutes. Then the fateful telegram arrived at his Auburn home, where crowds of friends and well-wishers had gathered to celebrate.¹⁰⁴ He felt humiliated “in the character of a leader deposed by my own party, in the hour of organization for decisive battle.”¹⁰⁵ Later he said he was glad he did not keep a diary, for if he had done so there would be “recorded all my cursing and swearing on the 19th of May.”¹⁰⁶ Before the Chicago convention he had declared to Joseph Medill, with “much heat of temper and expression,” that “if he was not nominated as the Republican candidate for President . . . he would shake the dust off his shoes, and retire from the service of an ungrateful party for the remainder of his days.”¹⁰⁷ A week after the convention he informed Weed that he would quit public life in March 1861, when his senate term expired.¹⁰⁸ (From Capitol Hill, William P. Fessenden reported that a rumor that Seward “will not come back to

¹⁰¹ Weed to Seward, Davenport, Iowa, 20 May 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

¹⁰² George M. Grier to Seward, Chicago, 18 May 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

¹⁰³ Glyndon Van Deusen, William Henry Seward (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 229.

¹⁰⁴ Auburn Democrat, n.d., copied in the New York Herald, 29 May 1860.

¹⁰⁵ Seward to his wife, Washington, 30 May 1860, Seward, ed., Seward at Washington, 1:454.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915: An Autobiography (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), 69.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Medill to Frederic Bancroft, n.p., 18 February 1898, Frederic Bancroft, The Life of William H. Seward (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900), 1:531n.

¹⁰⁸ “Private life as soon as I can reach it without grieving or embarrassing my friends will be welcome to me – and I am impatient for it. It will come the 4th of next March in any case.” Seward to Weed, Auburn, N.Y., 24 May 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester. On May 18, he wrote a more stoic letter to Weed, expressing the hope “that your sense of the disappointment is as light as my own.” Seward to Weed, Auburn, N.Y., 18 May 1860, ibid.

Washington] but I hope he will not make himself ridiculous.” If he “retires in a pet, it will end his political career.”¹⁰⁹ On June 26, he again wrote to Weed about his retirement plans: “If I can rightly and to the satisfaction of my friends remain at rest I want to do so. I am content to quit with the political world when it proposes to quit with me.”¹¹⁰ Through Lord Thurlow and Henry J. Raymond, he peevishly quarreled with Greeley and let it be known that he probably would not actively campaign for the Republican ticket.¹¹¹ Many other Sewardites bitterly attacked Greeley, who they thought had single-handedly defeated their man out of spite.¹¹² But a pro-Seward delegate from California protested that “the outcry against Mr. Greeley seems but a convenient vent for disappointed and selfish malignity.” The Republicans at Chicago wanted to nominate a winner, and Seward simply did not fit that description.¹¹³ Amos Tuck argued that Greeley had actually injured Lincoln’s chances and inadvertently helped Seward; by championing Bates, the eccentric editor had delayed the unification of anti-Seward forces on the Rail-splitter.¹¹⁴

Sewardites also criticized Governor E. D. Morgan, who as chairman of the Republican National Committee felt constrained to be neutral. They maintained that if Morgan had behaved like Curtin of Pennsylvania and Lane of Indiana and warned

¹⁰⁹ William P. Fessenden to his son William, Washington, 19 May 1860, and to Elizabeth Warriner, Washington, 20 May 1860, Fessenden Family Papers, Bowdoin College. Another leading Maine Republican recommended that Seward not resign his seat in the senate. Israel Washburn to Thurlow Weed, Washington, 19 May 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

¹¹⁰ Seward to Weed, Auburn, 26 June 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

¹¹¹ Raymond’s dispatch, Auburn, 22 May, New York Times, 24 May 1860; Harlan Hoyt Horner, Lincoln and Greeley (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953), 179-81; Van Deusen, Seward, 229-30; Van Deusen, Weed, 256-58.

¹¹² New York Courier and Enquirer, 1 August 1860; “The War Between the Republican Journals of New York,” New York Herald, 31 May 1860; New York Tribune, 25, 28, 29 May, 2, 6, 18 June 1860; Jeter Allen Isely, Horace Greeley and the Republican Party, 1853-1861: A Study of the New York Tribune (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 284-86.

¹¹³ A. A. S[argent] to the editor, New York, 28 May 1860, New York Tribune, 29 May 1860.

¹¹⁴ “New Hampshire at Chicago,” Concord, New Hampshire, Independent Democrat, 7 June 1860.

delegates that New York might go Democratic if Seward were not nominated, then the senator could well have triumphed on the first ballot. It was also alleged that Morgan had joined other anti-Seward New Yorkers in arguing that “the unfortunate associations which surround Seward will be carried to Washington, and the corruptions of the Albany Legislature and lobby be transferred to Congress.”¹¹⁵

In late May, the press ran a cool, stiffly formal public letter from the Sage of Auburn endorsing the party’s platform and candidates without mentioning Lincoln by name.¹¹⁶ In June, Seward wrote a similarly frosty reply to an invitation to speak in Michigan.¹¹⁷ Two months later, he expressed to a reporter no enthusiasm for the Republican standard bearer: “Governor Seward had very little to say about Lincoln, further than that he should receive his support.”¹¹⁸ Seward did agree, however, to make a campaign speech in Chicago.¹¹⁹

On May 21, a bitter, angry dispatch from the Windy City appeared in Weed’s Albany newspaper complaining of a “spirit of envy and hate,” “ingratitude,” and “malignity” at the convention. “The sentiment which culminated in his [Seward’s] rejection was chiefly manufactured by those whose dislike of the man was infinitely in

¹¹⁵ James Watson Webb to Thurlow Weed, n.p., 28 June 1860, James Watson Webb Papers, Yale University; James Watson Webb in the New York Courier and Enquirer, 25 May, copied in the New York Herald, 27 May 1860. See also Morgan to Weed, Irvington, N.Y., 18 June 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester, and N. D. Morgan to E. D. Morgan, New York, 18 June 1860, Edwin D. Morgan Papers, New York State Library, Albany.

¹¹⁶ Seward to Charles C. Nott et al., Auburn, 21 May 1860, Chicago Press and Tribune, 25 May 1860. The New York Courier and Enquirer said that Seward wrote for the Auburn Daily Advertiser an unsigned editorial endorsing the ticket. New York Tribune, 24 May 1860.

¹¹⁷ Seward to J. W. Tillman, Auburn, 28 June 1860, Detroit Tribune, n.d., copied in the New York Courier and Enquirer, 3 July 1860.

¹¹⁸ Auburn, New York, correspondence, 23 August, New York Herald, 27 August 1860.

¹¹⁹ This was arranged in a meeting that Norman B. Judd held with Thurlow Weed in New York. Herman Kreismann to Elihu B. Washburne, Chicago, 16 July 1860, Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Library of Congress.

advance of their love for his principles.”¹²⁰ A week later that paper scouted reports that the senator lost because he was too radical for the battleground states: “the ready acceptance of Mr. Lincoln, whose Free Soil record is as ultra, and whose principles harmonise, exactly, with those of Gov. Seward, perplexes us. It may be all consistent and right, but we cannot understand it.”¹²¹ Soon, however, Weed backed Lincoln, explaining that the Sewardites could be reconciled to defeat because their hero had lost to the only competitor who commanded their respect. On June 7, Lord Thurlow told Swett: “but for the entire confidence reposed in Mr Lincoln, we should have collapsed in this State. Any nomination, other than Mr L’s, instead of Seward, would have been fatal. As it is, we shall ‘harness up the old team’ and drive it through[.]”¹²² Weed’s newspaper spoke highly of Lincoln, calling him “an honest, devoted, fearless, true-hearted Republican.”¹²³ No matter how disappointed, Weed and his fellow New York Republicans realistically understood that to control their state government and its patronage, they had to work for Lincoln’s election.¹²⁴

Other Sewardites followed Weed’s example. In Boston, William Schouler praised the Rail-splitter: “The nominations at Chicago take well here and they will receive larger majorities in New England than Governor Seward would have done. I was a Seward man

¹²⁰ Chicago correspondence by G[eorge] D[awson], 19 May, Albany Evening Journal, 21 May 1860. Albany Republicans quickly repudiated this dispatch, and James Shepherd Pike published a spirited rejoinder. Resolutions adopted by the Albany Republican General Committee, 22 May, Albany Evening Journal, 23 May 1860; “Centaur” to the editor, Albany, 26 May, New York Tribune, 2 June 1860; Niagara Falls correspondence by J[ames] S[hpherd] P[ike], 1 June, New York Tribune, 5 June 1860.

¹²¹ Albany Evening Journal, 28 May 1860.

¹²² Weed to Swett, Albany, 7 June 1860, David Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

¹²³ Albany Evening Journal, 20 July 1860.

¹²⁴ James E. Harvey to John Covode, Brattleboro, Vermont, 19 August 1860, Covode Papers, Western Pennsylvania Historical Society, Pittsburgh.

and am now but I think Lincoln and Hamlin are wise nominations.”¹²⁵ Elsewhere in Massachusetts, the pro-Seward William S. Robinson of the Springfield Republican, though “very much grieved” at Seward’s defeat, agreed that the “convention did the next best thing.”¹²⁶ Two weeks after the convention, it was reported that voters in the northwestern corner of the Bay State “fall in with the nomination, and seem as a general thing to think it a good one. Some lamentations are heard for Seward but they grow less and less.”¹²⁷

New Yorkers expressed similar views. On May 19, delegate George William Curtis confided to his wife that the convention had made “a good nomination. If Seward were impossible Lincoln was the man.”¹²⁸ Senator Preston King regretted that the convention “would not nominate the Candidate of New York – but they gave us a good man. . . . His canvass with Douglas in Illinois showed him to be an able man.” Lincoln “possesses the public confidence and I think deserves it.”¹²⁹ When the word first reached Manhattan, the poet-stockbroker Edmund C. Stedman reported that Lincoln’s Cooper Union speech “was quoted by hundreds, and to those who saw the man on the occasion of its delivery, no name could so effectually compensate for the withdrawal of Seward, as that of Abraham Lincoln.”¹³⁰ John Bigelow regretted Seward’s defeat but thought Lincoln’s nomination “a very wise one, much wiser than I had hoped for.” He explained

¹²⁵ William Schouler to Israel Washburn, Boston, 14 June 1860, Washburn Family Papers, Washburn Memorial Library, Norlands, Maine.

¹²⁶ William S. Robinson to his nephew, n.p., n.d., in William S. Robinson, "Warrington" Pen-Portraits: A Collection of Personal and Political Reminiscences (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1877), 91.

¹²⁷ William P. Porter to Henry L. Dawes, North Adams, 29 May 1860, Dawes Papers, Library of Congress.

¹²⁸ George William Curtis to Anna Shaw Curtis, Chicago, 19 May 1860, Curtis Papers, Harvard University. On May 16, Curtis had told his wife that Lincoln “is a strong man.”

¹²⁹ Preston King to Hamilton Fish, Washington, 13, 30 July 1860, Fish Papers, Library of Congress.

¹³⁰ New York correspondence by “Launcelot,” 31 May, Chicago Press and Tribune, n.d., clipping in scrapbook # 11, Edmund C. Stedman Papers, Columbia University.

to an English friend that the candidate “is not precisely the sort of man who would be regarded as entirely a la mode at your splendid European Courts, nor indeed is his general style and appearance beyond the reach of criticism in our Atlantic drawing rooms.” He was “essentially a self made man and of a type to which Europe is as much a stranger as it is to the Mastodon.” Nonetheless, “he has a clear and eminently logical mind, a nice sense of truth and justice” as well as a superior “capacity of statement.” Nothing in the candidate’s background or in the way he won the nomination was “calculated to render Mr. S’s friends indifferent to his success.”¹³¹

Other Seward supporters actually expressed relief at the nomination. “Lincoln is so much better than I feared we shd. get,” said E. G. Brooks, “that I am well satisfied. He is a strong straight out, live man I was afraid we shd. get Bates or some purely expediency candidate, resurrectionized and galvanized for the occasion.”¹³² A Rochester resident who identified himself as “a very great admirer of Mr Seward” feared that the Republican party “would run into extravagance, and all kinds of schemes to steal money” and thus be ruined if the senator had become president.¹³³ A leader of New York’s Whig party and former governor Washington Hunt reported that many Sewardites “feel sore & dissatisfied. But they are all sectional rep[ublican]s & can be nothing else, & will generally support Lincoln, believing that Mr. Seward will have full command of his adm[inistratio]n & will use it to secure the succession.”

Helping to salve the hurt feelings of the New Yorkers was Lincoln’s reassurance that they would occupy honored places at the patronage trough. New York Congressman

¹³¹ John Bigelow to William Hargreaves, New York, 17 June, 30 July 1860, Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library.

¹³² E. G. Brooks to Israel Washburn, New York, 7 June 1860, Hunt, Washburns, 73.

¹³³ P. W. Glen to Samuel Galloway, Rochester, 16 July 1860, Galloway Papers, Ohio Historical Society.

Elbridge G. Spaulding, a lieutenant of Weed's, had requested a letter from David Davis containing a pledge to that effect. For Davis's signature Lincoln prepared such a document: "Since parting with you, I have had full, and frequent conversations with Mr. Lincoln. The substance of what he says is that he neither is nor will be, in advance of the election, committed to any man, clique, or faction; and that, in case the new administration shall devolve upon him, it will be his pleasure, and, in his view, the part of duty, and wisdom, to deal fairly with all. He thinks he will need the assistance of all; and that, even if he had friends to reward, or enemies to punish, as he has not, he could not afford to dispense with the best talent, nor to outrage the popular will in any locality."¹³⁴ (This was an accurate surmise. To Carl Schurz, an ardent Sewardite at Chicago, Lincoln wrote: "I beg you to be assured that your having supported Gov. Seward, in preference to myself in the convention, is not even remembered by me for any practical purpose, or the slightest u[n]pleasant feeling. I go not back of the convention, to make distinction among its' members.")¹³⁵ When Swett asked approval for a similar letter to Judge John W. Shaffer reassuring the Seward and Cameron men to whom he had made pledges at Chicago, Lincoln assented, but stipulated: "do not let him know I have seen it." He instructed Swett to burn his letter, "not that there is any thing wrong in it; but because it is best not to be known that I write at all."¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Davis to Lincoln, Springfield, 23 May 1860, and Bloomington, 24 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to Davis, Springfield, 26 May 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, First Supplement, 54; Lincoln to Davis, Springfield, 26 May 1860, Basler and Basler, eds., Collected Works of Lincoln, Second Supplement, 20; Spaulding to Weed, Washington, 31 May 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

¹³⁵ Lincoln to Schurz, Springfield, 18 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:78.

¹³⁶ Lincoln to Swett, Springfield, 26 and 30 May 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:55, 57.

Even the most disenchanted friends of Seward could not sit on their hands lest the Democrats win control of the state legislature and thus prevent their hero's reelection to the senate.¹³⁷ But still, they warned that “there is an appalling apathy among the people, never before seen and from which it is difficult to tell how they are to be aroused.”¹³⁸

On June 10 at Cooper Union, Republicans gathered to ratify the Chicago nominations. In general the meeting was enthusiastic, though William E. Evarts's speech reportedly struck listeners as “tedious, tiresome, and very formal.”¹³⁹

Informed by his wife that her New England relatives were disappointed in Lincoln's nomination, Elihu B. Washburne told her that he was sorry that they “do not like the old Sucker, but they will have to take him, and he is a better man than they have got in all Massachusetts.”¹⁴⁰ Some other Bay State supporters of Banks were at first chagrined but quickly came around.¹⁴¹

REACTION AMONG ABOLITIONISTS AND RADICALS

Lincoln's nomination pleased many, though not all, militant opponents of slavery.¹⁴² Frederick Douglass called him “a man of unblemished private character” with “a cool well balanced head” and “great firmness of will,” who “is perseveringly

¹³⁷ E. G. Brooks to Israel Washburn, New York, 7 June 1860, Hunt, Washburns, 73.

¹³⁸ E. Peshine Smith to Henry C. Carey, Rochester, 29 July 1860, Henry C. Carey Papers in the Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

¹³⁹ New York correspondence by J. A. B., 14 June, Cleveland Morning Leader, 18 June 1860, clipping in the James A. Briggs Scrapbooks, vol. 2, p. 47, Western Reserve Historical Society.

¹⁴⁰ Elihu B. Washburne to his wife, Washington, 29 May [1860], Washburn Family Papers, Washburn Memorial Library, Norlands, Maine.

¹⁴¹ James [no last name indicated] to Banks, Bear Valley, 18 June 1860, Banks Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

¹⁴² James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 9-28.

industrious,” “one of the most frank, honest men in political life,” and a “radical Republican . . . fully committed to the doctrine of the ‘irrepressible conflict.’” During the campaign of 1858, Douglass noted, Lincoln “came fully up to the highest mark of Republicanism, and he is a man of will and nerve, and will not back down from his own assertions. He is not a compromise candidate by any means.”¹⁴³ Douglass would eventually support the Radical Abolitionist Party nominee, Gerrit Smith, but he hoped that the Republicans would win.¹⁴⁴ “While I see . . . that the Republican party is far from an abolition party,” he told an upstate New York audience, “I cannot fail to see also that the Republican party carries with it the anti-slavery sentiment of the North, and that a victory gained by it in the present canvass will be a victory gained by that sentiment over the wickedly aggressive pro-slavery sentiment of the country. . . . I sincerely hope for the triumph of that party.”¹⁴⁵ In one of his autobiographies, the black orator said that “[a]gainst both Douglas and Breckinridge, Abraham Lincoln proposed his grand historic doctrine of the power and duty of the National Government to prevent the spread and perpetuity to slavery. Into this contest I threw myself, with firmer faith and more ardent hope than ever before, and what I could do by pen or voice was done with a will.”¹⁴⁶

(White abolitionists applauded Douglass’s work, though one wished that his complexion were darker. “On this question of . . . prejudice against color, I would like still better a

¹⁴³ “The Chicago Nominations,” Douglass’s Monthly 3 (June 1860): 276.

¹⁴⁴ “Ten thousand votes for Gerrit Smith at this juncture would do more, in our judgment, for the ultimate abolition of slavery in this country, than two million for Abraham Lincoln, or any other man who stands pledged before the world against all interference with slavery in the slave States, who is not pledged to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, or anywhere else where the system exists, and who is not opposed to making the free States a hunting ground for men under the Fugitive Slave Law.” “The Liberty Party Nominees,” Douglass’s Monthly 3 (October 1860): 339.

¹⁴⁵ Speech at Geneva, N.Y., 1 August 1860, John W. Blassingame, ed., The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews (5 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979-92), 3:381-82.

¹⁴⁶ The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (Hartford, Connecticut: Park Publishing Co., 1881), 265.

genuine negro, as black as night,” said Parker Pillsbury, who traveled the antislavery lecture circuit with Douglass.)¹⁴⁷ John S. Rock of Boston, another black abolitionist, also supported Lincoln.¹⁴⁸

A week after the Chicago Convention, Joshua Giddings told his militantly antislavery son-in-law: “As to Lincoln I would trust him on the subject of slavery as soon as I would Chase or Seward. I have been well acquainted with him and think I understand his whole character. I know him to be honest and faithful.” Seven months later, Giddings said of Lincoln: “I have no doubt that we did the best thing we could when we nominated him.”¹⁴⁹ Giddings was assured by his longtime friend and fellow Ohio antislavery leader, Joseph Root, that Lincoln and Hamlin “are all right. Let us then gird up our loins and go forth to battle with Moab and Amalek.”¹⁵⁰ The New York Independent, which had urged the Republicans to nominate a militant opponent of slavery like Seward, Chase, Charles Sumner, or Benjamin Wade, praised Lincoln as “a true man, a man of great ability, who has thoroughly studied the question of the times, a man honored and beloved by his fellow-citizens at home, and one who, if chosen President, will use all his power and official influence to re-establish the Constitution as our fathers made it.”¹⁵¹

Female abolitionists also applauded Lincoln’s nomination. Jane Grey Swisshelm deemed him “as much of an anti-Slavery man” as Seward and said that the Rail-splitter

¹⁴⁷ Pillsbury to Wendell Phillips, Elmwood, Illinois, 17 March 1861, Phillips Papers, Harvard University.

¹⁴⁸ On Rock, see George A. Levesque, “Boston’s Black Brahmin: Dr. John S. Rock,” Civil War History 26 (1980): 326-46.

¹⁴⁹ Giddings to George W. Julian, Jefferson, [Ohio], 25 May 1860, Giddings-Julian Papers, Library of Congress; Giddings to John Allison, Jefferson, Ohio, 25 December 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph M. Root to Joshua R. Giddings, Sandusky, Ohio, 26 May 1860, Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society.

¹⁵¹ The Independent (New York), 10 and 24 May 1860.

suit her “admirably.”¹⁵² Lydia Maria Child told Charles Sumner, “I don't place much reliance on any political party; but I am inclined to think this Mr. Lincoln . . . is an honest, independent man, and sincerely a friend to freedom. One thing makes me strongly inclined to like him and trust him. At a public meeting in Illinois, two years ago, in discussion with Stephen A. Douglass, he said, ‘A negro is my equal; as good as I am.’ Considering that Lincoln came from Kentucky, and that his adopted state, Illinois, is very pro-slavery, I think he was a brave man to entertain such a sentiment and announce it.”¹⁵³

Radical Republicans joined the pro-Lincoln chorus. Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin rejoiced that by nominating Lincoln, he and his allies had created “a real Republican party . . . no old fogy or conservative party, but one that can march to the logic of Events and keep step with the Providence of God.”¹⁵⁴ Another Midwestern Radical, Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa, was equally enthusiastic. “The nomination of Lincoln strikes the mass of the people with great favor,” he told his wife. “He is universally regarded as a scrupulously honest man, and a genuine man of the people.”¹⁵⁵

Lincoln assured Wait Talcott, a leading Illinois abolitionist, that he sympathized with him. “I know you Talcotts are all strong abolitionists,” said Lincoln, “and while I have had to be very careful in what I said I want you to understand that your opinions and

¹⁵² Saint Cloud (Minnesota) Democrat, 31 May 1860, in Sylvia D. Hoffert, Jane Grey Swisshelm: An Unconventional Life, 1815-1884 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 124.

¹⁵³ Child to Sumner, Wayland, 27 May 1860, Lydia Maria Child: Selected Letters, 1817-1880, ed. Milton Meltzer and Patricia G. Holland (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 352.

¹⁵⁴ James R. Doolittle to his wife, 29 May 1860, Doolittle Papers, in William Ernest Smith, The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1933), 1:485.

¹⁵⁵ Grimes to his wife, Washington, 4 June 1860, William Salter, The Life of James W. Grimes, Governor of Iowa, 1854-1858; A Senator of the United States, 1859-1869 (New York: Appleton, 1876), 128.

wishes have produced a much stronger impression on my mind than you may think.”¹⁵⁶

Publicly, Frederick Douglass’s candidate, Gerrit Smith, criticized Lincoln as too lukewarm an advocate of freedom, but privately he confided to Giddings: “Seward is a very able man. But so also is Lincoln – & he will, I have no doubt, get a greater vote than Seward would have got. I have read in the newspapers what Lincoln said, so wisely & sublimely, of the Declaration of Independence. I feel confident that he is in his heart an abolitionist.” Though on principle Smith voted for no one who acknowledged the legality of slavery, he told Giddings that Lincoln’s victory at the polls “will be regarded by the South as an Abolition victory – not less so than if you yourself were elected President.”¹⁵⁷ The Boston correspondent of the New York Tribune opined that Lincoln was “ahead of the Anti-Slavery sentiment of the Republican party, rather than behind it, and therefore to rally round and defend him will be to improve the political morals of the country.”¹⁵⁸ The young abolitionist Charles Russell Lowell preferred Lincoln to Seward, for the former was “emphatic on the irrepressible conflict, without if or but,” whereas the latter had backtracked from the doctrine in his February speech on Capital States and Labor States.¹⁵⁹

Some abolitionists were less enthusiastic. One protested that during the 1858 campaign “his ground on the score of humanity towards the oppressed race was too

¹⁵⁶ Ralph Emerson, “Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Emerson’s Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln” (pamphlet; Rockford, Illinois: privately printed, 1909), 13. Emerson was Talcott’s son-in-law.

¹⁵⁷ Gerrit Smith to D. E. Somes, Peterboro, N.Y., 16 October 1860, The Liberator (Boston), 2 November 1860; Gerrit Smith to Giddings, Peterboro, New York, 2 June 1860, Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society; Smith to Frederick Douglass, Peterboro, New York, 13 July 1860, New York Herald, 23 July 1860.

¹⁵⁸ Boston correspondence, 7 July, New York Tribune, 9 July 1860.

¹⁵⁹ Lowell to George Putnam, Burlington, Iowa, 24 May 1860, in Edward W. Emerson, ed., Life and Letters of Charles Russell Lowell, Captain Sixth United States Cavalry, Colonel Second Massachusetts Cavalry, Brigadier-General United States Volunteers (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907), 188.

low.”¹⁶⁰ Gerrit Smith’s party adopted a resolution proclaiming that “for Abolitionists to vote for a candidate like Abraham Lincoln, who stands ready to execute the accursed Fugitive Slave Law, to suppress insurrections among slaves, to admit new slave States, and to support the ostracism, socially and politically, of the black man of the North, is to give the lie to their professions, to expose their hypocrisy to the world, and to do what they can to put far off the day of the slave’s deliverance.”¹⁶¹ The party’s candidate for governor of New York, William Goodell, condescendingly remarked that if anyone supporting Lincoln called himself an abolitionist, “we know not how to vindicate the sincerity of his professions, except by entertaining a less elevated conception of his intelligence.”¹⁶² Goodell sneered that the Republicans had chosen the “most available, because the least known, the least prominent, the least distinguished or distinguishable among those to be selected from.”¹⁶³ A leading member of the party in Ohio said Lincoln “ignores all the principles of humanity in the colored race, both free and slave; and as abolitionists claim the right to freedom of the one class, and political equality of the other, how can they be consistent, to say nothing of honest, in supporting such a man.”¹⁶⁴ Gerrit Smith’s agent at his Oswego colony for free blacks scornfully remarked to those urging him to support the Republican ticket: “I should look beautiful voting for a President who would be for sending the Marshall after me for helping Fugitive Slaves to

¹⁶⁰ Charles Grandison Finney in the Oberlin Evangelist, n.d., quoted in Allen C. Guelzo, “Lincoln and the Abolitionists,” Wilson Quarterly, vol. 24, no. 4 (autumn 2000): 60.

¹⁶¹ The Liberator (Boston), 7 September 1860.

¹⁶² Principia, 2 June 1860, in McPherson, Struggle for Equality, 17.

¹⁶³ Principia, 26 May 1860, in M. Leon Perkal, “William Goodell: A Life of Reform” (Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1972), 297.

¹⁶⁴ W. A. Hunter to William Goodell, 13 June 1860, in Principia, 21 July 1860, in McPherson, Struggle for Equality, 17.

Canada.”¹⁶⁵ Equally contemptuous was an Illinois radical who declared, “I hate the Lincoln party. I would as soon call Hell a paradise as to call the Lincoln Party a Republican Party.”¹⁶⁶ Lamenting the defeat of Seward, the National Anti-Slavery Standard objected that while Lincoln might be “a worthy and respectable person of some local consequence,” he was “thoroughly insignificant and obscure, viewed from the stand-point of the nation.”¹⁶⁷ Beriah Green, known as “abolition’s axe,” indignantly asked how any self-respecting opponent of slavery could possibly support a “craven wretch” like Lincoln: “He who goes for the Fugitive Slave bill of ’50! Hasn’t made up his mind that the interstate slave trade should be abolished! Is against negro equality! A man is not to be classified with men! . . . Is against the abolition of slavery in the District except on conditions which none but a damned cross between a knave and a fool could either impose or endure!”¹⁶⁸

Other abolitionists like Stephen S. Foster denounced the Republican standard-bearer as a man “who declared his willingness to be a slave-driver general.” They also argued that “in voting for a slave-catching President, we do as truly endorse and sanction slave-catching as the non-extension policy which he advocates.” Lincoln not only “stands ready to hunt slaves” but also “supports the ostracism, socially and politically, of the blacks at the North.”¹⁶⁹ Parker Pillsbury told his fellow radicals, “in voting for Abraham

¹⁶⁵ John B. Edwards to Gerrit Smith, 11 July 1860, in Ralph Volney Harlow, Gerrit Smith: Philanthropist and Reformer (New York: Russell and Russell, 1939), 427.

¹⁶⁶ John W. [Windham?] to Gerrit Smith, Lexington, Illinois, 25 August 1860, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

¹⁶⁷ National Anti-Slavery Standard (New York), 26 May, 2 June 1860.

¹⁶⁸ Green to Elizur Wright, n.p., n.d., in Philip G. Wright and Elizabeth Q. Wright, Elizur Wright, the Father of Life Insurance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 212.

¹⁶⁹ Stephen S. Foster in The Liberator (Boston), 15 June 1860; C[harles] A. H[ammond] to Frederick Douglass, n.p., n.d., Douglass’s Monthly 3 (October 1860): 343. In the following issue of that periodical,

Lincoln, you as effectually vote for slavery as you would in voting for Stephen A. Douglas.”¹⁷⁰ Under the sway of Pillsbury, the Western Anti-Slavery Society denounced Lincoln for being “committed to every constitutional compromise for slavery ever claimed by Calhoun or conceded by Webster” and the Republican platform for failing to condemn slavery. The party was not fit “to be entrusted with the interests of humanity and liberty.”¹⁷¹

Oliver Johnson, editor of the National Anti-Slavery Standard, organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society, criticized attacks by men like Pillsbury and Foster: “Instead of allowing for a fair margin for honest differences of opinion, and thus keeping on good terms with the better portion of the Republicans,” the Western Society “has selected for special denunciation such men as Sumner, and thereby reduced itself needlessly & recklessly to a small faction of growlers, showing their teeth and snapping just where they should have been generous and conciliatory.” To Johnson it seemed “utterly preposterous to deny that Lincoln’s election will indicate growth in the right direction.”¹⁷²

H. Ford Douglass, an eloquent black abolitionist from Chicago, asked an antislavery gathering in Massachusetts “if any man can tell me the difference between the anti-slavery of Abraham Lincoln, and the anti-slavery of the old Whig party, or the anti-slavery of Henry Clay,” who “was just as odious to the anti-slavery cause and anti-

A. Pryne objected strongly to Hammond’s characterization of Lincoln. A. Pryne to Douglass, n.p., n.d., Douglass’s Monthly 3 (November 1860): 358.

¹⁷⁰ Parker Pillsbury, speech at Framingham, Massachusetts, 4 July 1860, The Liberator (Boston), 20 July 1860.

¹⁷¹ National Anti-Slavery Standard, 13 October 1860.

¹⁷² Johnson to J. Miller McKim, n.p., 8 November and 11 October 1860, Samuel J. May Anti-Slavery Manuscript Collection, Cornell University.

slavery men as ever was John C. Calhoun. . . . I do not believe in the anti-slavery of Abraham Lincoln, because he is on the side of this Slave Power . . . that has possession of the Federal Government.” Douglass alleged that Lincoln in 1858 had refused his request to sign a petition calling for the repeal of Illinois’ infamous black laws. He also complained that in 1849 Lincoln “introduced, on his own responsibility, a fugitive slave law for the District of Columbia.”¹⁷³

Rising from the audience, Massachusetts Senator Henry Wilson challenged Douglass’s version of that proposed 1849 statute. “Mr. Lincoln was born in Kentucky, a slave State, and went to Illinois, and living in a portion of that State which did not entertain the sentiments of this State [Massachusetts], and with a constituency living under what he called the Black Laws of Illinois, he went into Congress and proposed to make the District of Columbia free. I think that he should be honored for that and not misrepresented.” Passionately he urged the assembled opponents of slavery, “When you undertake to arraign men who, in the halls of Congress, before dominating majorities, in a city where public sentiment is against them, where the sneer and the profane word meet them at every step in the streets, are true to the right, I ask you when you deal with such men that you shall do them justice, and that if they have done good deeds and brave deeds, that you say it.” Wilson declared that Lincoln was “ahead of the Anti-Slavery sentiment of the Republican party, rather than behind it.” No one, Wilson added, “ever

¹⁷³ Frederick Douglass’s Monthly, March 1859, p. 40; H. Ford Douglass, speech at Framingham, Massachusetts, 4 July 1860, The Liberator (Boston), 13 July 1860; Orville A. Hitchcock and Ota Thomas Reynolds, “Ford Douglass’ Fourth of July Oration, 1860,” in J. Jeffery Auer, ed., Antislavery and Disunion, 1858-1861: Studies in the Rhetoric of Compromise and Conflict (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 133-51; see Robert L. Harris, Jr., “H. Ford. Douglas: Afro-American Antislavery Emigrationist,” Journal of Negro History 62 (1977): 225-26.

grew faster in intellectual stature than Mr. Lincoln, from the time he commenced the contest with Douglas till the day he received the Chicago nomination.”¹⁷⁴

In addition to Wilson, some other Radicals were willing to make allowances for Lincoln. Though the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society chastised him for supporting the fugitive slave act, for opposing citizenship rights for blacks, and for advocating a timid approach to abolition in the District of Columbia, it nevertheless acknowledged that “it is due to truth and candor to say that, as between him and his opponents, and on the issues involved in the present contest, the election of Abraham Lincoln will be a great and encouraging triumph.”¹⁷⁵ A New Yorker disillusioned by Seward’s backsliding on the slavery issue, declared that Lincoln’s presidency “may be an imbecility – may be a malignity; but it is hardly possible that its cowardice, corruptions and betrayals should be so speciously masked, so artfully baptized into the sacred name of Philanthropy, Integrity and Virtue, as in the case of Mr. Seward’s elevation would be sure to happen.”¹⁷⁶

As the campaign wore on, H. Ford Douglass came to regard Lincoln more favorably, reasoning that even if there was little difference between Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, “there is in the Republican party a strong anti-slavery element. And though the party will do nothing for freedom now, that element will increase; and before long – I trust – springing up from the ruins of the Republican party will come a great anti-slavery

¹⁷⁴ Speech at Framingham, Massachusetts, 4 July 1860, The Liberator (Boston), 13 July 1860; New York Herald, 8 July 1860; Boston correspondence, 7 July, New York Tribune, 9 July 1860. William Lloyd Garrison defended Douglas, pointing out that Lincoln did not in 1860 propose to abolish slavery in Washington. Speech at Framingham, Massachusetts, 4 July 1860, The Liberator, 20 July 1860.

¹⁷⁵ Annual report of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, quoted in the New York Herald, 30 October 1860.

¹⁷⁶ Charles D. B. Mills, “The ‘Sacrifice’ of Wm. H. Seward,” Syracuse, 31 May 1860, The Liberator (Boston), 22 June 1860.

party.” So he endorsed Lincoln.¹⁷⁷ Another black abolitionist, John Mercer Langston of Ohio, also supported Lincoln even though he thought the candidate’s “ground on the score of humanity” was “too low” and “did him no honor.”¹⁷⁸

Anticipating H. Ford Douglas’s criticism of Lincoln’s 1849 bill to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, the antislavery purist Wendell Phillips in May called the Republican standard bearer “the slave hound of Illinois,” a “knave,” a “huckster in politics,” and “a county court lawyer, whose only recommendation was that, out of the emptiness of his past, lying newspapers could make him any character they pleased.”¹⁷⁹ He paid Lincoln the dubious compliment of being candid: “I wish I could say of Mr. Lincoln, as I can of Giddings or Sumner, when I see him swearing to support the Constitution of the United States, ‘I respect him so much that I do not believe he will do what he promises.’”¹⁸⁰ Curiously Phillips compared Lincoln unfavorably to Seward because the latter had enunciated the “great philosophical principle” of the “irrepressible conflict” while the former “is merely known as the antagonist of Douglas.”¹⁸¹ Readers of Phillips’s philippic were quick to point out that Lincoln’s “House Divided” address clearly spelled out the same thesis as that of Seward’s Rochester speech, which was delivered five months after the Rail-splitter’s speech.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Speech of 23 September 1860, in Salem, Ohio, in C. Peter Ripley, ed., The Black Abolitionist Papers (5 vols.; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985-92) 5:91.

¹⁷⁸ William Cheek and Aimee Lee Cheek, John Mercer Langston and the Fight for Black Freedom, 1829-65 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 370.

¹⁷⁹ New York Times, 8 June 1860; Wendell Phillips, speech of 30 May 1860 in Boston, The Liberator (Boston), 8 June 1860. For more on Phillips’ criticism, see chapter 8 supra.

¹⁸⁰ “Lincoln and Slavery – Conservatism of the Republican Candidate,” New York Times, 4 September 1860.

¹⁸¹ Wendell Phillips, speech of 30 May 1860 in Boston, The Liberator (Boston), 8 June 1860.

¹⁸² “A Republican” to the editor, Northern Egyptian Line, Illinois, 14 June 1860, The Liberator (Boston), 29 June 1860.

The Connecticut antislavery editor Joseph Hawley indignantly protested against Phillips' attack on Lincoln. "I know Mr. Lincoln; he is not quite up to my standard," Hawley told the Massachusetts abolitionist orator, "but he has always been ahead of his neighbors; he has fought gallantly, honorably and unselfishly." Phillips' criticism of Lincoln made Hawley feel "really insulted, grossly wronged." Applying such "savage epithets" to Lincoln was worthy of an irresponsible Radical like Parker Pillsbury, but not of a gentleman, Hawley declared.¹⁸³ A "highly esteemed friend and long-time supporter" of the New York National Anti-Slavery Standard called Phillips' attack a "calumny against Lincoln."¹⁸⁴ The New York Tribune also protested against Phillips's "calumnious," "unfounded," "reckless," and "unmanly" condemnation of Lincoln's proposal to abolish slavery in Washington; his strictures were a "gross misrepresentation" that constituted "a slander."¹⁸⁵

A fellow Massachusetts abolitionist, Edward Lillie Pierce, gently but firmly disagreed with Phillips, describing Lincoln as "an able lawyer, a fair disputant and an honest man." Pierce asserted that "[f]ew public men of our time have in their discourses treated slavery as a wrong more logically and feelingly" than Lincoln. To be sure, he may have "a technical record in favor of legislation by Congress for the rendition of fugitive slaves," but so did Seward and John Quincy Adams. (The Albany Evening Journal echoed that point, stating that Lincoln's 1849 emancipation bill was "a project somewhat similar to those which were proposed by John Quincy Adams and Gov. Seward, and if there is any more reasonable and practicable way of legislating on the subject at all, we

¹⁸³ Joseph Hawley to Wendell Phillips, Hartford, 17 July 1860, fragment of a draft, Hawley Papers, Library of Congress. The letter is not in the Phillips Papers at Harvard.

¹⁸⁴ New York National Anti-Slavery Standard, 11 August 1860.

¹⁸⁵ New York Tribune, 4, 18 July 1860.

should like to hear it proposed.”¹⁸⁶ “Considering the community and associations among which he was reared & has lived,” Pierce concluded, “I think Lincoln stands as well as they [Seward and Adams] do on record. And whatever may have been his technical record, I believe that ‘he himself is right’!”¹⁸⁷

In September, when antislavery Radicals gathered in Worcester, Massachusetts, to choose an alternative to Lincoln, Thomas Wentworth Higginson (who styled himself “a rather radical Republican”) told the convention that “he was glad of the excellence of the Republican nominations for President and Governor [John A. Andrew], and intended, for himself, to go for them.”¹⁸⁸ Charles Sumner, the most radical antislavery member of the U.S. Senate, paid tribute to Lincoln as one “whose ability, so conspicuously shown in his own State, attracted at once the admiration of the whole country, whose character no breath has touched, and whose heart is large enough to embrace the broad Republic and all its people.”¹⁸⁹ Other abolitionists supporting Lincoln included Henry B. Stanton, Elizur Wright, Theodore Tilton, Sydney Howard Gay, Moncure D. Conway, William H. Burleigh, John Jay, George Luther Stearns, Richard Hinton, John Wallace Hutchinson, and David Lee Child.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Albany Evening Journal, 5 June 1860.

¹⁸⁷ Pierce to Phillips, Boston, 25 October 1860, Phillips Papers, Harvard University.

¹⁸⁸ Higginson to Charles Francis Adams, Worcester, 22 December 1860, Adams Family Papers; The Liberator (Boston), 28 September 1860; Tilden G. Edelstein, Strange Enthusiasm: A Life of Thomas Wentworth Higginson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 239.

¹⁸⁹ The Works of Charles Sumner (15 vols.; Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875-1883), 5:225.

¹⁹⁰ McPherson, Struggle for Equality, 14, 20-23; Lawrence B. Goodheart, Abolitionist, Actuary, Atheist: Elizur Wright and the Reform Impulse (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1990), 136, 151; Henry Mayer, All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 512.

The conservative New York Herald predicted that Phillips' speech exposing "the inconsistency and insincerity of 'honest Abe'" would seriously hurt the candidate.¹⁹¹ An Illinoisan reported that Radical Republicans in his state "find it very hard to support Lincoln, on account of his position on the fugitive slave law, slavery in the District of Columbia, the admission of slave states, &c. They think he is not so good as the Chicago platform, and too much like his political progenitor, Henry Clay."¹⁹²

REACTION AMONG MODERATES AND CONSERVATIVES

Moderate and conservative Republicans were more uniformly enthusiastic about Lincoln. Senator James Dixon of Connecticut, who disapproved of Lincoln's "house divided" speech, nevertheless said his selection was "as good a nomination as could have been made" and predicted that he would run well and "as a President he will be capable & incorruptible. . . . I know him well. He is a man of more than average talents – and as honest as the light of day."¹⁹³ Daniel Ullman, the Know Nothing candidate for governor of New York in 1856, praised Lincoln as the true heir of Henry Clay.¹⁹⁴ William L. Dayton of New Jersey declared that, except for slaveholders themselves, "he did not believe there was a man in the whole country more conservative in his views on the question of Slavery than Abraham Lincoln."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ "The Heavings of the Political Revolution," New York Herald, 17 July 1860.

¹⁹² Letter by "an intelligent gentleman in Illinois," n.d., n.p., in The Liberator (Boston), n.d., copied in the New York World, 8 August 1860.

¹⁹³ Dixon to Gideon Welles, Washington, 1 and 25 May 1860, Welles Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁹⁴ Daniel Ullman, speech of 16 July, New York Times, 17 July 1860.

¹⁹⁵ Speech by Dayton in New York, 19 September, New York Times, 20 September 1860.

Some Northern Democrats also had positive things to say about Lincoln. In New Hampshire they called him “a man of respectable character and talents” and complimented the Republicans on the “improvement they have made over 1856.”¹⁹⁶ In neighboring Massachusetts, a Democratic paper remarked that Lincoln’s nomination “is a strong one, and will be difficult to defeat, and those who flatter themselves that the Democrats are to walk over the Presidential course with ease will find themselves mistaken. The Convention at Chicago has given evidence of shrewdness, no less in the nomination of Mr. Lincoln than in the platform adopted, which is progressive without being ultra.”¹⁹⁷

Even some Southerners praised Lincoln. William L. Goggin, a prominent Virginia supporter of Bell, lauded his industry and character.¹⁹⁸ George D. Prentice, editor of the Louisville Journal, described the Republican standard bearer as “a genial, delightful, and high toned gentleman, whose pleasant hospitality we have enjoyed, and, although we think him in great error in some of his political opinions, we have as much confidence in his patriotism as we have in that of any man except ourselves.”¹⁹⁹ A dispatch from Louisville stated that in Kentucky Lincoln “is liked for his honesty and sincerity, his Democratic habits and manners, and his Henry Clay type of character.”²⁰⁰ The New Orleans Bee called Lincoln “a man of agreeable manners, a ready and forcible speaker,

¹⁹⁶ Manchester Union Democrat, 22 May 1860.

¹⁹⁷ Boston Herald, n.d., copied in the Concord, N.H., Independent Democrat, 24 May 1860.

¹⁹⁸ William L. Goggin, quoted in the New York Tribune, 4 September 1860.

¹⁹⁹ Louisville Journal, n.d., copied in the Cincinnati Commercial, 11 June 1860. To his friend Walter Q. Gresham, Prentice said that “he believes Mr. Lincoln is an honest, good man, wise and conservative.” Walter Q. Gresham to Matilda Gresham, Indianapolis, 7 January 1861, Matilda Gresham, Life of Walter Quintin Gresham, 1832-1895 (2 vols.; Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1919), 1:128.

²⁰⁰ Louisville correspondence by “Pontiac,” 26 May, New York Times, 2 June 1860.

self-made and self-taught, and personally popular among the burly sons of the West.”²⁰¹

Douglas also lauded his opponent: “Lincoln and I have called each other some pretty hard names on the stump, but I’ll do him justice. He is an honest, able and very popular man,” a “very clever fellow; a kind-hearted, good-natured, amiable man. I have not the heart to say anything against Abe Lincoln; I have fought him so long that I have a respect for him. . . . I would not permit, without rebuke, any Democrat to say an unkind or disrespectful word about him.”²⁰² To the speaker of the U.S. House, the Little Giant stated: “I have competed with the most distinguished men in the country and I say the hardest man to beat I ever had to meet in combat, was Abraham Lincoln.”²⁰³ When it was speculated that the election might be thrown into the House of Representatives because no candidate would win a majority of the electoral votes, Douglas exclaimed: “By God, sir, the election shall never go into the House – before it shall go into the House, I will throw it over to Lincoln.”²⁰⁴ Lincoln returned the compliment, telling a journalist that with Douglas “he has had personally only the most friendly relations, for, notwithstanding their public argumentative and political contests, there has never been any quarrel between them.” He also praised John Bell as “an honorable, high-toned gentleman” and Breckinridge “as a man of considerable ability, who can make a scathing speech when occasion demands.”²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ New Orleans Bee, n.d., copied in the Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 13 June 1860.

²⁰² Washington correspondence, 20 May, New York Evening Post, 21 May 1860; speech at Manchester, New Hampshire, Cincinnati Commercial, 8 August 1860.

²⁰³ William Pennington, speech at Jersey City, 9 August, Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 16 August 1860.

²⁰⁴ Douglas allegedly said this to Congressman Edward McPherson, who told the story to Alfred E. Lewis. Lewis to an unidentified correspondent, Philadelphia, 23 July 1860, Raleigh, N.C., Standard, n.d., copied in the New York Times, 28 October 1860.

²⁰⁵ Springfield correspondence, 4 September, New York Evening Post, 8 September 1860.

FORMAL NOTIFICATION

Lincoln was correct in assessing his wife's enthusiasm about the nomination. As the exceedingly ambitious Mary Lincoln and the rest of Springfield anxiously awaited the news from Chicago, she "said she thought she had more interest and concern in whom the Chicago convention nominated than her husband."²⁰⁶ A Springfield clergyman believed that Mrs. Lincoln would be so puffed up with pride that she "ought to be sent to the cooper's and well secured against bursting with iron hoops."²⁰⁷ Her childhood dream of becoming First Lady of the land was about to come true.

Mary Lincoln busily prepared for the arrival of an official delegation notifying her husband of his selection. Reaching the capital before the others was an advance party of that committee, including Ebenezer Peck, who suggested to some Springfielders that Mrs. Lincoln should be informed that her presence when the committee called would be inappropriate. Because they feared to confront her, the townsfolk replied: "Go up and tell her yourself."²⁰⁸ When Peck, along with Gustave Koerner, called at the Lincolns' house, they were taken aback by the sight of brandy decanters, a champagne basket, and glasses, cakes, and sandwiches all spread out. (The alcoholic beverages had been provided by Lincoln's neighbors "to enable him to offer what they conceived was proper to these

²⁰⁶ Reminiscences of John H. Littlefield in "Abe Lincoln's Wisdom," unidentified clipping, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne.

²⁰⁷ Albert Hale to Theron Baldwin, Springfield, 31 May 1860, in Burlingame, ed., Oral History of Lincoln, 155-56n31.

²⁰⁸ Henry J. Raymond's dispatch, Auburn, 22 May, New York Times, 24 May 1860; interviews with John Bunn, [15 October 1914?] and 21 November 1916, Jesse W. Weik, The Real Lincoln: A Portrait, ed. Michael Burlingame (1922; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 319, 322. Cf. Bunn's reminiscences in the Chicago Tribune, 12 February 1900. According to Bailey S. Dawson, Bunn arranged to have the event catered by a Mr. Doul. Springfield, Illinois, Register, 12 February 1911.

distinguished guests.”²⁰⁹ A black servant explained that the refreshments were for the committee. When Mrs. Lincoln came in and asked Koerner and Peck what they thought of the repast she was providing for her guests, they “told her at once that this would hardly do. This meeting of the committee would be a somewhat solemn business. Several, perhaps, of the Eastern men were strictly temperance people, and they might think treating the committee would not be the proper thing.” Koerner recalled that Mary Lincoln “remonstrated in her very lively manner, but we insisted on dispensing with this hospitality, which we appreciated ourselves, but which might be misconstrued. I finally told the black man bluntly to take the things out into the back room, which he did. But Mrs. Lincoln still argued with us. Lincoln, being in the parlor opposite, came in, and, learning of the trouble, said: ‘Perhaps, Mary, these gentlemen are right. After all is over, we may see about it, and some may stay and have a good time.’”²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ A committee member said that Lincoln’s “neighbors, knowing that Mr. Lincoln was a strict temperance man, at once dispatched their servants with waiters covered with bottles of wine, brandy, whisky, &c., Mr. Lincoln met these servants who had the charge of these refreshments, and requested them to say to his friends and neighbors that he duly appreciated their kindness, but he could not consent to violate a long established rule of conduct and he should treat his guests with plentiful draughts of delicious and pure ice water.” Baltimore Patriot, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 25 May 1860.

²¹⁰ Thomas J. McCormack, ed., Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, 1809-1896 (2 vols.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1909), 2:93-94. There are several versions of this story. Norman B. Judd recalled that after the convention, “myself and — [the name omitted was perhaps George Ashmun] came down to Springfield with the Committee sent to notify Lincoln. While the Committee went on to the hotel to brush off the dust we jumped off at the junction and ran across to Mr. Lincoln’s house where we found that Mrs. L. had spread out a lunch with champagne and liquors &c. I tell you I made her hustle those liquors out of there mighty fast.” Judd’s interview with John G. Nicolay, Washington, 28 February 1876, in Burlingame, ed., Oral History of Lincoln, 46. George Ashmun told a different story to his secretary: Ashmun had gone to the house by himself to check on arrangements. “When Mr. Ashmun was ushered into the house he found Mr. Lincoln walking back and forth with his hands behind him. He stopped and shook hands with Mr. Ashmun, who he knew, having served in congress with him. Mr. Ashmun then said, ‘Mr. Lincoln there seems to be something troubling you.’ ‘Yes’ replied Mr. Lincoln, ‘The trouble is that my good neighbors, knowing that I never have anything intoxicating in my house, have sent in quantities of wine and other liquors, saying they would be needed in entertaining your committee and I don’t know what to do about it.’” Mr. Ashmun replied saying, ‘Send it all back with your compliments and serve the committee with cold water,’ and as Mr. Ashmun told me, ‘This was done.’” Wheeler A. Tracy to George P. Hambrecht, Madison, Wisconsin, 4 December 1924, Hambrecht Papers, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. Yet another version of this story can be found in Charles C. Coffin, Four Years of Fighting: A Volume of Personal Observation with the Army and Navy, from the First Battle of Bull Run to the Fall of Richmond (Boston: Ticknor and

When the committee arrived on the evening of May 19, Mrs. Lincoln, in a fancy low-neck dress, came sweeping into the parlor.²¹¹ Lincoln was less fashionably attired, looking “ungainly in his black suit of apparently new but ill-fitting clothes, his long tawny neck emerging gauntly from his turn-down collar, his melancholy eyes sunken deep in his haggard face.” He “did not present the appearance of a statesman.”²¹² A journalist remembered that Lincoln “bowed, but it was not gracefully done. There was an evident constraint and embarrassment. He stood erect, in a stiff and unnatural position, with downcast eyes. There was a diffidence like that of an ungainly school-boy standing alone before a critical audience.”²¹³ According to Roland W. Diller, Lincoln “feared the result of the august body’s call. He regarded it as unnecessary and foolish. He complained to his friends that he had no idea what to say to the gentlemen.”²¹⁴ One of the committeemen reported that Lincoln was “a very awkward looking man,” though “you realize at once that it is the awkwardness of genius rather than any proof of the lack of it.” The candidate, he added, “was a far better looking man” than available images suggested, and Mary Lincoln “is a very ladylike and quite good looking person.”²¹⁵

Fields, 1866), 31-32. Lincoln reported that no alcohol was served to the committee. Lincoln to J. Madison Haight, Springfield, 11 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:75.

²¹¹ Interview with John Bunn, [15 October 1914?], Weik, Real Lincoln, ed. Burlingame, 319.

²¹² The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz (3 vols.; New York: McClure, 1907-08), 2:188. A journalist more favorably impressed with the candidate reported that he “was dressed with perfect neatness” and “stood erect, displaying to excellent advantage his tall and manly figure.” Springfield correspondence, 19 May, Chicago Journal, 22 May 1860.

²¹³ Charles C. Coffin in Allen Thorndike Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time (New York: North American Review, 1886), 168-69.

²¹⁴ Roland W. Diller’s recollections, in Paul Hull, “Lincoln in Springfield,” New York Mail and Express, 8 February 1896, p. 15

²¹⁵ James G. Blaine to his family, Springfield, 20 May 1860, Blaine Papers, Library of Congress.

Gideon Welles told his wife that the Lincolns received the delegation “pleasantly and with unaffected diffidence, that does them credit.”²¹⁶

George Ashmun, the head of the delegation, “announced the errand in a few brief, explanatory remarks,” to which Lincoln listened “with the utmost attention.”²¹⁷ Voicing his thanks, the nominee modestly declared that he was “[d]eeply, and even painfully sensible of the great responsibility which is inseparable from that honor – a responsibility which I could almost wish had fallen upon some one of the far more eminent men and experienced statesmen whose distinguished names were before the Convention.” He promised to consider carefully the proffered nomination and reply soon in writing.²¹⁸

Four years later, Congressman William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania recalled that as Lincoln “uttered the first sentence, a smile played round his large mouth, his eyes lit up, and his face declared the nature which we have learned in some measure to comprehend and revere.”²¹⁹ Ashmun remarked that the scene “was well calculated to try the power of self-possession of any man in his situation; but the dignity and composure with which he spoke made a most marked and favorable impression upon every person present.” All the guests felt “perfectly at home in his presence.” Those who had worried about Lincoln’s reputed lack of polish “were at once set at ease on that score. No diplomatic interview could have been conducted with more becoming propriety; and when the formalities were over, all possible fears of chill upon the party were at once scattered by the personal introduction that followed.” After an hour and a half of agreeable talk, the committee

²¹⁶ Gideon Welles to his wife, Chicago, 20 May 1860, Welles Papers, Library of Congress.

²¹⁷ Ashmun’s dispatch, dated Springfield, 19 May, Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, 23 May 1860.

²¹⁸ Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:51.

²¹⁹ Kelley, speech before the Philadelphia Girls’ High and Normal School, Philadelphia Telegraph, 26 April 1865. Cf. Kelley in Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Lincoln, 256-60.

withdrew “with an increased estimate of the man.”²²⁰ George G. Fogg was impressed by “the unerring quickness with which he recognized every man whom he had, though ever so casually, met before, and the distinctness with which he recollected the time and place of such meeting.”²²¹

During the exchange of pleasantries, Lincoln asked Kelley his height. When the congressman replied six feet three inches, the candidate said he was six feet four inches. “Then,” Kelley remarked, “Pennsylvania bows to Illinois. My dear man, for years my heart has been aching for a President that I could look up to, and I’ve found him at last in the land where we thought there was none but little giants.”²²² (Months later, when Kelley asked permission to dedicate to him his two-volume treatise on international law, Lincoln consented so long as “the inscription may be in modest terms, not representing me as a man of great learning, or a very extraordinary one in any respect.”)²²³

After leaving, the committee members expressed relief and gratification.²²⁴ Kelley declared: “Well, we might have done a more brilliant thing, but we could hardly have done a better thing.”²²⁵ A New Englander observed: “I was afraid I should meet a gigantic rail-splitter, with the manners of a flatboatman, and the ugliest face in creation;

²²⁰ Ashmun’s dispatch, dated Springfield, 19 May 1860, Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, 21 May 1860.

²²¹ Springfield correspondence by G[eorge] G. F[ogg], 21 May, Independent Democrat (Concord, New Hampshire), 31 May 1860.

²²² Springfield correspondence, 19 May, Chicago Journal, 22 May 1860. Also see Coffin in Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Lincoln, 168-69.

²²³ Lincoln to Kelley, Springfield, Springfield, 13 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:127.

²²⁴ Shelby M. Cullom, Fifty Years of Public Service: Personal Recollections of Shelby M. Cullom, Senior United States Senator from Illinois (Chicago: McClurg, 1911), 89.

²²⁵ Schurz, Reminiscences, 2:188.

and he's a complete gentleman."²²⁶ Another New Englander, George Boutwell, said of Lincoln's brief remarks: "nothing could have been more elegant and appropriate."²²⁷ Boutwell's fellow Massachusetts delegate, John A. Andrew, told a campaign rally in Boston that Lincoln "has a countenance which bespeaks the benignity and beauty of a noble soul. My eyes were never visited with the vision of a human face, in which more transparent honesty, and more benignant kindness were combined with more of the intellect and firmness which belong to masculine humanity. I would trust my case with the honesty, and with the intellect and with the heart and with the brain of Abraham Lincoln as a lawyer; and I would trust my country's cause in the hands of Abraham Lincoln as its Chief Magistrate."²²⁸ Amos Tuck also found Lincoln's face "captivating."²²⁹

Not all were so favorably impressed. According to Carl Schurz, some committeemen "could not quite conceal their misgivings as to how this single-minded man, this child of nature, would bear himself in the contact with the great world and in the face of the large and complicated problems, for grappling with which he had apparently so scant an equipment."²³⁰ Especially skeptical was Edwin D. Morgan, who expressed shock when the committee was greeted by Willie and Tad Lincoln, looking

²²⁶ Springfield correspondence, 19 May, Chicago Journal, 22 May 1860. Also see Coffin in Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Lincoln, 168-69.

²²⁷ Boutwell said this to Newton Bateman. Bateman, Abraham Lincoln: An Address (Galesburg, Illinois: Cadmus Club, 1899), 29.

²²⁸ John A. Andrew, speech of 25 May 1860 in Faneuil Hall, Chicago Press and Tribune, 30 May 1860.

²²⁹ Amos Tuck to his daughters Abby and Ellen, Springfield, 20 May 1860, Benjamin Brown French Family Papers, Library of Congress.

²³⁰ Schurz, Reminiscences, 2:188-89.

like ragamuffins.²³¹ Others shared their fear. Robert H. Morris of Chicago called Lincoln “honest, well-meaning & amiable,” but with insufficient backbone. “In trying to please everybody he may fail to satisfy anybody. – From my own knowledge of the man I should say, if elected it will be very hard work for him to be President.”²³² Connecticut Senator James Dixon, who had served in Congress with Lincoln, said privately: “I think he is rather credulous & unsuspecting, and may possibly be exposed to the craft & cunning of men, who professing honesty, may take advantage of him.”²³³ A Springfield Democrat disagreed with this assessment, arguing that “any man, born and bred in the West, and engaged in political life so long as has been Mr. Lincoln, surrounded by all the temptation to rascality and sharp dealing of Western life, coming out unscathed, and with unblemished reputation for integrity must have not only a will, but one that is very determined.”²³⁴

Most committee members took supper at a hotel, but the Pennsylvania delegation, which had come down with the committee, returned to the house at Eighth and Jackson Streets for another reception, where Judge John W. Shaffer gave a speech to which Lincoln responded.²³⁵

The visitors, who had been met at the train station by “an immense concourse of the people” greeting them with “round after round of electrifying cheers,” departed amid

²³¹ Roland W. Diller’s recollections, in Paul Hull, “Lincoln in Springfield,” New York Mail and Express, 8 February 1896, p. 15

²³² Robert H. Morris to Hamilton Fish, Chicago, 21 May 1860, Fish Papers, Library of Congress.

²³³ Dixon to Gideon Welles, Washington, 1 and 25 May 1860, Welles Papers, Library of Congress. Publicly Dixon was more positive about the candidate, whom he called “a man of spotless integrity,” a “close and logical reasoner” possessing “wonderful powers of condensation.” Dixon’s speech, 27 July, New York Tribune, 30 July 1860.

²³⁴ Letter by an unidentified author to “Rev. and Dear Sir,” Springfield, 24 October, New York Times, 6 November 1860.

²³⁵ Henry J. Raymond’s dispatch, Auburn, 22 May, New York Times, 24 May 1860.

similar rejoicing. Springfielders celebrated till nearly midnight. “The principal streets were ablaze with illuminations,” John Hay reported. “Bonfires flamed and roared in public places, and bursting rockets paled the splendor of the calm May star-light.”²³⁶

As he composed his acceptance letter, Lincoln heard from several leaders urging him to placate the Know Nothings. Papers like the Boston Atlas and the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser deplored the so-called Dutch planks.²³⁷ E. B. Washburne warned that the “Pennsylvanians, of American proclivities, are somewhat troubled by the Anti-[Know Nothing] planks, and they have appealed to me to write you and suggest that in your letter of acceptance you say nothing about the platform, so they can support you, without committing themselves to those planks. I really think the suggestions are worth considering.”²³⁸ In Indiana, his old friend from congressional days, Richard W. Thompson, followed suit.²³⁹ Ignoring such counsel, Lincoln wrote a short formal letter of acceptance in which he endorsed the entire party platform: “The declaration of principles and sentiments, which accompanies your letter, meets my approval; and it shall be my care not to violate, or disregard it, in any part. Imploring the assistance of Divine Providence, and with due regard to the views and feelings of all who were represented in the convention; to the rights of all the states, and territories, and people of the nation; to the inviolability of the constitution, and the perpetual union, harmony, and prosperity of

²³⁶ Springfield correspondence by John Hay, 21 May, Providence, Rhode Island, Journal, 26 May 1860, in Michael Burlingame, ed., Lincoln’s Journalist: John Hay’s Anonymous Writings for the Press, 1860-1864 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 2-3.

²³⁷ Boston Atlas and the Buffalo Commercial Advertiser copied in the Illinois State Register (Springfield), 7 June 1860.

²³⁸ E. B. Washburne to Lincoln, Washington, 20 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. A correspondent for a Philadelphia paper made a similar appeal. James E. Harvey to Lincoln, Washington, 21 May 1860, ibid.

²³⁹ John D. Defrees to Lincoln, Washington, 26 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

all, I am most happy to co-operate for the practical success of the principles declared by the convention.”²⁴⁰

Democrats sneered that this letter brimmed with “all the anti-slavery venom of his party.”²⁴¹

FRONT PORCH CAMPAIGN

Publishers scrambled to meet the great demand for information about the little-known Republican candidate, who at first was often referred to as Abram Lincoln.²⁴² Thurlow Weed’s suggestion that Charles G. Halpine be given the task of writing a campaign biography came to nothing.²⁴³ The most informative of the thirteen campaign lives that did appear in 1860 were by William Dean Howells, a young Ohio journalist who was to achieve literary fame, and by John Locke Scripps, editor of the Chicago Press and Tribune and a good friend of Lincoln.²⁴⁴

For Howells, Scripps, and other authors, Lincoln prepared an autobiographical sketch which, though brief, was longer than the one he had drafted in 1859 for Jesse W. Fell. In this political document he said little about slavery, other than to reproduce his

²⁴⁰ Lincoln to George Ashmun, Springfield, 23 May 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:52. When Lincoln showed a draft of this letter to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Newton Bateman, the latter recommended that he not split an infinitive. (He had written “it shall be my care to not violate it.”) “Oh,” said Lincoln, “you think I’d better turn those two little fellows [i.e., not and to] end for end, eh?” He took Bateman’s advice. Bateman, Lincoln, 30-32.

²⁴¹ William B. Reed to Thomas B. Stevenson, Philadelphia, 11 June 1860, T. B. Stevenson Papers, Cincinnati Historical Society.

²⁴² Lincoln to George Ashmun, Springfield, 4 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 68.

²⁴³ Halpine alienated Weed by supporting Greeley in the public quarrel that broke out soon after the Chicago Convention. William Hanchett, Irish: Charles G. Halpine in Civil War America (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1970) 30-32.

²⁴⁴ Edward J. Wessen, “Campaign Lives of Abraham Lincoln, 1860: An Annotated Bibliography,” Papers in Illinois History and Transactions for the Year 1937 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1938), 188-220.

1837 resolution denouncing the peculiar institution as based on “injustice and bad policy” and assert that his views had not changed since then. He devoted much more space to his Mexican War stand, correctly assuming that the Democrats would once again attack his record on that conflict.²⁴⁵ In addition to relying on that autobiographical sketch, Scripps sought to interview Lincoln about his life. At first the candidate was reluctant to cooperate, telling his would-be biographer: “it is a great piece of folly to attempt to make anything out of my early life. It can all be condensed into a single sentence and that sentence you will find in Gray’s Elogy: ‘The short and simple annals of the poor.’ That’s my life, and that’s all you or any one else can make of it.”²⁴⁶ Nevertheless he told Scripps much about his life that was then incorporated into the campaign biography, making it virtually an autobiography.²⁴⁷ Hastily the busy editor churned out ninety-six pages of copy, only to be instructed by his New York publisher (Horace Greeley’s Tribune) to reduce it to thirty-two pages. After reluctantly making wholesale cuts, he apologized to Lincoln for the “sadly botched” final section, which was trimmed at the last minute. Amusingly he instructed the candidate that if he had not read Plutarch’s Lives, he should do so immediately, for the biography asserted that he had read it in his youth!²⁴⁸ Earlier Scripps had written a 4000-word biographical sketch for the Chicago Press and Tribune which he used as the basis for his campaign life. That biography lacked a

²⁴⁵ Autobiography written for John L. Scripps, [ca. June 1860], Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:60-67; Cairo Gazette, n.d., copied in the Illinois State Register (Springfield), 21 August 1860; “Mr. Lincoln and the Mexican War,” Illinois State Register (Springfield), 2 June 1860.

²⁴⁶ Scripps to Herndon, Chicago, 24 June 1865, Wilson and Davis, eds., Herndon’s Informants, 57. He reportedly said something to the same effect on the day he was nominated. Charles S. Zane, “Lincoln as I Knew Him,” Sunset 29 (October 1912), reprinted in the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society 14 (1921-22): 82.

²⁴⁷ Scripps to William Herndon, n.p., 20 June 1865, in Grace Locke Scripps Dyche, “John Lock Scripps, Lincoln’s Campaign Biographer,” Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society 17 (1924): 346.

²⁴⁸ Scripps to Lincoln, Chicago 11 and 17 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

sentence that had appeared in his newspaper article: “A friend says that once, when in a towering rage in consequence of the efforts of certain parties to perpetrate a fraud on the State, he was heard to say ‘They shan’t do it, d—n ’em!’”²⁴⁹ Evidently it was thought advisable to play down Lincoln’s capacity for anger, which was formidable.²⁵⁰

Like Scripps’s biography, William Dean Howells’s was enriched by interviews. They were conducted by a research assistant, James Quay Howard, who visited Springfield and talked briefly with Lincoln and at greater length with several of his friends.²⁵¹ When the publisher, Follett and Foster of Columbus Ohio (who had issued the Lincoln-Douglas debates earlier that year) advertised it as an “authorized by Mr. Lincoln,” the candidate protested vigorously. To Samuel Galloway he complained about Follett and Foster: “I have scarcely been so much astounded by anything, as by their public announcement that it is authorized by me.” He had, he said, made himself “tiresome, if not hoarse, with repeating to Mr. Howard” that he “authorized nothing – would be responsible for nothing.” He would not endorse a biography unless he thoroughly reviewed and corrected it, which he was then unable to do. He could not obey the advice of all his “discreet friends” to make no public statements while simultaneously approving a campaign life for his opponents “to make points on without end.” If he were to do so, “the convention would have a right to reassemble” and name another candidate.²⁵² To maintain deniability, Lincoln refused to read the manuscript of any

²⁴⁹ “Lincoln as He Is,” Chicago Press and Tribune, 23 May 1860.

²⁵⁰ On Lincoln’s anger, see Michael Burlingame, The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 147-209.

²⁵¹ Howard’s interview notes are in the Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁵² Lincoln to Samuel Galloway, Springfield, 19 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:79-80.

campaign biography. He had his friends at the Illinois State Journal run a disclaimer and his secretary write letters of protest both to Howard and to Follett and Foster.²⁵³

That secretary was the industrious, efficient John G. Nicolay, a twenty-eight-year-old, German-born journalist from Pike County who since 1857 had been clerking for secretary of state Ozias M. Hatch. A week before the Chicago Convention he had helped build support for Lincoln's candidacy in an elaborate article comparing his record on slavery with Henry Clay's, arguing that they were very similar.²⁵⁴ He probably did so at the suggestion of the would-be candidate, who may have written the piece. Since 1858, Nicolay had been writing occasional articles for the Missouri Democrat of St. Louis; he filed a long report on the Chicago Convention for that newspaper.²⁵⁵ Shortly after that conclave, Lincoln told Hatch: "I wish I could find some young man to help me with my correspondence. It is getting so heavy I can't handle it. I can't afford to pay much, but the practice is worth something." When Hatch recommended Nicolay, Lincoln found it easy to accept the advice, for he regarded the young man as "entirely trust-worthy" and had often conversed and played chess with him in Hatch's office, which served as an informal Republican headquarters. Nicolay had hoped to be given the task of writing a campaign biography and was "filled with jealous rage" when Howells was chosen.²⁵⁶ He was

²⁵³ Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 15 June 1860; John G. Nicolay to Follett and Foster, Springfield, 15 June 1860, and to James Q. Howard, 19 June 1860, Michael Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House: Letters, Memoranda, and Other Writings of John G. Nicolay, 1860-1865 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 2-4.

²⁵⁴ Pike County Journal (Pittsfield), 10 May 1860. I am grateful to Warren Winston for calling this item to my attention.

²⁵⁵ Using the pen name Pike, Nicolay wrote articles that appeared in the Missouri Democrat on January 12, June 17 and 28, July 19, and October 11, 1858; and May 23, 1860.

²⁵⁶ Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, xv-xvi.

solaced when Lincoln hired him at \$75 per month, for he vastly admired his employer, who served as a kind of surrogate father to the orphaned Nicolay.²⁵⁷

As time passed and the correspondence grew heavier, Nicolay required help. To the committee covering Lincoln's extra expenses, Milton Hay proposed his young nephew John Hay, saying that he had "great literary talent and great tact." John had been studying law with his uncle, who said that he "will never make a lawyer" but he "may be a poet some day, and he can at least write good English." The committee agreed to the suggestion, and the twenty-three-year-old Hay, a suave, sophisticated graduate of Brown University with a touch of the poet and a reputation for "humorous gayety," began assisting Nicolay, who had been his school chum in Pittsfield.²⁵⁸ Both young men were to accompany Lincoln to Washington, where they served as his private secretaries. During the campaign, Hay composed occasional press dispatches under the pen name of "Ecarte."²⁵⁹

Lincoln himself wrote few letters, in part because friends urged him to remain silent lest he, like Henry Clay, ruin his presidential chances by seeming to modify earlier positions. James A. Briggs told him "as the gallant 'Harry of the West' struck himself down by writing letters to meddlers, I hope that if any Mourning owl politicians, write you letters, asking your opinions, You will let them wait for answers until the Jews are restored to their ancient Judea!" John B. Fry reminded Lincoln that "the 'cacoethes

²⁵⁷ John G. Nicolay to Therenia Bates, Springfield, 7 June 1860, Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 1; Burlingame, Inner World of Lincoln, 78.

²⁵⁸ John W. Bunn to Weik, Springfield, 20 July 1916, in Weik, Real Lincoln, ed. Burlingame, 320-21, 405 n25; Michael Burlingame, ed., At Lincoln's Side: John Hay's Civil War Correspondence and Selected Writings (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), xviii; William Dean Howells, Literary Friends and Acquaintance: A Personal Retrospect of American Authorship, ed. David F. Hiatt and Edwin H. Cady (1900; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 73.

²⁵⁹ Burlingame, ed., Lincoln's Journalist, 1-16; dispatches in the Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 13, 28 July; 11, 18 August; 3, 12 14, 15, 17, 19 September; 15, 22 October 1860.

scribendi' [evil habit of writing] killed Mr. Clay. . . . do not let it kill you." After reading his acceptance letter in the press, Richard W. Thompson appealed to Lincoln: "For God's sake and for your own, too, let me beg of you not to write another one for the papers. Let them take you just as you are and as a man takes his wife – for better or for worse. Letters can do you no good and may do harm." From William Cullen Bryant he received similar advice: "I am sure that I but express the wish of the vast majority of your friends when I say that they want you to make no speeches write no letters as a candidate, enter into no pledges, make no promises, nor even give any of those kind words which men are apt to interpret as promises."²⁶⁰

Heeding this counsel, Lincoln gave no public response to urgent appeals to speak out, especially on slavery. He had Nicolay reply to such requests with a form letter stating that friends had counseled him "to write nothing whatever upon any point of political doctrine. They say his positions were well known when he was nominated, and that he must not now embarrass the canvass by undertaking to shift or modify them."²⁶¹

The New York Times argued that any statement Lincoln made during the campaign "would have been justly open to the suspicion of having been said for effect: – while it could not have been stronger or more directly to the point than what he has already and repeatedly said, at a time when his motives were not open to any such construction."²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Joshua Giddings to Lincoln, Jefferson, Ohio, 19 June 1860; James A. Briggs to Lincoln, New York, 25 May 1860; John B. Fry to Lincoln, New York, 9 August 1860; Richard W. Thompson to Lincoln, Washington, 12 June 1860; William C. Bryant to Lincoln, New York, 16 June 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁶¹ Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:60. For Nicolay, Lincoln also prepared a polite form letter for those seeking biographical information.

²⁶² "Mr. Lincoln's Views on Slavery," New York Times, 5 November 1860.

This strategy did not sit well with all of Lincoln's correspondents, including Benjamin G. Wright, an Illinoisan who told his fellow Republicans that he was parting company with them because "the non-committalism of Mr. A. Lincoln makes it an imperative duty. Mr. Lincoln's right to pursue this policy is not questioned, but I do question its correctness, because it subverts our representative system of government."²⁶³

In dealing privately with requests for a clarification of his views, Lincoln seemed hypersensitive about appearing weak, timid, biddable, unmanly, or cowardly.²⁶⁴ One such appeal came from a Tennessean who wanted Lincoln to reassure the South that he would, if elected, not interfere with the peculiar institution. Lincoln gently but firmly declined, saying: "in my judgment, it would do no good. I have already done this many – many, times; and it is in print, and open to all who will read. Those who will not read, or heed, what I have already publicly said, would not read, or heed, a repetition of it. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'"²⁶⁵ To his Illinois friend George T. M. Davis, Lincoln made that point even more emphatically: "What is it I could say which would quiet alarm? Is it that no interference by the government, with slaves or slavery within the states, is intended? I have said this so often already, that a repetition of it is but mockery, bearing an appearance of weakness, and cowardice, which perhaps should be avoided. Why do not uneasy men read what I have already said? and what our platform says? If they will not read, or heed, then [these?], would they read, or heed, a repetition of them? Of course the declaration

²⁶³ Benjamin G. Wright to the editor, n.p., n.d., Rock Island Weekly Register, n.d., copied in the Rock Island Argus, n.d., copied in the Illinois State Register (Springfield), 20 August 1860.

²⁶⁴ David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (completed and edited by Don E. Fehrenbacher; New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 558.

²⁶⁵ Lincoln to William S. Speer, Springfield, 23 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:130.

that there is no intention to interfere with slaves or slavery, in the states, with all that is fairly implied in such declaration, is true; and I should have no objection to make, and repeat the declaration a thousand times, if there were not danger of encouraging bold bad men to believe they are dealing with one who can be scared into anything.”²⁶⁶

In stronger language still Lincoln conveyed a similar message to George Prentice of the Louisville Journal: “If I were to labor for a month, I could not express my conservative views and intentions more clearly and strongly, than they are expressed in our platform, and in my many speeches already in print, and before the public. And yet even you, who do occasionally speak of me in terms of personal kindness, give no prominence to these oft-repeated expressions of conservative views and intentions; but busy yourself with appeals to all conservative men, to vote for Douglas – to vote any way which can possibly defeat me – thus impressing your readers that you think, I am the very worst man living. If what I have already said has failed to convince you, no repetition of it would convince you. The writing of your letter, now before me, gives assurance that you would publish such a letter from me as you suggest; but, till now, what reason had I to suppose the Louisville Journal, even, would publish a repe[ti]tion of that which is already at it’s command, and which it does not press upon the pubic attention? And now my friend – for such I esteem you personally – do not misunderstand me. I have not decided that I will not do substantially what you suggest. I will not forbear doing so, merely on punctilio and pluck. If I do finally abstain, it will be because of apprehension that it would do harm. For the good men of the South – and I regard the majority of them as such – I have no objection to repeat seventy and seven times. But I have bad men also

²⁶⁶ Lincoln to George T. M. Davis, Springfield, 27 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:132-33.

to deal with, both North and South – men who are eager for something new to seize upon which to base new misrepresentations – men who would like to frighten me, or, at least, to fix upon me the character of timidity and cowardice. They would seize upon almost any letter I could write, as being an ‘awful coming down.’ I intend keeping my eye upon these gentlemen, and to not unnecessarily put any weapons in their hands.”²⁶⁷ Ultimately he did not comply with the Kentucky editor’s request. He did, however, tell a visitor from Louisiana “that he would dispel the illusion existing at the South, that he would have to send men from the Free States to fill the offices, by assuring him that there would be found plenty of persons at the South glad enough to get them, and that he had already received four hundred letters from the slave states begging office, a large and considerable portion of which came from Louisiana.”²⁶⁸

Protectionists also nagged Lincoln for a public avowal of his tariff views. To James E. Harvey he explained that in 1844 he had served as an elector for Henry Clay and had sat on a committee that wrote a resolution favoring protective tariffs. But, he asked, “after all, was it really any more than the tariff plank of our present platform? And does not my acceptance pledge me to that? And am I at liberty to do more, if I were inclined?”²⁶⁹ (Harvey’s newspaper, the Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, heaped praise on Lincoln’s tariff stand.)²⁷⁰ He made a similar response to a gentleman with the improbable name of G. Yoke Tams, who had asked bluntly about his

²⁶⁷ Lincoln to George D. Prentice, Springfield, 29 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:134-35.

²⁶⁸ New Orleans Louisianian, n.d., copied in the Chicago Press and Tribune, 3 November 1860.

²⁶⁹ Lincoln to James E. Harvey, Springfield, 2 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:125.

²⁷⁰ “Mr. Lincoln and the Tariff,” Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, 6 November 1860.

stand on the tariff. After patiently reiterating his support of the Republican party platform, he added: “Now, if I were to publicly shift this position, by adding or subtracting anything, the convention would have the right, and probably would be inclined, to displace me as their candidate. And I feel confident that you, on reflection, would not wish me to give private assurances to be seen by some, and kept secret from others.”²⁷¹ Early in the campaign said that “the tariff subject must be touched lightly. My speeches in favor of a Protective Tariff would please Pennsylvania and offend W. C. Bryant in the same degree. It is like the case of three men who had nothing to cover them but a blanket only sufficient to cover two. When No 1 pulled it on himself he pulled it off No. 3.”²⁷²

Lincoln refused speaking invitations as well as requests that he publish his views. The National Republican Campaign Committee told him that he should follow the traditional custom of staying quietly at home during the campaign lest he appear to be an undignified “stump candidate.”²⁷³ Douglas, however, traveled throughout the country, denouncing Republicans and pro-secessionist Southerners alike, alleging that Congress had no constitutional right to exclude slavery from the Territories (thus ignoring the Northwest Ordinance and the Missouri Compromise), and insisting that settlers in the Territories had as much right to govern themselves as the inhabitants of the states (thus ignoring the provision of the Constitution authorizing Congress to regulate affairs in the

²⁷¹ Lincoln to G. Yoke Tams, Springfield, 22 September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:119.

²⁷² James Q. Howard’s notes of an interview with Lincoln, ca. May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁷³ Lincoln to George G. Fogg, Springfield, 14 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:94; George G. Fogg to Lincoln, New York, 18 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lyman Trumbull to Zachariah Chandler, Springfield, 3 September 1860, Chandler Papers, Library of Congress.

Territories).²⁷⁴ Because political etiquette dictated that the office should seek the man rather than the man the office, the Little Giant protested to crowds that “I am not canvassing. I’m only showing you how you can preserve the integrity of the Union and Constitution by supporting this great principle of non-intervention.”²⁷⁵ He boasted that “Lincoln is under great obligations to me,” for the Republicans “would never have dreamed of taking up Lincoln as a candidate for the Presidency, if I had not brought him into notice by beating him in Illinois.” The Rail-splitter also owed a debt of gratitude to the pro-Breckinridge forces, said Douglas, for “if they had not bolted I would have beaten Lincoln in every State of the Union except Vermont and Massachusetts.”²⁷⁶ If Lincoln actually did win, Douglas pledged to help impeach and hang him “higher than Virginia hung John Brown” if he violated the Constitution or made “war upon the rights of any State or any section.”²⁷⁷ The Little Giant criticized Lincoln’s taciturnity: “The Republicans have asked me a great many [questions], and got more answers than they wished they had. After answering their questions I have turned to them and asked them to propound the same questions to their own candidates. I said to a leading republican the other day, who asked me questions on the stand, that I would answer them unequivocally, and then would like to have him propound them to Lincoln. Why is this not done?”²⁷⁸

In response, the Illinois State Journal scathingly remarked: “in the whole history of the country, no other candidate for the Presidency ever degraded himself by such a

²⁷⁴ Johannsen, Douglas, 778-807; Douglas’s speeches at St. Louis, 20 October, and Fort Wayne, Indiana, Washington States and Union, 25 and 10 October 1860.

²⁷⁵ Norwich, Connecticut, Bulletin, [22 August 1860], copied in the New York World, 27 August 1860.

²⁷⁶ Douglas’s speech in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Washington States and Union, 10 October 1860.

²⁷⁷ Douglas’s speech at Baltimore, Washington States and Union, 8 September 1860.

²⁷⁸ Speech in Chicago, 5 October, Illinois State Register (Springfield), 8 October 1860.

course as Mr. Douglas is now pursuing. No other candidate ever traveled about the country, delivering partisan harangues. . . . Mr. Douglas is doing what Mr. Lincoln would scorn to do. His regard for the proprieties of his position, as well as his respect for the intelligence of the American people, alike forbid his entering into the campaign.”²⁷⁹ Many others condemned Douglas’s unorthodox campaign tactics.²⁸⁰

The election hinged on the Fillmore voters of 1856, especially in Indiana and Pennsylvania, where gubernatorial contests were to be held in October, and also in New York. Lincoln realized that he must win over men like “the great high priest of Know-nothingism,” James O. Putnam, the postmaster at Buffalo and a close friend of Millard Fillmore.²⁸¹ Putnam, said Lincoln, resembled Weed: “these men ask for just, the same thing – fairness, and fairness only.”²⁸² In time Putnam came to admire Lincoln vastly, calling him “one of the most remarkable speakers of English, living.” For “logical eloquence, straight-forwardness, clearness of statement, sincerity that commands your admiration and assent, and a compact stren[g]th of argument,” Lincoln was “infinitely superior to Douglas,” he thought.²⁸³ As for Bell, Putnam acknowledged that the Tennessean “has the respect and confidence of every man of American antecedents, but of what earthly service can 20,000 or 30,000 votes be to him in New York?” Putnam deserted the Bell forces because “he saw no chance for them to carry the Northern States, and his only hope in defeating the Democratic party, and thereby promoting the interests

²⁷⁹ Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 24 and 30 July 1860.

²⁸⁰ Johannsen, Douglas, 781.

²⁸¹ Albany Argus, 15 September 1860, in Richard J. Carwardine, Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 430n90.

²⁸² Lincoln to Leonard Swett, Springfield, 30 May 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:57.

²⁸³ Putnam to Leonard Swett, n.p., n.d., copied in Swett to Lincoln, n.p., [July 1860], Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

of the country, was in a union with the Republicans upon the Chicago platform and nominees.”²⁸⁴ (As president, Lincoln was to name Putnam consul at Le Havre.) In Putnam’s hometown of Buffalo, the leading American party newspaper praised Lincoln for qualities lacking in the corrupt Republican legislature at Albany. “Mr. Lincoln’s nomination . . . guarantees executive honesty. It assures us that no bargains have been made, no greedy disposition of the spoils already accomplished. His principles are our principles. We only differ from Republicans in the relative importance attached to the Slavery issue and in having perhaps a larger faith in the final triumph of the right. Thus holding, thus satisfied of the honesty of the party with which we act, we are unreserved in our support of Lincoln and Hamlin.”²⁸⁵ Commenting on this endorsement, Washington Hunt, a leading conservative, said that the editor’s view of Lincoln, “unsound and fallacious as it is, operates upon many persons who are disposed to follow the current and take refuge in what they consider a strong and prosperous party.”²⁸⁶ Other American party members shared the belief that voting for Bell would be futile, while electing Lincoln would rebuke the hated Democrats.²⁸⁷ The Know Nothings were “so jubilant over the defeat of Seward that all go in for the ticket,” noted another Buffalo Republican.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ Letter by Putnam to the Republicans of Wyoming, New York, n.d., Albany Evening Journal, 12 July 1860; speech by Putnam at Fredonia, N.Y., New York Tribune, 5 June 1860. See also Putnam’s public letter, Fredonia, 13 July 1860, New York Tribune, 17 July 1860.

²⁸⁵ Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 6 June 1860.

²⁸⁶ Washington Hunt to John Bell, Lockport, 24 May 1860, John Bell Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁷ Washington Hunt to John Bell, Lockport, 7 June 1860, John Bell Papers, Library of Congress; Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, 19 May, copied in the Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 23 May 1860.

²⁸⁸ James Sheldon to Elihu B. Washburne, Buffalo, 21 May 1860, Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Library of Congress.

Lincoln was disappointed by the opposition of John J. Crittenden, who warned that although the Republican nominee was “an honest, worthy and patriotic man,” nevertheless as “the Republicans’ President” he “would be at least a terror to the South.”²⁸⁹ A former congressman (and future senator) from the Blue Grass State, Garrett Davis, called Lincoln “an honest man of fair ability” but found him unacceptable because “for some years past he has been possessed of but one idea – hostility to slavery.”²⁹⁰

Another American party leader who needed to be cultivated was David Davis’s cousin, Congressman Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, who was so influential that the committee of twelve at the Chicago Convention had asked him to run for vice president. He declined lest his candidacy ruin the ticket in the Northwest. Like many other Know Nothings, he objected to the Republican platform’s “supremely foolish” plank denouncing “any change in our naturalization laws or any state legislation by which the rights of citizenship hitherto accorded to immigrants from foreign lands shall be abridged or impaired” and favoring “a full and efficient protection to the rights of all classes of citizens.”²⁹¹ Since the term “Republican” was poison in Maryland, Davis said he would support Bell there but hinted that he might be willing to stump for Lincoln in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He thought “the Chicago nomination a wise one,” for the candidate was “long headed.” Davis’s only fear was that Seward would be named secretary of state and act as “a weight on the administration.”²⁹² Though he disliked

²⁸⁹ Crittenden’s speeches of 2 August and 30 October, Louisville correspondence, 2 August, New York Times, 8 August 1860, Cincinnati Commercial, 31 October 1860.

²⁹⁰ Davis to an unidentified correspondent, n.p., n.d., New York World, 24 July 1860.

²⁹¹ Proceedings of the Convention, 132.

²⁹² Henry Winter Davis to David Davis, [Baltimore, June 1860], David Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield; Henry Winter Davis to Samuel Francis Du Pont, n.p., 24 August 1860, S. F. Du Pont Papers, Hagley Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

Bell's pro-slavery public letter, he believed a Bell administration "would be the same as Lincoln[']s or Mr. [Henry] Clay[']s."²⁹³ Lincoln urged Richard W. Thompson, his friend from their days together in Congress and a leader of Indiana's Constitutional Union party, to "converse freely" with Davis.²⁹⁴

Thompson did so. He also told Lincoln while he himself might not vote Republican, he would work to block a Bell ticket in Indiana.²⁹⁵ (In 1856, Thompson had badly damaged Republicans' chances in the Hoosier state by thwarting their attempts to fuse with the Americans; in return he received a rich reward from the Democrats.)²⁹⁶ Thompson, whose influence with the Midwestern Know Nothings was considerable, assured them that Lincoln could not "be led into ultraism by radical men" and that his administration "will be national." In choosing the Illinoisan over Seward, the delegates at Chicago "demonstrated to the country that the great body of the Republicans are conservative." Lincoln's "strength consists in his conservatism. His own principles are conservative." Thompson asked Lincoln if it would be advisable to cite his 1849 vote against the Gott resolution in order to allay the fears of conservatives; the candidate hesitated to give permission, lest he alienate antislavery radicals.²⁹⁷ Lincoln replied: "If

²⁹³ Henry Winter Davis to Samuel Francis Du Pont, West Point, 15 August 1860, S. F. Du Pont Papers, Hagley Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

²⁹⁴ Lincoln to Richard W. Thompson, Springfield, 18 June 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:79

²⁹⁵ Blanton Duncan to Stephen A. Douglas, Louisville, 3 December 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago.

²⁹⁶ Acting as a lawyer for the Menominee tribe of Wisconsin, Thompson had submitted a dubious claim which had been rejected. After Thompson blocked any alliance between the Americans and the Republicans in 1856, Congressional Democrats allowed the claim, which included an \$80,000 commission for Thompson. Summers, Plundering Generation, 155-57, 241. See also Charles Roll, Colonel Dick Thompson: The Persistent Whig (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1948), 150-54.

²⁹⁷ Schuyler Colfax to Lincoln, Washington, 30 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; John G. Nicolay, "Lincoln in the Campaign of 1860," in Burlingame, ed., Oral History of Lincoln, 93; speech by

my record would hurt any, there is no hope that it will be over-looked; so that if friends can help any with it, they may as well do so. Of course, due caution and circumspection, will be used.”²⁹⁸ A week later, Horace Greeley pointed to Lincoln’s vote on the Gott resolution as proof of his conservatism.²⁹⁹

In July, when Thompson expressed a wish to meet with Lincoln, the candidate hesitated.³⁰⁰ Because Democratic papers had been accusing him of nativist proclivities (even alleging that he had attended a Know Nothing lodge), he wished to do nothing that might lend credence to those false charges.³⁰¹ So rather than invite Thompson to Springfield, he dispatched Nicolay to Indiana with instructions to ask what his old friend wanted to discuss and to assure him that his motto was “Fairness to all,” but to make no commitments. In mid-July Nicolay carried out this mission, finding that Thompson “only sought to be assured of the general ‘fairness’ to all elements giving Mr Lincoln their support, and that he did not even hint at any exaction or promise as being necessary to secure the ‘Know Nothing’ vote for the Republican ticket.”³⁰²

Fearing the influence of Know Nothings in northern Illinois, Lincoln asked Thompson to write to John Wilson, an American party leader in Chicago who had been a delegate to the Constitutional Union party’s convention.³⁰³ Thompson complied, and

Thompson at Terre Haute, 22 August, New York Times, 31 August 1860; speech by Thompson at Vigo, Indiana, The Liberator (Boston), 24 August 1860; Richard W. Thompson to Lincoln, Washington, 12 June 1860 and Terre Haute, Indiana, 6 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

²⁹⁸ Lincoln to Richard W. Thompson, Springfield, 10 July 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:82-83.

²⁹⁹ Greeley’s speech in New York, 16 July, New York Times, 17 July 1860.

³⁰⁰ Thompson to Lincoln, Terre Haute, Indiana, 6 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁰¹ Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Springfield, 21 July 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:85-86.

³⁰² Nicolay, “Lincoln in the Campaign of 1860,” 93-95.

³⁰³ David Davis to Lincoln, Bloomington, 7 June 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to Thompson, Springfield, 10 July 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 82-83.

Wilson abandoned the Bell movement after its Illinois leaders tried to merge with the Douglasites. Davis urged Lincoln to cultivate Wilson, which he did, making sure that the Chicagoan was invited to speak at a major Republican rally in Springfield.³⁰⁴

More worrisome than the nativists of Chicago were those in Pennsylvania, which all parties agreed was a vitally important state. “We expect to have hard work in Pennsylvania, and in the Eastern part especially, where Mr. Bell has many friends, and the American element is Considerable in numbers,” James E. Harvey told Lincoln immediately after the Chicago Convention.³⁰⁵ Charles Leib advised Lincoln that the platform plank regarding immigrants “is the only thing that causes the radical Americans in Penna. to even halt for an instant, and I trust and pray, that every time friends of yours will extend the ‘Olive branch’ to that party.”³⁰⁶ Schuyler Colfax also reported that there was “a little discontent in Eastern Pa. about the German plank.”³⁰⁷ From Washington, Elihu B. Washburne wrote that the “idea now prevails here that Pennsylvania is the battle ground, and that the locofocos will Stake all on that State. The American element of the State we must have, and it is wise to Consider fully its importance.” If the Democrats won all the slave states plus either California or Oregon, they could, with the addition of Pennsylvania, carry the election.³⁰⁸ Helping the Republican cause was a Democratic

³⁰⁴ Davis to Lincoln, Bloomington, 24 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to Davis, 27 July 1860, Basler and Basler, eds., Collected Works of Lincoln, Second Supplement, 57; Wilson’s speech at Springfield, 8 August 1860, Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 15 August 1860.

³⁰⁵ James E. Harvey to Lincoln, Washington, 21 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁰⁶ Charles Leib to Lincoln, Chicago, 6 June 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁰⁷ Schuyler Colfax to Lincoln, Washington, 26 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁰⁸ Washburne to Lincoln, Washington, 20 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

editor, John W. Forney of the Philadelphia Press, who switched parties in 1860, prompting Democrats to deride him and his fellow turncoats as “Forney-cators.”³⁰⁹

Washburne was not the only member of Congress worried about the Know Nothings. Lyman Trumbull complained that the anti-nativism plank in the Republican platform was hurting the party’s prospects by making John Bell more attractive to the Fillmore voters of 1856. “In my judgment the only thing we now have to fear is this Bell movement in Pa. and New Jersey,” he told Lincoln. “With you as the candidate, I do not think it will amount to anything in the West, though there may be some danger in Indiana – none I am sure in Ill. . . . I hear some little objections to the Anti American plank in the platform. Persons who probably are hunting for an excuse to go against us, talk of it as an insult to the American element – That such a resolution was unnecessary &c. Attempts will doubtless be made to use it against us in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. I wish our German friends could have been satisfied without such a resolution. Surely they were in no danger of an abridgement of their rights from any actions of the Republicans; but the thing is done, and we must now make the best of it.”³¹⁰ Horace Greeley scolded Germans for their attempts at “dictation” and declared that any man “who votes in our election as an Irishman or German has no moral right to vote at all.”³¹¹

Fear that Northerners who had voted for Fillmore in 1856 might support Bell was unfounded. In June, an Indianan reported that many people “like Bell and Everett, but

³⁰⁹ John D. Stewart, II, “The Great Winnebago Chieftain: Simon Cameron’s Rise to Power, 1860-1867,” Pennsylvania History 39 (1972): 20

³¹⁰ Trumbull to Lincoln, Washington, 22 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³¹¹ Carl Wittke, Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952), 214.

they say, as there is no chance for them, they will support Lincoln and Hamlin.”³¹² This reluctance to throw away one’s vote affected large numbers of Bell supporters above the Mason-Dixon line.³¹³ From the capital of New Jersey, a resident observed that Bell was “like a ‘tinkling cymball,’ an empty sound wherever it goes.”³¹⁴

Lincoln had to win over protectionists as well as Know Nothings in the Keystone State, whose Republican politicians said “you may cry nigger, nigger, as much as you please, only give us a chance to carry Pennsylvania by crying tariff.”³¹⁵ From Chambersburg, A. K. McClure informed Lincoln that in “the Eastern, Southern and Central counties especially, the Tariff will be the overshadowing question in this contest. . . . In these Tariff counties the Conservative element predominates.”³¹⁶ Pennsylvanians had been hit hard by the Panic of 1857, which depressed iron and coal prices and threw thousands of men out of work. The unemployed blamed low tariff rates for their misery.³¹⁷ Republican newspapers hammered away at the tariff issue incessantly.³¹⁸ To counter that popular cry, Democrats appealed to racial prejudice, condemning the Republicans for their support of “niggerism and ‘the Negro.’”³¹⁹

³¹² Unidentified correspondent in Washington, Indiana, undated letter, quoted in the Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 25 June 1860.

³¹³ William E. Gienapp, “Who Voted for Lincoln?” in Abraham Lincoln and the American Political Tradition, ed. John L. Thomas (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 66.

³¹⁴ B. O. Tyler to Henry L. Dawes, Trenton, 14 June 1860, Dawes Papers, Library of Congress.

³¹⁵ Harrisburg correspondence, 6 September, New York Herald, 13 September 1859.

³¹⁶ A. K. McClure to Lincoln, Chambersburg, 16 June 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³¹⁷ Malcolm Rogers Eiselen, The Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism (Philadelphia: privately printed, 1932), 244-66.

³¹⁸ Edgar B. Cale, “Editorial Sentiment in Pennsylvania in the Campaign of 1860,” Pennsylvania History 4 (1937): 219-34.

³¹⁹ Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, 14 May 1860, quoted in Robert L. Bloom, “Newspaper Opinion in the State Election of 1860,” Pennsylvania History 28 (1961): 352.

At the Chicago convention, Swett and Davis had agreed to stump Pennsylvania, where it was hoped they would testify to Lincoln's soundness as a protectionist.³²⁰ John P. Sanderson urged that they inspect the situation in the Keystone State, for Republicans there were in real danger, he warned.³²¹ Similar appeals came from Joseph Casey and Joseph J. Lewis. Davis and Weed preferred to remain in Illinois, but said they would go east if necessary.³²² The Pennsylvania state chairman, Alexander K. McClure, advised against a visit by the two Illinoisans, who, he told Lincoln, "would be presumed to represent you, and with even the greatest care, might put us on the defensive in some respect."³²³ McClure probably feared that Davis and Swett would be induced to side with the Cameron faction against the Curtin faction, which McClure supported. Lincoln grew alarmed about Pennsylvania when Joseph Casey said that the Republican state committee inspired little confidence. Casey and other malcontents, Lincoln feared, might "rebel, and make a dangerous explosion."³²⁴ (They did, in fact, establish a separate state committee and pack it with Cameron supporters.)³²⁵

Another problem in Pennsylvania was the rather lackluster campaigning of gubernatorial candidate Andrew G. Curtin, who was too "timid," in Cameron's

³²⁰ Alexander K. McClure, Abraham Lincoln and Men of War-Times (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Times, 1892), 46; Joseph J. Lewis to Jesse Fell, West Chester, 12 June 1860, Fell Papers, Library of Congress.

³²¹ J. P. Sanderson to [David Davis], Philadelphia, 16 June 1860, David Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

³²² Leonard Swett to Thurlow Weed, Bloomington, 4 July 1860, Barnes, Memoir of Weed, 299; King, Davis, 150-51.

³²³ McClure to Lincoln, Chambersburg, 2 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. The Republican state committee, dominated by Cameron men, was slated to meet later and would, according to Lewis, probably turn down the suggestion that Swett and Davis campaign in Pennsylvania. Joseph J. Lewis to Jesse W. Fell, West Chester, 9 July 1860, Fell Papers, Library of Congress.

³²⁴ Lincoln to Swett, Springfield, 16 July 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:83-84.

³²⁵ Bradley, Cameron, 153-55.

opinion.³²⁶ “We have been somewhat disappointed in Curtin as an efficient stumper and he really excites but little interest,” reported Joseph J. Lewis from West Chester. But, Lewis added, “there is a feeling that his success is of importance to Lincoln and that consideration helps Curtin greatly.”

Adding to Lincoln’s alarm were reports that McClure had misused campaign funds.³²⁷ When Joseph Medill recommended that some trustworthy Republican investigate the allegation, Lincoln concurred and reluctantly sent David Davis eastward with a letter introducing him as “my very good personal and political friend.” The judge also carried “scraps” Lincoln had written in 1847 about the tariff.³²⁸ (Pennsylvanians wanted to see the text of speeches Lincoln had delivered on protection during the 1840s, but, as he explained, newspapers at that time did not carry full accounts of political addresses and he had no manuscripts of them.)³²⁹ When Davis showed the scraps to Cameron, the Pennsylvania boss called them “abundantly satisfactory.”³³⁰ Soon thereafter

³²⁶ Cameron to David Davis, Lochliel, 7 September 1860; J. P. Sanderson to [David Davis], Philadelphia, 16 June 1860, David Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

³²⁷ Allegedly McClure had pocketed \$600 he had raised in New York for the Philadelphia municipal campaign in the spring of 1860. John M. Butler to Thurlow Weed, Philadelphia, 6 June 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

³²⁸ Russell Errett to Joseph Medill, [Pittsburgh], 24 July 1860, and Medill to Lincoln, Chicago, 29 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to whom it may concern, Springfield, 2 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, First Supplement, 58; Lincoln to Simon Cameron, Springfield, 6 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:91. To some Pennsylvanians, Lincoln had already shown his notes on the tariff. Among them were Thaddeus Stevens (the Rev. Dr. William M. Reynolds, president of Illinois University, shared their contents with the Congressman) and the Philadelphia journalist James Lesley. Reynolds to Lincoln, Lancaster, 25 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. Others believed that McClure and his allies were appropriating campaign funds for themselves. J. P. Sanderson to Cameron, n.p., 1 October 1860, Cameron Papers, Library of Congress. According to Leonard Swett, Lincoln “consented reluctantly” to the proposal that Davis go east. Wilson and Davis, eds., Herndon’s Informants, 163.

³²⁹ Lincoln to James E. Harvey, Springfield, 2 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:125.

³³⁰ David Davis to Lincoln, Harrisburg, 5 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

he reported that they “have done great good in our coal and iron regions.”³³¹ Quite pleased with Davis’s visit, Cameron agreed “to work earnestly.”³³² To Cameron, Sanderson wrote that Davis “had seen enough to know that you were the power in the State, & that if McClure & his party would let you & your friends carry it, it would be done.”³³³ After consulting with several other leaders, including McClure, Davis confidently assured Lincoln: “You will be elected Presdt.”³³⁴ While in the East, the judge also visited New Jersey and met with Weed in New York.³³⁵

Despite Davis’s visit, internal strife continued to rage in the Keystone State.³³⁶ At the end of August, when John M. Pomeroy of Pennsylvania informed Lincoln about the feud between the Cameron and Curtin factions, the candidate replied: “I am now slow to listen to criminations among friends, and never expouse their quarrels on either side. My sincere wish is that both sides will allow by-gones to be by-gones, and look to the present and future only.”³³⁷ A few weeks before the election, James Shepherd Pike found alarming signs of Democratic strength in Philadelphia.³³⁸

³³¹ Cameron to David Davis, Lochliel, 7 September 1860, Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library.

³³² Weed to Lincoln, Albany, 13 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³³³ Sanderson to Cameron, Philadelphia, 18 August 1860, Cameron Papers, Dauphin County Historical Society, Harrisburg.

³³⁴ McClure, Lincoln and Men of War Times, 46-47; King, Davis, 152-54; Davis to Lincoln, Scranton, Pennsylvania, 12 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³³⁵ David Davis to Simon Cameron, Bloomington, Illinois, 30 August 1860, Cameron Papers, Dauphin County Historical Society, Harrisburg.

³³⁶ McClure, Lincoln and Men of War Times, 45-47; Russell Errett to Cameron, Harrisburg, 23 June 1860; McClure to Cameron, Philadelphia, 31 July 1860; Cameron to McClure, Lochliel, 1 August 1860, copy, Cameron Papers, Library of Congress; J. P. Sanderson to Simon Cameron, Philadelphia, 24 July and 12 August 1860, Cameron Papers, Dauphin County Historical Society, Harrisburg.

³³⁷ Lincoln to John Pomeroy, Springfield, 31 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:103. McClure alleged that Lincoln wrote him weekly during the campaign, but all those letters were destroyed when Confederates burned his town (Chambersburg) in 1864. A. K. McClure, Our Presidents and How We Make Them (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1900), 177-78.

³³⁸ Pike to [William P. Fessenden], Philadelphia, 28 September 1860, Pike Papers, Library of Congress.

Lincoln was not discouraged, largely because in late June the Democratic national convention at Baltimore nominated Stephen A. Douglas and Herschel V. Johnson, prompting Southern delegates to bolt and choose Vice President John C. Breckinridge and Oregon Senator Joseph Lane as their standard bearers. With the Democracy thus split, Republicans gleefully assumed that victory was inevitable; a Hoosier predicted that Douglas would carry no states at all.³³⁹ Charles Henry Ray told Lincoln: “it will do you no harm to begin to consider what shall be the quality and cut of your inaugural suit. It does not seem to me that you have anything else to do in the campaign, which Breck[inridge] and Lane have taken off your hands.”³⁴⁰

Lincoln agreed. To his old friend Simeon Francis he wrote in August: “I hesitate to say it, but it really appears now, as if the success of the Republican ticket is inevitable. We have no reason to doubt any of the states which voted for Fremont. Add to these, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and New-Jersey, and the thing is done. Minnesota is as sure as such a thing can be; while the democracy are so divided between Douglass and Breckinridge in Penn. and N.J. that they are scarcely less sure.”³⁴¹ The Little Giant also believed that Lincoln would win. In the summer he told Congressman Anson Burlingame that he was pleased at the prospect of having four Illinoisans in the nation’s capital, three in the senate and one in the White House: “Won’t it be a splendid sight, Burlingame, to see [senatorial candidate James A.] McDougall returned from California, [senatorial

³³⁹ J. R. Mahan to Lincoln, Greencastle, Indiana, 5 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁴⁰ Charles Henry Ray to Lincoln, Chicago, 27 June 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. Joshua Giddings exulted to Lincoln: “Every thing now seems to indicate that our contest will be an easy one.” Giddings to Lincoln, Jefferson, Ohio, 2 July 1860, *ibid.* James E. Harvey declared to the candidate, “Nothing but a providential intervention, can well prevent your election now.” James E. Harvey to Lincoln, Washington, 4 July 1860, *ibid.* Truman Smith assured Lincoln: “your election (at all times probable) has become morally certain.” Truman Smith to Lincoln, New York, 24 July 1860, *ibid.* See also Trumbull to Lincoln, Washington, 28 June 1860, *ibid.*

³⁴¹ Lincoln to Francis, Springfield, 4 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:90.

candidate Edward D.] Baker from Oregon, and Douglas and ‘Old Abe,’ all at Washington together – for the next President is to come from Illinois!”³⁴²

Optimistic though Lincoln was, he shared Henry Wilson’s belief that unglamorous organizational work deserved more attention than it was receiving. He told the Massachusetts senator that the “point you press – the importance of thorough organization – is felt, and appreciated by our friends everywhere. And yet it involves so much more of dry, and irksome labor, that most of them shrink from it – preferring parades, and shows, and monster meetings. I know not how this can be helped. I do what I can in my position; but it does not amount to so much as it should.”³⁴³ Part of that work may have included lending covert support to the Breckinridge forces. The Illinois State Register claimed that the Danites’ successful effort to field a Breckinridge ticket in the Prairie State “was got up under the immediate personal supervision of Mr. Lincoln and his state committee.”³⁴⁴

On August 8, Lincoln attended a “monster meeting” in Springfield, where he delivered his only public remarks of the campaign.³⁴⁵ The event featured a number of prominent speakers, who, according to the Democratic Illinois State Register, “threw out an indescribable amount of gas on the nigger question.”³⁴⁶ Upon entering the fairgrounds,

³⁴² Speech of Anson Burlingame, August 1860, in Belfast, Maine, described in a letter dated Belfast, 23 August 1860, in the Bangor, Maine, Daily Union, 25 August, copied in the Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 11 September 1860.

³⁴³ Lincoln to Henry Wilson, Springfield, 1 September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:109.

³⁴⁴ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 13 July 1860.

³⁴⁵ John Hay described this rally vividly in his dispatch to the Providence Journal of 9 August 1860, in Burlingame, ed., Lincoln’s Journalist, 3-6. See also Angle, “Here I Have Lived,” 246-48; William E. Baringer, “The Presidential Candidate Attends a Rally,” Abraham Lincoln Quarterly 4 (1946-47): 123-36; Halbert E. Gulley, “Springfield Lincoln Rally, 1860,” in Auer, ed., Antislavery and Disunion, 1858-1861, 212-24.

³⁴⁶ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 9 August 1860.

Lincoln was surprised when some members of the huge crowd rushed his carriage, removed him “almost violently,” hoisted him onto their shoulders, and conveyed him to the speakers’ platform. The crowd cheered lustily for ten minutes, producing “a noise not unlike the roar of Niagara Falls.”³⁴⁷ When they finally quieted down, he briefly thanked them for their enthusiastic applause, which he interpreted as no tribute to himself personally but rather to the cause and party he represented.³⁴⁸ Taken aback by the tumultuous reception, he closed saying: “I came here, fellow citizens, expecting quiet, but as it seems, I am a great disturber of the peace. I wish you would allow me to depart.”³⁴⁹ After escaping on horseback, he told John G. Nicolay: “I was afraid of being caught and crushed in that crowd. The American people remind me of a flock of sheep.”³⁵⁰

In the state capitol, Lincoln occupied the governor’s office, which that official used only when the legislature was in session. Measuring approximately fifteen by twelve feet, and furnished with a sofa, a table, and a few armchairs, it could accommodate up to a dozen people comfortably. On a desk where his secretary worked were “countless letters and files of newspapers, and quite an assortment of odd presents.”³⁵¹ Lincoln received hundreds of gifts and souvenirs, including canes, axes, mauls, fragments of old

³⁴⁷ Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 9 August 1860; Springfield correspondence, 9 August, New York Herald, 14 August 1860.

³⁴⁸ Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:91.

³⁴⁹ Springfield correspondence, 8 August, Cincinnati Gazette, n.d., copied in the New York Courier and Enquirer, 13 August 1860.

³⁵⁰ Letter by Goyne S. Pennington, Pittsfield, Illinois, 7 July 1910, Pike County Democrat (Pittsfield), 29 July 1910; Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 9 August 1860; Illinois State Register (Springfield), 9 August 1860. In making good his escape, Lincoln had the help of two young men who had acted as escorts, Robert Officer and George M. Brinkerhoff. Reminiscences of George M. Brinkerhoff, Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 12 February 1909.

³⁵¹ Springfield correspondence, 8 November, New York Tribune, 14 November 1860; Chicago correspondence, 22 September, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 25 September 1860; Springfield correspondence by Henry Villard, 17 November, New York Herald, 22 November 1860; John G. Nicolay to Theren Bates, Springfield, 25 November 1860, Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 12.

rails that he had allegedly split and of the cabins where he had supposedly lived, pieces of furniture and surveyor's tools he had once owned, mementos of the Black Hawk War, wedges, pictures, books, and a chain of links ingeniously carved from a single piece of wood. Newspaper editors sent innumerable copies of their journals, all carefully marked up for the inspection of the president-elect, who did not read them. In time, the governor's office came to resemble "a museum of curiosities." The various tools provided Lincoln "an opportunity to entertain ever his polished city-bred callers with explanations and anecdotes about the use or importance of these, to them, unfamiliar implements."³⁵² A well-wisher who observed two steel wedges asked: "Are those the wedges, Sir?" Lincoln replied: "These, Sir, are the identical wedges – that were sent to me about a week ago."³⁵³ Upon receiving an elegant hat, he remarked to Mrs. Lincoln: "Well, wife, there is one thing likely to come out of this scrape any how. We are going to have some new clothes!"³⁵⁴

At the governor's office, Lincoln "made himself the Mecca to which all politicians made pilgrimages. He told them all a story, said nothing, and sent them away."³⁵⁵ Uncomplainingly he met not only politicians but ordinary people. "I am a public man now," he said, "and I am the public's most obedient servant." An observer sketched his method of dealing with callers: "Possessed of an unparalleled equanimity of temperament, and yet endowed with an iron-like firmness, he lends a willing ear to every visitor, patiently hears them through, and in every case dismisses them with a dignity and

³⁵² Bateman, Lincoln, 16-23; Bateman, interview with Ida Tarbell, 22 January 1895, Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College; Nicolay, "Lincoln in the Campaign of 1860," 103.

³⁵³ Springfield correspondence, 7 November, New York Tribune, 12 November 1860.

³⁵⁴ Francis B. Carpenter, The Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln: Six Months at the White House (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), 116.

³⁵⁵ Swett to Herndon, Chicago, 17 January 1866, Wilson and Davis, eds., Herndon's Informants, 163.

an affability that inspires the loftiest respect and admiration of his character. In no case have I heard of any man coming out of Mr. Lincoln's presence with feelings other than those of admiration and satisfaction." Among the more noteworthy interviews were those "with extreme Southern gentlemen, who come full of prejudices against him but who left, satisfied with his loyalty to all the constitutional rights of the South."³⁵⁶ A Mississippian who had just emerged from a long conversation with Lincoln declared: "I am perfectly astonished. I expected to find a fierce and ignorant fanatic, but I find instead, not only an affable and genial gentleman, but a wise and moderate statesman. . . . Why, our whole southern people are deceived in regard to that man."³⁵⁷ A Louisianan had a similar reaction to meeting with Lincoln.³⁵⁸

Some well-wishers expressed concern for Lincoln's life. Nicolay, Lincoln's only regular companion in the office, noted that among "the many things said in a general way to Mr. Lincoln by his visitors, there is nearly always an expressed hope that he will not be so unfortunate as were Harrison and Taylor, to be killed off by the cares of the Presidency – or as is sometimes hinted by foul means. It is astonishing how the popular sympathy for Mr. Lincoln draws fearful forebodings from these two examples."³⁵⁹

Lincoln's office was overrun with all kinds of visitors virtually every day. "There was free access to him; any one might knock and enter," Nicolay recalled. "His immediate personal friends from Sangamon County and central Illinois availed themselves largely of this opportunity. With men who had known him in field and forest

³⁵⁶ Unidentified private letter, Springfield, n.d., Baltimore Patriot, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 18 September 1860.

³⁵⁷ Bateman, Lincoln, 16-23; Bateman, interview with Ida Tarbell, 22 January 1895, Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College.

³⁵⁸ John H. Littlefield interviewed by C. D. B., Brooklyn Eagle, 16 October 1887.

³⁵⁹ John G. Nicolay and John Hay, Abraham Lincoln: A History (10 vols.; New York: Century, 1890), 2:*

he talked over the incidents of their common frontier experience with unaffected sympathy and interest, as though he were yet the flat-boatman, surveyor, or village lawyer of the early days.”³⁶⁰ He made no distinction between the great and the humble. “The flat-boatman and the statesman, the beggar and the millionaire, are treated with equal courtesy, and all heard with marvelous patience,” a journalist observed. “Honors have not changed the manners of ‘Honest Old Abe.’”³⁶¹

So many people came calling that Lincoln, according to Nicolay, enjoyed “little time for anything except the exchange of greetings and mere desultory talk, in which his whole effort was necessarily directed to avoiding political subjects, since any expression of opinion would be instantly telegraphed and printed far and wide. In this however he was very successful. He was by nature genial and social, a ready and entertaining talker, able to invest the tritest topics with fresh interest by his comments which were always clear and forcible, and often quaint and original.”³⁶² One visitor was Orville H. Browning, who found Lincoln bearing “his honors meekly.” As soon as the other company retired after Browning had entered, “he fell into his old habit of telling amusing stories,” and the two men “had a free and easy talk of an hour or two.”³⁶³ On September 21, Browning, Ninian Edwards, and Lincoln reminisced about the Black Hawk War.³⁶⁴ Another visitor reported that Lincoln “makes every one feel not only easy, but delighted and fascinated

³⁶⁰ Memorandum by Nicolay, 16 October 1860, Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 6. Lincoln received such warnings from correspondents as well as visitors. See, for example, Zenas Woods to Lincoln, Montpelier, Vermont, 5 November 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁶¹ Springfield correspondence, 28 January, New York Evening Post, 1 February 1861.

³⁶² Nicolay, “Lincoln in the Campaign of 1860,” 103. See also Richard C. McCormick’s reminiscences, New York, 29 April, New York Evening Post, 3 May 1865; Springfield correspondence, 28 January, New York Evening Post, 1 February 1861.

³⁶³ Pease and Randall, eds., Browning Diary, 1:415 (entry for 12 June 1860).

³⁶⁴ Chicago correspondence, 22 September, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 25 September 1860.

by his fine narratives, references and classical quotations. He does not pretend to be familiar with literature, though not many will be willing to enter a second time on literary themes with him, unless their minds be well stored.”

In October, William Henry Seward stopped briefly in Springfield while stumping the west.³⁶⁵ (Seward’s trip was a curious one, for he spent most of his time in safe Republican states in the Northwest. “The truth is,” observed James E. Harvey, “we want no aid where he is going, & I cannot see the necessity for, or the policy of this intended demonstration.”)³⁶⁶ Three months earlier, Lincoln had urged Seward to speak in Springfield, saying “I shall be personally much gratified to meet him here.”³⁶⁷ Instead of calling on Lincoln at his house or office, the haughty New Yorker allowed the candidate to come to the depot, make his way through the crowd, and climb aboard the train.³⁶⁸ The stopover in the Illinois capital had been scheduled at the last moment because “his avoidance of Springfield . . . would be sure to be construed into an evidence of hostility against Lincoln.”³⁶⁹ The Republican State Committee reportedly tried to keep the senator from visiting central and southern Illinois, where his reputation as an antislavery

³⁶⁵ On Seward’s campaigning in September and October, see George E. Baker, ed.,

The Works of William H. Seward (5 vols.; Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1884), 4:84-113, 303-430.

³⁶⁶ Harvey to Lincoln, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., 27 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁶⁷ Endorsement dated 21 July 1861, on John Wood et al. to Seward, Springfield, 21 July 1861, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:86. Seward had to decline that invitation because of a prior commitment. Seward to Wood, Auburn, 31 July 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester.

³⁶⁸ Springfield correspondence, 16 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860; Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 2 October 1860. According to the latter account, “It was not known that he [Seward] would take Springfield in his route until a few minutes before the arrival of the cars.”

³⁶⁹ Springfield correspondence, 16 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860. The Republicans of Springfield had only a two-hour notice of Seward’s arrival but managed to turn out 1500 people to greet him. Alexander M. Black to Jane Black, Springfield, 13 October 1860, Hagaman Family Papers, Missouri Historical Society.

extremist made him unpopular.³⁷⁰ The Illinois State Register, which denounced the radicalism of Seward’s speeches, claimed that the New Yorker spoke for Lincoln.³⁷¹ In the capital, one of Seward’s entourage, Charles Francis Adams, Jr., observed the two leading Republicans greet each other. The senator “appeared constrained,” while the “tall, shambling, plain and good-natured” Lincoln at first seemed “shy to a degree, and very awkward in manner; as if he felt out of place, and had a realizing sense that properly the positions should be reversed.”³⁷² Similarly, a journalist noted that Lincoln’s “manner to Mr. Seward was marked rather by deference and respect than cordiality, and Mr. Seward himself seemed to avoid friendly advances – a little unusual for him.”³⁷³ After introducing his traveling party to the candidate, Seward, “without entering into a conversation of even formal courtesy with him, resumed his seat, from which, however, he was immediately called out by the crowds around the car, who wished to see and hear him.” The senator obeyed their summons “with unwonted alacrity, as if glad to abbreviate by so much the interview.”³⁷⁴ From the platform of the train, he addressed a crowd, saying of Lincoln: “If there is in any part of the country a deeper interest felt in his election . . . it must of course be here, where he has lived a life of usefulness; where he is surrounded by the companions of his labors The State of New York will give a

³⁷⁰ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 7 September and 2 October 1860. When Seward accepted an invitation from the committee to speak in Chicago, he stated that he would be able to give only one speech in Illinois. Seward to Norman B. Judd, Auburn, 26 July 1860, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 26 July 1860.

³⁷¹ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 19 September 1860.

³⁷² Adams, Autobiography, 64-65, quoting his diary entry for 1 October 1860. Adams thought Lincoln’s face “a good one,” though “his eye never belonged to a man great in action; it is neither the quick, sharp eye of a man of sudden and penetrating nature, nor the slow firm eye of one of decided will; but it is a mild, dreamy, meditative eye which one would scarcely expect to see in a successful chief magistrate in these days of the republic.”

³⁷³ Chicago correspondence, 1 October, New York Herald, 2 October 1860.

³⁷⁴ Springfield correspondence, 16 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

generous and cheerful and effective support to your neighbor.” Afterwards, Lincoln held a brief conversation with Seward, suggesting a point for the New Yorker to incorporate into his upcoming Chicago address. (Seward later observed that he had already made that point in an earlier speech.)³⁷⁵ The candidate then reminisced: “Twelve years ago you told me that this cause would be successful, and ever since I have believed that it would be. Even if it did not succeed now, my faith would not be shaken.”³⁷⁶ Seward’s stopover in Springfield lasted no more than a quarter of an hour, during most of which time he spoke to the crowd. A mere five minutes were consumed “in introducing his traveling party to the President-to-be, with whom he at no time conversed unheard by at least a dozen listeners.”³⁷⁷

Simon P. Hanscom, who witnessed this scene, was struck by “Seward’s ill concealed dislike of Lincoln” and noted that “throughout Mr. Seward’s grand ovation in the Northwest, he very rarely, and then only in the curtest manner, spoke of the republican candidate for the Presidency. He recognized that the flattering demonstrations that attended his tour were made in honor of himself personally, and had little or nothing to do with the republican cause or candidate. The men who accompanied and surrounded him were his own immediate friends and admirers; and while they yielded a passive obedience to the ukase of the Chicago Convention, they never tried to stifle the expression of their regret that the choice had not fallen on their favorite. . . . Seward himself would have been more or less than human if he did not, to a very considerable

³⁷⁵ “Seward’s Western Tour: Campaign of 1860,” Lincoln Lore no. 1565 (July 1968): 2.

³⁷⁶ Seward to Lincoln, Auburn, N.Y., 8 October 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to Seward, Springfield, 12 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:126; Chicago correspondence, 1 October, Albany Evening Journal, 2 October 1860.

³⁷⁷ Chicago correspondence by Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 3 October, New York Times, 6 October 1860.

extent, share in the feeling. His heart was not in the cause of Lincoln and Hamlin. And so, while he talked of the irrepressible conflict, of the backwardness of slave communities, and of the present and prospective grandeur of the great West, he never attempted to inspire his hearers with any elevated idea of the talents or abilities of Mr. Lincoln.”³⁷⁸ After Seward’s opening address in Detroit, the New York Journal of Commerce observed that the senator “is forced by circumstances to go forth on a speech-making mission, ostensibly in favor of his successful rival. He could not, without self mortification, hold his peace, since to do so would subject him to the imputation of not supporting the nominee of the Republican party. Mr. Seward has therefore started on a tour through the Western States, where he will make a few speeches; but Mr. Lincoln will get cold comfort from them, if that made at Detroit last evening, is to be the standard.” Save for one paragraph, Seward’s address contained “not the slightest allusion to the contest for the Presidency, or the most remote reference to Mr. Lincoln or the importance of his election.”³⁷⁹ In Chicago, Seward “spoke in the most complimentary terms of John Brown, and of Lovejoy, but he never mentioned Lincoln’s name but once.”³⁸⁰ In the other fifteen speeches he delivered on his western tour, Seward ignored Lincoln in seven and only briefly alluded to him in the rest.³⁸¹

Simon P. Hanscom’s paper, the New York Herald, asserted that “[e]very one knows, and he [Seward] has never attempted to disguise it, that he is no admirer of the country lawyer of Illinois. . . . It is not unnatural that he would regard with disfavor, if not

³⁷⁸ Springfield correspondence, 16 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

³⁷⁹ “Speech of Mr. Seward,” New York Journal of Commerce, 5 September 1860.

³⁸⁰ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 5 October 1860.

³⁸¹ “Seward’s Western Tour: Campaign of 1860,” Lincoln Lore no. 1565 (July 1968), 1-3.

with some degree of contempt, a man who, without any special merit of his own, was taken from the subordinate ranks of the party and promoted over his head.”³⁸² George G. Fogg assured Lincoln that the senator “has no more doubt of his measureless superiority to you, than of his existence. . . . He either hates you for being nominated over him at Chicago, or he contemptuously expects to make you ‘play second fiddle’ to all his schemes.”³⁸³ (Alluding to Seward’s “enormous self-conceit,” Horace Greeley once asked Schuyler Colfax: “Do you happen to know of his ever consulting and counseling with any body on terms of equality?”)³⁸⁴

Seward long harbored resentment against Lincoln for defeating him at Chicago. In March 1861, when told that German Americans would be disappointed if he, as secretary of state, did not have Carl Schurz appointed to a first-class foreign mission, Seward exploded “in great rage”: “Disappointment! You speak to me of disappointment. To me, who was justly entitled to the Republican nomination for the presidency, and who had to stand aside and see it given to a little Illinois lawyer! You speak to me of disappointment!” He found it humiliating to be “simply a clerk of the President!”³⁸⁵ In light of Seward’s behavior, it is not surprising that Lincoln felt a certain “lukewarmness” towards him.

³⁸² “The Abolition Programme for Lincoln’s Administration,” New York Herald, 18 October 1860. James Russell Lowell disagreed. In October he wrote that “the magnanimity of Mr. Seward since the result of the convention was known has been a greater ornament to him and a greater honor to his party than his election to the Presidency would have been.” [Lowell], “The Election in November,” Atlantic Monthly 6 (October 1860): 499.

³⁸³ Fogg to Lincoln, Washington, 5 February 1861, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁸⁴ Greeley to Schuyler Colfax, New York, 5 February 1858, Greeley Papers, New York Public Library.

³⁸⁵ Seward said this to Congressman John F. Potter of Wisconsin. Schurz, Reminiscences, 2:221-22; Potter’s account, given in 1867 to George B. Lincoln, in George B. Lincoln to Gideon Welles, Riverdale, N.J., 25 April 1874, in “New Light on the Seward-Welles-Lincoln Controversy,” Lincoln Lore #1718 (April 1981): 3. A similar statement by Seward appears in Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (3rd ed.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), 223.

Lincoln had been advised not to accompany Seward to Chicago, lest he seem to be deferring to the senator or to be violating the rule that presidential candidates eschew overt campaigning.³⁸⁶ Fogg warned that “Seward is making a sort of triumphal march through the Country, with a large army of retainers. I hope that he will help the Republican cause. But there is one man [i.e., Lincoln] who must not be seen at his chariot wheels.”³⁸⁷ David Davis told Lincoln that “your discreet friends” in Chicago opposed his visiting that city when Seward appeared there.³⁸⁸ Norman B. Judd, who in July had invited Seward to speak in Chicago, later criticized the Sage of Auburn’s appearance there as a ploy to enhance John Wentworth’s standing rather than to help Lincoln and Trumbull win their elections.³⁸⁹

Democrats charged that “Mr. Seward was Captain and Lincoln was only Lieutenant” and that the New Yorker “would keep [the rank of] Captain after Lincoln was elected.”³⁹⁰ The Illinois State Register argued that in a Lincoln administration, Seward “will be, de facto, President of the United States. – Mr. Lincoln will be but an automaton in the White House.”³⁹¹

Seward did not stump the battleground states other than Illinois, in part because some Republican leaders had strenuously objected to the senator’s plans to campaign in

³⁸⁶ King, Davis, 157.

³⁸⁷ Fogg to Norman B. Judd, New York, 11 September 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁸⁸ David Davis to Lincoln, Chicago, 24 September 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁸⁹ Thurlow Weed to Seward, Albany, 5 July 1860, and Judd to Seward, Chicago, 17 July 1860, Seward Papers, University of Rochester; Norman B. Judd to Lyman Trumbull, Chicago, 4 October 1860, Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁹⁰ Leslie Coombs, speech in New York, 24 October, New York Times, 25 October 1860.

³⁹¹ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 25 May 1860.

their states, lest he frighten off moderate voters.³⁹² His ally Henry J. Raymond had warned shortly after the Chicago Convention that New Yorkers believed “Pennsylvania, New-Jersey, Illinois and Indiana have taken upon themselves the main burden of the canvass, and New-York will feel that she has done her part if she succeeds in casting her electoral vote for the nominees of the Convention.”³⁹³ (In the immediate aftermath of Lincoln’s nomination, Raymond had ordered the New York Times not to commit to the Rail-splitter.)³⁹⁴

Unlike Seward, Carl Schurz called on Lincoln at his house during a swing through Illinois. As that German-American leader recollected, “we conversed about the course and the incidents of the campaign, and his genial and simple-hearted way of expressing himself would hardly permit me to remember that he was a great man and a candidate of the presidency of the United States. He was in the best of humor, and we laughed much.” Afterwards Lincoln escorted his guest to the site where he was scheduled to speak. Because the July day was exceedingly hot, Lincoln shed his waistcoat and donned a linen duster, “the back of which had been marked by repeated perspirations and looked somewhat like a rough map of the two hemispheres.” He also wore “a well-battered ‘stove-pipe’ hat which had seen several years of hard service.” As the two men marched behind a brass band to the meeting place, Lincoln “was utterly unconscious of his grotesque appearance. Nothing could have been further from his mind than the thought that the world-conspicuous distinction bestowed upon him by his nomination for the presidency should have obliged him to ‘put on dignity’ among his neighbors.” Those

³⁹² Illinois State Register (Springfield), 7 September 1860.

³⁹³ Letter dated Auburn, 22 May, New York Times, 24 May 1860.

³⁹⁴ George W. Sanders to Douglas, New York, 19 May 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago.

neighbors waved and cheered, and he greeted them unselfconsciously with his usual cordiality. He declined to sit on the platform where Schurz spoke, but instead took a seat in the front row.³⁹⁵ Afterwards the candidate told the young orator: “You are an awful fellow! I understand your power now!”³⁹⁶ Like many others, Lincoln regarded Schurz as one of the foremost speakers in the country.³⁹⁷

None of Lincoln’s visitors were clients, for he had stopped practicing law, save for a handful of cases which he attended to in June. (That month he said that he tried to keep up his practice, but “pitied his clients,” for “the demands of his position made him an indifferent lawyer.”)³⁹⁸ Some callers were journalists, including an interviewer from the Missouri Democrat, who reported that the candidate’s “health and spirits are excellent; and though not quite so embrowned as when canvassing the State with Mr. Douglas, he is less lean than usual, and certainly looks as though he would not easily wither and die, even in the hot bed of the President’s house.”³⁹⁹ The New York Herald, also sent a representative to Springfield, to whom Lincoln expressed skepticism about the popularity of slavery among white Southerners. “Public opinion is not always private opinion,” he noted, citing “Lamartine’s account of the execution of Louis XVI., wherein it appeared that, although the leading revolutionists were publicly obliged to declare in favor of that deed, they were privately opposed to it. He said that it was the same with

³⁹⁵ Schurz, Reminiscences, 2:196.

³⁹⁶ Schurz to his wife, Alton, 25 July 1860, Frederic Bancroft, ed., Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz (6 vols.; New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 1:120-21.

³⁹⁷ Chicago correspondence, 22 September, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 25 September 1860; H. G. McPike to Lyman Trumbull, Alton, 29 June 1860, Lyman Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress; E. H. Rauch to James C. Conkling, Mauch Chunk, Pennsylvania, 12 November 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

³⁹⁸ Springfield correspondence, 21 June, Utica, New York, Herald, 27 June 1860, copied in the New York Tribune, 9 July 1860.

³⁹⁹ Chicago correspondence, 22 September, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 25 September 1860.

many people in the South; they were obliged to sustain slavery, although they secretly abhorred the institution.” He regretted that Southerners misunderstood the Republicans’ stand on slavery and expressed a wish to enlighten them.⁴⁰⁰ (Lincoln was guilty of wishful thinking, for most white Southerners were not “privately opposed” to slavery.)

Newton Bateman, whose office adjoined the one occupied temporarily by Lincoln in the statehouse, overheard many of the candidate’s conversations, for the door between their offices was left open at Lincoln’s request. Bateman recalled fondly “his hearty and delightful recognition of the poor men and women whom he had known in the days of his obscurity and poverty.” No matter how eminent a figure he was entertaining, Lincoln, when informed that an old friend wished to see him, “would instantly excuse himself, hurry forward, take the timid or embarrassed person by the hand, offer a chair and talk of old times with all the simple familiarity of former days.” One such friend was an elderly gentleman who greeted him with the salutation “Mr. President.”

“Not yet,” said Lincoln. “We mustn’t count our chickens before they are hatched, you know.”

“Well,” said the caller, “maybe yourn aint quite hatched, but they’re peepin’ sure.”

When a woman of advanced years gave him a long pair of hand-knit socks, a wag quipped: “The lady had a correct apprehension of your longitude and latitude, Mr. Lincoln.”⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ Springfield correspondence, 8 August, New York Herald, 13 August 1860.

⁴⁰¹ Bateman, Lincoln, 16-23; Bateman, interview with Ida Tarbell, 22 January 1895, Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College; Nicolay, “Lincoln in the Campaign of 1860,” 103.

In late October, Lincoln complained to Bateman about the politics of Springfield's clergymen. Informed that twenty of the town's twenty-three ministers opposed his election, he pointed to a Bible and "with a face full of sadness" said: "These men well know that I am for freedom . . . and that my opponents are for slavery. They know this, and yet, with this book in their hands, in the light of which human bondage cannot live a moment, they are going to vote against me. I do not understand it at all."⁴⁰² It was rumored that Lincoln seldom attended his wife's church because its minister, a well-to-do Kentuckian named John Howe Brown, favored Douglas.⁴⁰³

Many years later Nicolay explained that the "opposition of the Springfield clergy to his election was chiefly due to remarks about them. One careless remark I remember was widely quoted. An eminent clergyman was delivering a series of doctrinal discourses which had attracted considerable local attention. Although Lincoln was frequently invited, he would not be induced to attend them. He remarked that he wouldn't trust Brother _____ to construe the statutes of Illinois and much less the laws of God; that people who knew him wouldn't trust his advice on an ordinary business transaction because they didn't consider him competent; hence he didn't see why they did so in the most important of all human affairs, the salvation of their souls. These remarks were

⁴⁰² Josiah G. Holland, The Life of Abraham Lincoln (Springfield, Massachusetts: Gurdon Bill, 1866), 236-37. For a thoughtful discussion of this quote, see William E. Barton, The Soul of Abraham Lincoln (New York: George H. Doran, 1920), 114-27. See also Herndon's interview with Bateman, 1865-66], Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, eds., Herndon's Informants: Letters, Interviews, and Statements about Abraham Lincoln (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 436. Of the twenty-eight clergy listed in the 1860 Springfield City Directory, eleven did not vote. Richard J. Carwardine, Lincoln (London: Pearson, Longman, 2003), 134n86.

⁴⁰³ The Rev. Mr. Albert Hale to the Rev. Mr. Theron Baldwin, Springfield, 31 May 1860, in Burlingame, ed., Oral History of Lincoln, 95; Wayne C. Temple, Abraham Lincoln: From Skeptic to Prophet (Mahomet, Ill.: Mayhaven, 1995), 78.

quoted widely and misrepresented, to Lincoln's injury. In those days people were not so liberal as now and anyone who criticized a parson was considered a skeptic.”⁴⁰⁴

Some callers angled for patronage, prompting Simon Hanscom to observe wryly: “If these gentlemen do not get an opportunity of serving their country for the next four years, in positions where there is little work and much pay, you may depend upon it that it will not be for any want of blowing their own trumpets nor from any modesty in magnifying their own achievements.”⁴⁰⁵ Lincoln was badly annoyed by a constant stream of visitors from all regions.⁴⁰⁶ To escape them, he occasionally carved out time to play with his children, Willie and Tad. While doing so one day that summer, he told a friend that “he was having a little season of relaxation with the boys, which he could not always enjoy now, as so many callers and so much correspondence occupied his time.”⁴⁰⁷

One prominent visitor to Springfield who did not call on Lincoln was the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII of England. Lincoln told Simon P. Hanscom that “he would like very much” to have met the heir-apparent to the British throne when he quietly passed through the Illinois capital on September 29 and “had he not occupied his present peculiar position, so that he could have joined his fellow citizens in common in a welcome to the representative of the British government without having his motive misrepresented and a charge of immodesty brought against him, he would have taken measures to notice properly the passage of the Prince of Wales through the capital.” He explained: “Being thus situated and not able to take any lead in the matter, I remained

⁴⁰⁴ Edgar De Witt Jones, Lincoln and the Preachers (New York: Harper, 1948), 181.

⁴⁰⁵ Springfield correspondence, 16 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

⁴⁰⁶ Herndon to Trumbull, Springfield, 19 June 1860, Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress. Herndon added: “Good gracious, I would not have his place and be bored [i.e., annoyed] as he is – I could not endure it.”

⁴⁰⁷ Bonham, Fifty Years' Recollections, 183.

here at the State House, where I met so many sovereigns [i.e., fellow citizens] during the day that really the Prince had come and gone before I knew it.” Hanscom added that anyone “by conversing with Mr. Lincoln for a short time on national politics, will see that he is firm in the opinion that the whole government wants overhauling and cleaning out; that he is posted to an astonishing degree in the details of our government in all its departments.”⁴⁰⁸ When asked about the men he wanted to head those departments, he replied that “after his election he would form his own Cabinet.”⁴⁰⁹

To another journalist the candidate spoke of his mail and callers, saying that “he liked to see his friends, and as to the letters, he took good care not to answer them.” His most serious grievance, he averred, was with “the artists; he tried in vain to recognize himself in some ‘Abraham Lincolns’ of the pictorials.”⁴¹⁰ Jestingly he told a reporter who had asked why the campaign pictures of him were so inadequate: “It is impossible to get my graceful motions in – that’s the reason why none of the pictures are like me!”⁴¹¹ To those who maintained that none of the photographs accurately depicted him, he “laughingly suggested that it might not be desirable to have justice done to such forbidding features as his.”⁴¹² One portrait that he did admire was a photograph taken by Alexander Hesler in 1857; that likeness he deemed “a very true one,” though Mrs. Lincoln “and many others” did not agree. He believed that they objected to “the disordered condition of the hair.” But, he modestly insisted, his judgment was “worth

⁴⁰⁸ Springfield correspondence, 1 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

⁴⁰⁹ Lincoln said this to a friend of Douglas. New York Daily News, 20 August 1860.

⁴¹⁰ Springfield correspondence, 21 June 1860, Utica, New York, Herald, 27 June 1860, copied in the New York Tribune, 9 July 1860.

⁴¹¹ Springfield correspondence by J. L., August 1860 [no day of the month indicated], Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, 22 August 1860.

⁴¹² Richard C. McCormick’s reminiscences, New York, 29 April, New York Evening Post, 3 May 1865.

nothing in these matters.”⁴¹³ (The photographer had mussed Lincoln’s hair to make him look more natural.)⁴¹⁴ When a lithograph of this photo was rushed into print, Lincoln said that newsboys hawking it on city streets cried out: “‘Ere’s yer last picter of Old Abe! He’ll look better when he gets his hair combed!”⁴¹⁵ (One day during the Civil War, while visiting the front, he asked to borrow a hairbrush. When the request was honored, he said: “I can’t do anything with such a thing as that. It wouldn’t go through my hair. Now, if you have anything you comb your horse’s mane with, that might do.”)⁴¹⁶ Hesler recalled that Lincoln “did not care for pictures especially of his own. He said he could not see what any one wanted a picture of his ugly face for,” though he agreed to pose for photographers to accommodate his friends. When he saw Hesler’s photo, he remarked: “well, that looks better, and expresses me better than any I have seen” and “if it pleases the people I am satisfied.”⁴¹⁷

For the campaign, two Springfield photographers – John G. Stewart and Preston Butler – made more than 200,000 pictures of the candidate.⁴¹⁸

Among the artists for whom Lincoln sat that year were George Frederick Wright, Alban Jasper Conant, Thomas M. Johnston, J. Henry Brown, Jesse Atwood, Thomas

⁴¹³ Lincoln to James F. Babcock, Springfield, 13 September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:114.

⁴¹⁴ George H. Fergus, whose father was a Chicago printer and friend of Lincoln, recalled that he was in Hesler’s gallery when Lincoln entered and asked to have his picture taken. The photographer “looked at him and saw that his hair was plastered down on his forehead. Lincoln had evidently just come from a barber shop, and the barber had probably planned to prepare his patron for the event. But the arrangement of the hair did not please Hessler. He walked up to Lincoln, ran this hand through ‘Abe’s’ hair and mussed it all up. ‘Now you look natural,’ said Hessler.” Chicago Daily News, 14 January 1909.

⁴¹⁵ Albert B. Chandler in Harper’s Monthly 32 (February 1866): 405.

⁴¹⁶ Le Grand B. Cannon, Personal Reminiscences of the Rebellion, 1861-1866 (New York: Burr Printing House, 1895), 169.

⁴¹⁷ Hesler to George B. Ayers, Chicago, 24 May 1895, Lincoln Collection, Chicago History Museum.

⁴¹⁸ Reminiscences of John G. Stewart, Bloomington Pantagraph, 20 November 1901.

Hicks, George P. A. Healy, and Charles A. Barry.⁴¹⁹ A native of Boston, Barry was commissioned by Nathaniel P. Banks and John A. Andrew to do a crayon portrait of Lincoln. When it was finished, Lincoln gestured toward it and said: “Even my enemies must declare that to be a true likeness of Old Abe.”⁴²⁰ (But he called the lithograph made from it “a total failure.” Reportedly that lithograph was “very unpopular” in Springfield.)⁴²¹ Of Hicks’s oil portrait, he remarked: “It will give the people of the East a correct idea how I look at home I think the picture has a somewhat pleasanter expression than I usually have, but that, perhaps, is not an objection.”⁴²² Orville Browning called it “an exact, life like likeness” and “a beautiful work of art. It is deeply imbued with the intellectual and spiritual, and I doubt whether any one ever succeeds in getting a better picture of the man.”⁴²³

Lincoln was also pleased with Brown’s miniature portrait, which he deemed “an excellent one, so far as I can judge. To my unpracticed eye, it is without fault.”⁴²⁴ Nicolay, too, admired the portrait by Brown, who had been dispatched to Springfield by the wealthy Pennsylvania Republican leader, John M. Read. To Nicolay, Brown explained that “the impression prevails East that Mr. Lincoln is very ugly – an impression which the published pictures of him of course all confirm.” Read, however, “had an idea that it could hardly be so – but was bound to have a good-looking picture,” and so

⁴¹⁹ Springfield correspondence, 4 September, New York Evening Post, 8 September 1860; Rufus Rockwell Wilson, Lincoln in Portraiture (New York: Press of the Pioneers, 1935).

⁴²⁰ Barry’s reminiscences, Boston Transcript, 1902, in Rufus Rockwell Wilson, ed., Intimate Memories of Lincoln (Elmira, N.Y.: Primavera, 1945), 310.

⁴²¹ Thomas M. Johnston to Charles H. Brainard, Springfield, 23 July 1860, Lincoln’s Contemporaries Collection, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

⁴²² Thomas Hicks in Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Lincoln, 602.

⁴²³ Pease and Randall, eds., Browning Diary, 1:415 (entry for 13 June 1860).

⁴²⁴ Lincoln to John M. Read, Springfield, 27 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:102.

ordered Brown “to make it good-looking whether the original would justify it or not.” Thus when Brown reached Springfield to carry out his commission, he had some forebodings, but “was very happy when on seeing him [Lincoln] he found that he was not at all such a man as had been represented.”⁴²⁵ Brown thought that there were “so many hard lines in his face that it becomes a mask to the inner man. His true character only shines when in an animated conversation or when telling an amusing tale.”⁴²⁶

Thomas M. Johnston shared Brown’s view. “I believe no man’s personal appearance has been so variously misrepresented,” Johnston declared. “I was not aware that it was possible for photographs taken from life to so misrepresent the human face.” The candidate “has a fine head and face[,] the expression of which indicates an amiable disposition combined with great force of character. The upper part of his head is quite Websterian. Mr. Lincoln[’]s title of ‘Ugly’ must be owing entirely to his figure and gait; the length of the former destroying to some extent the grace of the latter.”⁴²⁷

Nicolay praised Brown’s portrait as “strikingly faithful and correct. It is, in my opinion, as perfect a likeness of him as could be made.”⁴²⁸ When he saw the engraving made from it, Nicolay told Brown: “I am highly gratified that Mr. Lincoln’s friends will at length be enabled to obtain a good likeness of him.”⁴²⁹

⁴²⁵ Nicolay to Therenia Bates, Springfield, 26 August 1860, Burlingame ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 5.

⁴²⁶ Brown, diary entry for 26 August 1860, in Wilson, Lincoln in Portraiture, 109-10.

⁴²⁷ Thomas M. Johnston to Charles H. Brainard, Springfield, 22 July 1860, Lincoln’s Contemporaries Collection, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

⁴²⁸ Nicolay to Read, Springfield, 27 August 1860, Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 5.

⁴²⁹ Nicolay to Brown, Springfield, 5 October 1860, ibid., 6.

Mary Lincoln lauded Conant's portrait of her husband, saying: "That is excellent, that is the way he looks when he has his friends about him."⁴³⁰ Lincoln found it "more satisfactory than any portrait of him that has been painted, probably, he says, because it makes a better-looking man of him than the others do."⁴³¹ Mrs. Lincoln also admired Healy's painting, though she "remarked that it gave Mr. Lincoln a graver expression than he usually wore."⁴³² (In January 1861, as Lincoln's new beard began to fill out, his photograph was taken by Christopher S. German of Springfield. The candidate told a visitor that it "was in his judgment, and that of his friends, the best ever had.")⁴³³

Artists enjoyed working with Lincoln. Thomas D. Jones, a sculptor for whom he sat during the winter after his election, spent "some very happy hours" with him and was "astounded at the man's simplicity & modesty." Jones described him as "a perfect child of nature – so fond of fun," one who "tells the best stories in the world, and more of them than any man I have ever met."⁴³⁴ (Jones's bust was praised for capturing not only Lincoln's "intellectual expression" but also "those cheerful, generous emotions which bespeak the true man.")⁴³⁵ To his patron, J. Henry Brown reported that Lincoln "must be seen and known to be properly appreciated. Ten minutes after I was in his presence I felt as if I had known him for years, [for] he has an easy frankness and charm of manner

⁴³⁰ Alban Jasper Conant, "A Portrait Painter's Reminiscences of Lincoln," McClure's Magazine 32 (March 1909): 515.

⁴³¹ Springfield correspondence, 4 September, New York Evening Post, 8 September 1860.

⁴³² Springfield correspondence by W., 14 November, Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, 21 November 1860.

⁴³³ Richard C. McCormick's reminiscences, New York, 29 April, New York Evening Post, 3 May 1865.

⁴³⁴ Thomas D. Jones to [William Linn McMillen], Springfield, 30 December 1860 and 11 February 1861, Lincoln Collection, Lilly Library, Indiana University.

⁴³⁵ Chicago Tribune, n.d., copied in the Ohio State Journal (Columbus), 31 March 1861.

which made me comfortable and happy while in his presence.”⁴³⁶ After three sittings, Thomas M. Johnston was able to state that “Mr Lincoln and myself are good friends and get along well together.”⁴³⁷

While remaining publicly silent, Lincoln worked behind the scenes to combat Democratic criticism. One of the most common charges against him and his party was that they favored social and political equality for blacks.⁴³⁸ Democrats believed that if they “would ignore the absurd quarrel raised upon the territorial question and resolve to fight the ensuing campaign upon new ground such as broadly, white man vs Negro,” they “could not fail to win.”⁴³⁹ Commenting on Lincoln’s July 10, 1858 speech, the Chicago Herald observed: “This declaration of Mr. Lincoln unequivocally places the white man and negro on the same level. . . . This is the ‘ultima thule’ of national self-degradation. The naked, greasy, bandy-shanked, blubber-lipped, monkey-headed, muskrat-scented cannibals from Congo and Guinea can come here in hoards, and settle down upon terms of equality with the descendants of Alfred the Great, the Van Tromps, the Russells, the Washingtons, the Lafayettes, the Emmitts! Mr. Lincoln will have no quibbling about this matter. They are not only not born inferior; but he will have them assigned no inferior position. A race, which for five thousand years has fallen so low as to have almost lost the image of manhood, who eat human flesh and indulge in every horror of vice and

⁴³⁶ Brown to Read, Springfield, 16 August 1860, Read Family Papers, Library of Congress, in Burlingame ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 191n27.

⁴³⁷ Thomas M. Johnston to Charles H. Brainard, Springfield, 23 July 1860, Lincoln’s Contemporaries Collection, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

⁴³⁸ “Lincoln’s Assailants,” Chicago Press and Tribune, 27 August 1860. On press criticism of Lincoln, see Douglas Fermer, James Gordon Bennett and the New York Herald: A Study of Editorial Opinion in the Civil War Era, 1854-1867 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 126-57; Wayne C. Williams, A Rail Splitter for President (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1951), 115-229; Melvin L. Hayes, Mr. Lincoln Runs for President (New York: Citadel Press, 1960), 99-207.

⁴³⁹ R. J. Haldeman to Thomas H. Seymour, Harrisburg, 22 May 1860, Thomas H. Seymour Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.

infamy, and whose very persons offend every sense of civilized man, are to rank at once with the races which, from their virtue and inherent strength, have, after a conflict of a thousand years, won the brilliant civilization of the nineteenth century!”⁴⁴⁰ A St. Louis paper identified the central Republican principle as “negro equality.” The party “seeks to confound the white and black races; and as it can never elevate the negro to the moral and intellectual level of the white, it can never bring about that promised equality save by dragging the whites down to the level of the blacks.” The result would be “intellectual, moral and physical degradation of both whites and blacks.”⁴⁴¹ That paper ran a satirical letter maintaining that Black Republicanism was the progeny of Abraham Lincoln and the “darkey” Hagar.⁴⁴² The Illinois State Register described to its readers Lincoln’s “detestable doctrines” thus: “the worthless negro of our state” must be placed “upon full social and political equality with you – to associate him with you at the ballot box, in your legislative halls, in your judiciary, and in your family circle, and finally, if that full equality which Lincoln claims is his right, should be brought about, to mingle the African with the blood of the whites, by intermarriage with your sisters and daughters.” The Register claimed that Lincoln’s policies would turn Illinois into “an asylum for the worthless free negro population of the whole valley of the Mississippi.” Republican policy “must end in the Africanization of the slave states, and a gradual mingling of the races in the political control of the government.”⁴⁴³ The New York Herald argued that the essential difference between the Republicans and Democrats was their position on race:

⁴⁴⁰ “Equality of Races,” Chicago Herald, 17 July 1860.

⁴⁴¹ Missouri Republican (St. Louis), 3 August, 12 September 1860.

⁴⁴² “Isaac” to the editor, Independence, Missouri, 23 June 1860, Missouri Republican (St. Louis), 27 June 1860.

⁴⁴³ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 2 August, 14, 28 September 1860.

“This anti-slavery idea aims to establish a new social policy in this country – the policy of an equalization of the white and black races – which has never produced anything but bloodshed in other parts of the world, and which can only result in the subjugation or destruction of the numerically weaker race. There is no possibility of the black and the white existing harmoniously together in social and political equality. Even the blacks and mulattoes cannot do it.” The Republican doctrine of racial equality would lead to “anarchy, civil war, the rule of the military tyrant and the public robber,” such as could be seen in Spanish America. The “grand object” of the Republican party, said the Herald, was racial “amalgamation.” The paper speculated that once emancipated, blacks would flee the South for the North, where they would become public charges, for “the negro South cannot support himself in a state of freedom.” Rhetorically it asked readers: “Are you ready to divide you patrimony with the negro?”⁴⁴⁴

Democratic organizers and speakers as well as their party’s newspapers stressed racial issues. In New York, the Second Ward Democratic Clubs rode a wagon through the streets of Manhattan carrying “a very large transparency, representing a boat, Lincoln at the head with a black flag labeled ‘discord,’ and Horace Greeley at the stern, holding the tiller in his right hand and the Tribune in the left.” Between them “sat the amalgamationists – in one case a thick-lipped negro embracing a white girl, while a fellow darkey exclaims, ‘Is looking at you, Sam;’ and Sam chuckles an answer, ‘Yah, yah!’” Greeley “is made to say, ‘Colored folks have preference of state rooms;’ and one of the party says, ‘Free Love and Free Niggers will certainly elect Old Abe if he (Lincoln) pilots us safe.’” Another wagon bore a transparency with three figures, the first

⁴⁴⁴ New York Herald, 5, 18, and 19 September, 5 November 1860.

representing “a nigger with outstretched arms, grasping Horace Greeley with the left hand, and a sorry-looking figure of Abe Lincoln with the right.” Beneath them was a caption: “The Almighty Nigger.”⁴⁴⁵ Other banners read:

“Republican Principle – ‘The Negro better than the White Man,’ Republican Practice – ‘Union of Black and White’”

“What ‘Free Negro Suffrage’ Really Means – ‘Amalgamation in the Military. Amalgamation in the Fire Department. Amalgamation in the Social Circle.’”

“No Negro Equality.”

“The Niggers of the North!”

“Free Love, Free Niggers, and Free Women!”⁴⁴⁶

Another campaign sign displayed “the caricature of a huge negro, and underneath the inscription: ‘The successor of Abraham Lincoln in 1864.’”⁴⁴⁷

On a “dusky cart” stood a man costumed like Horace Greeley beside what a journalist described as “a large and good-looking nigger wench, whom he caressed with all the affection of a true Republican. This produced great cheers and laughter from the thousands of spectators, and many were the derisive epithets hurled after them as they proceeded.”⁴⁴⁸ Congressman Theodore R. Westbrook of New York told several hundred of his fellow Democrats that the “only argument advanced by the Republicans is ‘Freedom, Freedom, Freedom – Darky, darky, darky.’ Indeed, they have a darky for breakfast, darky for dinner, darky for supper, and darky for bed-fellows.” Calling for a

⁴⁴⁵ New York Daily News, copied in the New York Tribune, 25 October 1860.

⁴⁴⁶ New York Express, n.d., copied in The Liberator (Boston), 2 November 1860.

⁴⁴⁷ New York World, 25 October 1860.

⁴⁴⁸ Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, 3 November 1860.

vote on what he termed “the nigger question,” Westbrook declared: “I say, down with the darky. All who are in favor of putting down the darky, manifest it by saying Aye.”⁴⁴⁹

Rhetorically the New York Morning Examiner its readers, “Shall Africans govern Americans? Are you ready for negro equality? Are you ready for assimilation? Both are Republican principles.”⁴⁵⁰ Constitutional Unionists also appealed to race prejudice. “In the spirit of profound fanaticism,” proclaimed John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, the Republicans “would destroy the white man in order that the black man might be free.”⁴⁵¹

Lincoln did not openly respond to race baiting, but in September the Illinois State Journal published an anonymous contribution on race that may well have been written by him. Headlined “Negro Equality and Amalgamation,” it focused on the Douglas Democratic party platform’s call for the acquisition of Cuba. That policy did not square with the Little Giant’s analysis of the Revolutionary fathers’ attitude toward mixed races.⁴⁵²

Rather than write many such pieces, Lincoln counted on Republican orators and newspapers to rebut charges that he was a deep-dyed abolitionist, that he had been unpatriotic during the Mexican War, that he sought to provoke warfare between the sections, that he had betrayed Henry Clay, and that he favored equality for blacks. In dealing with the contention that the Republicans kept harping on slavery, the Illinois State Journal observed that “the agitation of the slavery question has been the chief stock in trade of the Democratic party, ever since the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

⁴⁴⁹ New York Tribune, n.d., quoted in The Liberator (Boston), 9 November 1860.

⁴⁵⁰ New York Morning Examiner, 31 October 1860.

⁴⁵¹ Crittenden, speech of 25 October 1860, Boston Courier, 3 November 1860, quoted in John V. Mering, “The Slave-State Constitutional Unionists and the Politics of Consensus,” Journal of Southern History 43 (1977): 405.

⁴⁵² Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 1 September 1860.

‘Nigger, nigger, nigger,’ is the entire burden of their song.”⁴⁵³ Pointing to Maryland, Frank P. Blair noted that half its population lived in Baltimore but that the state legislature was dominated by rural areas where slaves were numerous. “Talbot County, where they had nothing but niggers and blackbirds,” was represented by one state senator, as was the populous city of Baltimore. “The nigger representatives in Maryland have charge of the City of Baltimore, and have disfranchised it; the niggers vote down the white residents.” Blair protested against the perversion of language whereby “the Republicans were called ‘Black,’ because their aim was to dignify free white labor, and sustain white men: and the Democracy called themselves white because they wished to cover the country with niggers, to the exclusion of white men.” He urged laborers to “put the Government into the hands of Lincoln. He will respect the rights of the whites.”⁴⁵⁴ The New York Times scoffed at charges that Republicans favored racial equality. Over ninety per cent of the delegates to the Chicago Convention, the paper argued, would oppose “making negroes, in all respects, the political equals of whites, – of giving them the same rights of suffrage, the same right to office and the same political standing and consideration which belong to the white race. Nor is the proportion greater among their constituents.” Pointing to the lack of political rights enjoyed by blacks in the Free States, the Times asked rhetorically: “how is the doctrine of negro equality to be ‘forced upon the South’ by the Republicans, when they scout and scorn it for the free negroes of the North?” Republicans do not “have any more love of the negro – any greater disposition to make sacrifices for his sake, or to waive their own rights and interests for the promotion of his welfare, than the rest of mankind, North and South.” The Republican party is

⁴⁵³ Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 21 June 1860. Cf. “Negro Mania,” ibid., 14 August 1860.

⁴⁵⁴ New York Times, 27, 28 June 1860.

“pretty thoroughly a white man’s party.”⁴⁵⁵ The Indianapolis Daily Journal said it was absurd to charge “‘nigger equality’ against a party, the first cardinal principle of whose creed is, exclusion of Niggers from the Territories.”⁴⁵⁶

In addition to attacking Lincoln’s record and principles, Democrats also ridiculed him personally.⁴⁵⁷ He was, they sneered, “a third rate lawyer,” a man “without tact, talent, or ordinary discernment,” a “stiff-necked, cold-blooded, calculating man, who keeps an eye to the main chance, and was never known to serve even his own party except as a means of personal advantage.”⁴⁵⁸

When opponents belittled the candidate’s appearance, origins, education, and nicknames, Congressman John Sherman of Ohio admitted that “Lincoln cannot be recommended as a parlor President, like Gen. Pierce, and is not as familiar with the etiquette of foreign courts, as Mr. Buchanan,” but, Sherman insisted, “he is honest, faithful and capable. . . . He is far better for having lived a short time in Washington, for that city of politicians is not particularly celebrated for sound principles or rigid morals.”⁴⁵⁹

Democrats tried to show that Lincoln’s relatives opposed his election. In July, John Hanks published a 1600-word letter countering rumors that he would not vote for

⁴⁵⁵ “The Republicans and the Doctrine of Negro Equality,” New York Times, 28 August 1860.

⁴⁵⁶ Indianapolis Daily Journal, quoted in Emma Lou Thornbrough, Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880 (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1965), 92-93.

⁴⁵⁷ “The Railers Silenced,” Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, 17 October 1860.

⁴⁵⁸ Peoria, Illinois, Daily Democratic Union, 19 May 1860; Manchester, N.H., Union Democrat, 22 May 1860.

⁴⁵⁹ Speech of John Sherman at Chadd’s Ford, Pennsylvania, Chicago Press and Tribune, 17 September 1860.

his cousin Lincoln.⁴⁶⁰ (In fact, he was the only member of the Hanks family who did support the Republican nominee.) His brother Charles criticized John's account of Lincoln's life, which was widely reprinted. Asserting that he had known the candidate well as a young man, Charles scornfully called him "a wild harum scarum boy" and insisted that "jumping and wrestling were his only accomplishments. His laziness was the cause of many mortifications to me; for as I was an older boy than either Abe or John, I often had to do Abe's work at uncle's, when the family were sick . . . and Abe would be rollicking around the county neglecting them."⁴⁶¹ To counter these allegations, Lincoln wrote a public letter explaining that he had spent virtually no time with Charles Hanks in Indiana or Kentucky but had done so in Macon County in 1830-31.⁴⁶²

Lincoln composed yet another reminiscent document responding to charges by John Hill, son of the New Salem merchant Samuel Hill, that he had betrayed the principles of Henry Clay.⁴⁶³ In a detailed rebuttal which he left incomplete, Lincoln reviewed Hill's allegations and showed that his record as a state legislator and a congressman had been misrepresented.⁴⁶⁴ Another misrepresentation which Lincoln took pains to challenge involved an attack on Jefferson that he had allegedly made in 1844.⁴⁶⁵ The language ascribed to him in fact came from a hostile sketch of the third president

⁴⁶⁰ John Hanks's letter, drafted by Richard J. Oglesby, appeared in the Decatur Chronicle on July 4 and was copied in the Quincy Whig and Republican, 11 July 1860. Mark A. Plummer, Lincoln's Rail-Splitter: Governor Richard J. Oglesby (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 46-47.

⁴⁶¹ Undated letter by Charles Hanks to the editor of the Decatur Magnet, copied in the Rockport, Indiana, Democrat, 11 August 1860.

⁴⁶² Hanks to Lincoln, 23 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to John Hanks, Springfield, 24 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:100.

⁴⁶³ On 24 July 1860, in the Missouri Republican (St. Louis), Hill had published a long article comparing Lincoln's record with Clay's on a number of issues. Other Democrats made similar charges. Illinois State Register (Springfield), 25 August 1860.

⁴⁶⁴ Draft of a letter to John Hill, September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:104-8.

⁴⁶⁵ Macomb, Illinois, Eagle, n.d., copied in the New York World, 31 August 1860.

written by a Scottish Tory, Thomas Hamilton.⁴⁶⁶ Insisting that his name not be used in any denials, he authorized friends to denounce the misattribution.⁴⁶⁷ The Illinois State Journal did so in an editorial that may well have been written by Lincoln: “This is a bold and deliberate forgery, whether originating with the Chicago Times and Herald or the Macomb Eagle. Mr. Lincoln never used any such language in any speech at any time. Throughout the whole of his political life, Mr. Lincoln has ever spoken of Mr. Jefferson in the most kindly and respectful manner, holding him up as one of the ablest statesmen of his own or any other age, and constantly referring to him as one of the greatest apostles of freedom and free labor. This is so well known that any attempt, by means of fraud or forgery, to create the contrary impression, can only react upon the desperate politicians who are parties to such disreputable tactics.”⁴⁶⁸

In August, Lincoln told an interviewer from the New York Herald that when invited to visit his birthplace in Kentucky, he playfully asked if he would not be lynched if he were to accept. The Herald reported this conversation in such a way that it did not sound playful. Lincoln, said the paper, concluded “that the invitation was a trap laid by some designing person to inveigle him into a slave State for the purpose of doing violence to his person.”⁴⁶⁹ Democrats, including Stephen A. Douglas, attacked him as a coward. The Little Giant told an audience in Indiana how Kentuckians “regretted exceedingly that Lincoln was afraid to come to Kentucky to look after his mother. But I

⁴⁶⁶ Thomas Hamilton, Men and Manners in America (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Blanchard, 1833), quoted in Carolyn Moss, “The Source of a Faked Lincoln Attribution,” Lincoln Herald 101 (1999): 62-64.

⁴⁶⁷ Lincoln to Anson G. Chester, Springfield, 5 September 1860, and to James H. Reed, Springfield, 1 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:111, 124.

⁴⁶⁸ Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 6 September 1860, in Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:112n.

⁴⁶⁹ Springfield correspondence, 8 August, New York Herald, 13 August 1860.

told them to have no uneasiness on that subject, for Lincoln was a friend of mine, and I never yet failed to do him an act of kindness when I had a chance; that while, perhaps, his principles would not allow him to visit the grave of his grandfather in the valley of Virginia, or his mother, in Kentucky, mine would allow me to go wherever the American flag waved over American soil. Hence I told them when I returned to Illinois I would call on my friend Lincoln and tell him I had visited his good old mother Kentucky and that she was grieved to know that her son had forgotten the land of his birth; had proved false to the grave of his fathers; had joined her enemies, and was now preaching a crusade against the State that gave him birth.”⁴⁷⁰

Lincoln wrote Samuel Haycraft, who had extended the invitation to visit Kentucky, denying the Herald report: “I was not guilty of stating, or insinuating, a suspicion of any intended violence, deception or other wrong, against me, by you, or any other Kentuckian.”⁴⁷¹ Lincoln prepared a correction for the Herald to publish: “We have such assurance as satisfies us that our correspondent writing from Springfield, Ill., under date of Aug. 8 – was mistaken in representing Mr. Lincoln as expressing a suspicion of a design to inveigle him into Kentucky for the purpose of doing him violence. Mr. Lincoln neither entertains, nor has intended to express any such suspicion.” He asked George G. Fogg, secretary of the Republican National Committee, to persuade the Herald’s editor, James Gordon Bennett, to run the correction.⁴⁷² Bennett replied that he would not do so

⁴⁷⁰ Douglas’s speech in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Washington States and Union, 10 October 1860. He made similar remarks in a speech at Jones’ Wood, New York, 12 September, New York World, 13 September 1860.

⁴⁷¹ New York Herald, 13 and 14 August 1860; “Lincoln Self-Condemed,” Missouri Republican (Missouri), 18 August 1860; Lincoln to Haycraft, Springfield, 16 and 23 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:97, 99.

⁴⁷² Lincoln to Fogg, Springfield, 16 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:96.

unless Fogg would sign it or it could be datelined Springfield. Fogg advised Lincoln to drop the matter, and so he did, explaining: “Although it wrongs me, and annoys me some, I prefer to let it run it’s course, to getting into the papers over my own name.”⁴⁷³

A New York Herald reporter, Simon P. Hanscom, helped undo some of the damage created by his colleague; he interviewed Lincoln and published the candidate’s explanation of the Kentucky story, which resembled the denial he had penned for Fogg.⁴⁷⁴ On Lincoln’s behalf Hanscom also lobbied the editor of the Herald, James Gordon Bennett, who dreaded the prospect of a Republican victory. At first, the mercurial Bennett supported Breckinridge; subsequently he urged a fusion of all anti-Republican elements.⁴⁷⁵ In late October, Hanscom wrote the candidate: “I had a long talk with Mr. Bennett, about you, since my return, and he was pleased at the assurances I made him that you would pursue a conservative course &c. &c. and said he would give you his support with the greatest pleasure, especially if you would make a clean sweep of the present corrupt office-holders.”⁴⁷⁶ Hanscom was, according to Illinois Congressman William Kellogg, one of Lincoln’s “warmest supporters” at the Chicago Convention and “well known to be a true and staunch republican” whose coverage of Congress for the Herald was fair and just to the party. “No man I am confident enjoys more of the confidence of the republicans here than he does,” Kellogg told Lincoln, “and no man has done more than him to present Douglass in his true character before the American people, and to the utmost of his ability will he, I do know wage an unyielding warfare against

⁴⁷³ Lincoln to Fogg, Springfield, 30 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:102.

⁴⁷⁴ Springfield correspondence, 1 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

⁴⁷⁵ Fermer, Bennett, 137-39.

⁴⁷⁶ Simon P. Hanscom to Abraham Lincoln, Boston, 24 October 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

[the] democracy in any of [its] phases.”⁴⁷⁷ Hanscom claimed that at Chicago he had “contributed somewhat . . . to remove the obstacles in the way of his [Lincoln’s] nomination” and was one of the original members of a rail-splitter’s club.⁴⁷⁸ (Not everyone in the capital agreed with Kellogg. A Washington correspondent of the New York Tribune alleged that Hanscom “is known here, as one of the most unscrupulous & notorious of all the corrupt gang who infest this capital.”)⁴⁷⁹

Hanscom visited Springfield, where he wrote two pro-Lincoln dispatches that ran in the Herald on October 20. The candidate evidently disliked publicity generated earlier that month by his brief meeting with Seward. To help put a positive gloss on that story, Hanscom (perhaps at Lincoln’s urging) said the senator should be honored “for his avoidance of even the semblance of hypocrisy.” The brief stopover in Springfield “may be said the proof of Mr. Seward’s regard for Lincoln.” If he had failed to visit the party’s standard bearer, it “would surely be construed into an evidence of hostility against Lincoln.” On the other hand, if the two men held a long conversation, “the same slanderous spirit might find in that fact ‘confirmation as strong as proofs of holy writ’ that Seward was negotiating for the State Department or for the mission to London.” So the New Yorker decided to stop in the Illinois capital but to avoid any private consultation with Lincoln.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ William Kellogg to Lincoln, Washington, 26 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁷⁸ Simon P. Hanscom to William Kellogg, Washington, 26 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. Hanscom supported his friend N. P. Banks before the convention. S[imon] P. H[anscom] to Banks, Washington, 4 May [1860], Banks Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁷⁹ James E. Harvey to John G. Nicolay, Washington, 25 November 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁸⁰ Springfield correspondence, 16 October, New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

Hanscom sought to modify the out-and-out abolitionist image of Lincoln that the Herald had been portraying. He assured readers that the radical Seward would “not hold a place in the next administration.” Unlike the Sage of Auburn, Lincoln “rather inclines to follow a moderate, fair, constitutional course of policy. If you believe his own assurances, the most violent Southern fire-eater will find it difficult to question his patriotism or impartiality. He is a man of a rough, original turn of mind, and just such a man, it strikes me, as would, in the administration over which he should preside, show rather more obstinacy and self-will. . . . And such a man would not be likely to tolerate such a vizier as Wm H. Seward.” “I found him eminently conservative,” Hanscom added; “I have reason to know that because of the great ability he exhibited and the high national conservative position taken by him” in the 1858 campaign “he was selected by the Chicago Convention as the standard bearer of the republican party. The platform adopted by that Convention is in harmony with the view expressed by Mr. Lincoln in his discussions with Douglas.” On slavery, Lincoln’s record “is not nearly so radical as some of the avowed doctrines of the democratic party” a few years earlier.

Hanscom forwarded a copy of his handiwork to Lincoln with a cover note: “Of course you will find some things in it that will amuse you, but it had to be dished for peculiar appetites and in taking advantage of my opportunities and facilities I trust I have done you no injustice. At first I thought I would not publish the paragraph about your visit to Kentucky, but many of your best and most sagacious friends advised that it had better be done. . . . The editorial accompanying the letter is quite as important as the letter.”⁴⁸¹ That editorial, in stark contrast to Bennett’s earlier ones denouncing Lincoln as

⁴⁸¹ Hanscom to Lincoln, Boston, 24 October 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

a dangerous radical, referred to the candidate as “a conservative republican” who “contemplates no war upon the constitutional rights of slavery in the slave States,” and predicted “that his general policy upon slavery will be to conciliate the South into submission instead of exasperating her people into open rebellion.”⁴⁸²

During the Civil War, Hanscom was to become Lincoln’s favorite journalist. In 1863, the well-informed Noah Brooks asserted that Hanscom, “a pushing and persevering man, has managed to so ingratiate himself with the President that he has almost exclusive access to the office of the Executive, and there obtains from our good-natured Chief magistrate such scanty items of news as he is willing to give out for publication.”⁴⁸³ During the 1860 campaign, Hanscom laid the foundations for his status as presidential insider. Lincoln’s cultivation of Hanscom was yet another example of his solicitude for the press and his subtle manipulation of it to assure favorable coverage for him and his party.⁴⁸⁴

The Herald’s new tune was indicative of a growing trend. By September the New York Times could observe that critics had abandoned their earlier attacks on Lincoln as a radical. “It begins to be universally seen and felt, that Mr. Lincoln’s position is eminently conservative, and that his election will by no means involve a triumph of the ultra Anti-

⁴⁸² “The Question of Lincoln’s Administration – Interesting Reports from Springfield,” New York Herald, 20 October 1860.

⁴⁸³ Washington correspondence, 14 October, Sacramento Daily Union, 7 November 1863, in Michael Burlingame, ed., Lincoln Observed: Civil War Dispatches of Noah Brooks (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 69-70. See also Philadelphia Sunday Dispatch, 25 March 1865; Ben: Perley Poore, “Reminiscences of the Great Northern Uprising,” The Youth’s Companion, 26 July 1883, 301; Washington correspondence by Whitelaw Reid (“Agate”), 10 August, Cincinnati Gazette, 14 August 1863.

⁴⁸⁴ Michael Burlingame, “Lincoln Spins the Press,” in Charles M. Hubbard, ed., Lincoln Reshapes the Presidency (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2003), 65-78.

Slavery element of the Northern and Eastern States.”⁴⁸⁵ (Some Northern papers continued attacking him as a dangerous radical. In September the Illinois State Register said: “Lincoln has the insane idea that he is a sort of second Messiah; that he is the man selected from all time to establish a new law, under which African slavery is to be abolished in the United States.”)⁴⁸⁶

On August 6, the first harbinger of things to come appeared in Missouri, where Frank Blair won election to the U.S. House on the Republican ticket, reversing the outcome of 1858.⁴⁸⁷ “I count that day as one of the happiest in my life,” Lincoln said a few weeks later.⁴⁸⁸

The first gubernatorial election of the campaign occurred on September 10 in Maine, which Douglas’s strategists regarded as vital and where the Little Giant had stumped.⁴⁸⁹ To counter his efforts, Republicans imported outside speakers, including Anson Burlingame, whose speeches proved effective. “The way Burlingame hits the crowds is astonishing,” James Shepherd Pike reported. “Everybody thinks him angelic.”⁴⁹⁰ In late August, Lincoln felt “a little anxiety” about the Pine Tree State when he heard about Hannibal Hamlin’s alleged prediction that the Republicans would probably lose two congressional seats and triumph by only a 6,000-vote margin in

⁴⁸⁵ King, Davis, 157-58; Fehrenbacher, Chicago Giant, 180-82; “Lincoln and Slavery – Conservatism of the Republican Candidate,” New York Times, 4 September 1860.

⁴⁸⁶ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 29 September 1860.

⁴⁸⁷ William E. Parrish, Frank Blair: Lincoln's Conservative (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 86.

⁴⁸⁸ Springfield correspondence, 10 October, St. Louis Anzeiger des Westens, 15 October 1860, in Germans for a Free Missouri: Translations from the St. Louis Radical Press, 1857-1862, selected and translated by Steven Rowan (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), 130.

⁴⁸⁹ Johannsen, Douglas, 784-85.

⁴⁹⁰ Pike to William P. Fessenden, Calais, 2 September [1860], Pike Papers, Library of Congress.

gubernatorial race.⁴⁹¹ To his running mate, Lincoln wrote that he was “annoyed some” by this news, especially since he had received optimistic reports from other Maine leaders. “Such a result as you seem to have predicted in Maine, in your letter to Colfax, would, I fear, put us on the down-hill track, lose us the State elections in Pennsylvania and Indiana, and probably ruin us on the main turn in November.”⁴⁹² Hamlin promptly denied saying any such thing and accurately predicted a Republican landslide.⁴⁹³ Thanks in part to the popularity of gubernatorial candidate Israel Washburn, the party swept all six congressional races and won the governorship by more than 15,000 votes.⁴⁹⁴

The next tests occurred in Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania, where state tickets were elected on October 9. Assured by Pennsylvanians that their gubernatorial candidate would win easily, and with Ohio safely in hand, Lincoln advised that all efforts be focused on Indiana, where a fusion movement threatened Henry S. Lane’s chances of capturing the governorship.⁴⁹⁵ In August, after stumping the Hoosier State for two weeks,

⁴⁹¹ Lincoln to E. B. Washburne, Springfield, 9 September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:114; Medill to Lincoln, Chicago, 30 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. James G. Blaine was also anxious about Republican chances in the Augusta district. Blaine to William P. Fessenden, Augusta, 13 August 1860, Blaine Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹² Lincoln to Hamlin, Springfield, 4 September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:110.

⁴⁹³ Hamlin to Lincoln, Hampden, 8 September 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹⁴ Israel Washburn to Elihu B. Washburne, Orono, Maine, 29 March 1861, Washburn Family Papers, Washburn Memorial Library, Norlands, Maine; Jerry R. Desmond, “Maine and the Elections of 1860,” New England Quarterly 67 (1994): 455-75; H. Draper Hunt, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine: Lincoln’s First Vice-President (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1969), 125.

⁴⁹⁵ Lincoln to E. D. Morgan, Springfield, 20 September 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:116; David Davis to Simon Cameron, Bloomington, Illinois, 30 August 1860, Cameron Papers, Dauphin County Historical Society, Harrisburg; Cameron to Davis, Lochliel, 7 September 1860, Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield; David Davis to Thurlow Weed, Bloomington, 3 and 11 September 1860, and John D. Defrees to Weed, Indianapolis, 25 August 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester; Schuyler Colfax to Lincoln, South Bend, Indiana, 6 July 1860, and John D. Defrees to Lincoln, Indianapolis, 9 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Henry S. Lane to Richard W. Thompson, Fort Wayne, 3 September 1860, typed copy, Lane Papers, Indiana University; W. M. Dunn to Richard W. Thompson, Switzerland, Indiana, 11 August 1860, Richard W. Thompson Collection, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne; Horace Greeley to L. U. Reavis, New York, 21 August 1860, L. U. Reavis Papers, Chicago

Herman Kreismann was pessimistic. “I have worked like a nigger,” he reported. “I have been in the d[amnde]st holes worse than any places we have in Egypt. It was the first time many of them had ever heard anything about slavery etc.” The Republicans in Indiana “are just four years behind us [Illinoisans] in organization and efficiency.”⁴⁹⁶ David Davis, who thought Indiana was in grave danger, urged Weed, Cameron, and Morgan to send thousands of dollars for speakers and efforts to combat fraud.⁴⁹⁷ The money was provided swiftly by Davis’s old friend John Z. Goodrich of Massachusetts, a wealthy member of the Republican National Committee.⁴⁹⁸ Goodrich visited Springfield in September and raised \$7,000 from Illinoisans to counter Democratic “pipelaying” operations there and in Indiana.⁴⁹⁹ Luckily for the Republicans, the leader of Indiana’s Breckinridge forces, Jesse D. Bright, so hated Douglas that he spitefully threw his support to Lane.⁵⁰⁰ Exacerbating tension between the Democratic factions, the Little

History Museum; Blanton Duncan to [A. H. Davidson], Louisville, 13 October 1860, Valette Miller Papers, Indiana State Library Indianapolis.

⁴⁹⁶ Herman Kreismann to Elihu B. Washburne, Chicago, 3 September 1860, Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Library of Congress; Herman Kreismann to Lyman Trumbull, Chicago, 30 August 1860, Lyman Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹⁷ David Davis to Thurlow Weed, Bloomington, 24 August, Barnes, Memoir of Weed, 299-300; David Davis to Thurlow Weed, Bloomington, 11 September 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester; David Davis to E. D. Morgan, Bloomington, 22 September 1860, and Indianapolis, 28 September 1860, Edwin D. Morgan Papers, New York State Library, Albany; David Davis to his wife Sarah, Indianapolis, 30 September 1860, Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library; Simon Cameron to Davis, Lochliel, 7 September 1860, ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ David Davis to E. D. Morgan, Bloomington, 6 September 1860, and George Morey to Morgan, Boston, 21 September 1860, Edwin D. Morgan Papers, New York State Library, Albany; King, Davis, 154.

⁴⁹⁹ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 25 September 1860; David Davis to E. D. Morgan, Bloomington, 22 September 1860, and Indianapolis, 28 September 1860, Edwin D. Morgan Papers, New York State Library, Albany.

⁵⁰⁰ Louisville Daily Democrat, 14 October 1860; J. H. B. Nowland to Stephen A. Douglas, Jeffersonville, Indiana, 15 October 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago; James E. Blythe to A. H. Davidson, Evansville, 15 October 1860, Valette Miller Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

Giant abused Breckinridge and his followers during a swing through Indiana.⁵⁰¹ Many Bell supporters distrusted the Douglasites, who had betrayed them at a recent session of the state legislature.⁵⁰² In addition, the Bell forces, headed by Lincoln’s friend Richard W. Thompson, eventually decided to back the Republican gubernatorial candidate.⁵⁰³ On the eve of the October elections, Davis, who was heroically organizing the Lincoln campaign and who felt “uneasy, very, about the Indiana & Pennsylvania elections,” told his son: “Tomorrow is the most important day in the history of the Country.”⁵⁰⁴

Davis’s apprehension proved unwarranted, for Republicans triumphed in both of those states. In Indiana, Lane defeated his opponent 136,725 to 126,968 (52% to 48%). During the final months of the campaign, the Republicans had taken Lincoln’s advice and flooded the state with money and speakers.⁵⁰⁵ As Lincoln had been advised, the Republicans did much better than usual in southwestern Indiana, where he grew up.⁵⁰⁶ In Pennsylvania, Democrats bemoaned their opponents’ emphasis on protectionism. One observed that “the Tariff possesses more interest to the working classes than the ‘Nigger’

⁵⁰¹ Douglas, speeches at Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, Washington States and Union, 9 and 10 October 1860; John D. Defrees to Thurlow Weed, Indianapolis, 1 October 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester.

⁵⁰² W. K. Edwards to A. H. Davidson, Terre Haute, 15 October 1860, Valette Miller Papers, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

⁵⁰³ Roll, Thompson, 163-64; New York Times, 31 August, 2 October 1860.

⁵⁰⁴ Davis to his wife Sarah, Clinton, Illinois, 2 October 1860; Davis to his son George, Clinton, Illinois, 8 October 1860, Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library.

⁵⁰⁵ Austin H. Brown to Stephen A. Douglas, Indianapolis, 2 September 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago; McClure, Lincoln and Men of War-Times, 43; Reinhard H. Luthin, The First Lincoln Campaign (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944), 196-200; Hiram Rockwell Bennett, “Financing Mr. Lincoln’s First Campaign,” Lincoln Herald, vol. 50, no. 3 (October 1948): 11-22.

⁵⁰⁶ Schuyler Colfax to Lincoln, South Bend, 9 July, and John D. Defrees to Lincoln, Indianapolis, 9 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. In 1856, the so-called “pocket” of Indiana had gone for Buchanan by 10,000 votes; four years later the Democratic gubernatorial candidate won there by only 1500 votes. Chicago Press and Tribune, 16 October 1860. On Lincoln’s popularity in the Pocket, see Elmer Duane Elbert, “Southern Indiana Politics on the Eve of the Civil War, 1858-1861” (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1967), 124, and W. K. Edwards to Richard W. Thompson, Terre Haute, 4 June 1860, Richard W. Thompson Collection, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne.

question” and that “the Republicans, in their speeches say nothing of the nigger question, but all is made to turn on the Tariff.”⁵⁰⁷ Cameron noted that in the opinion of his constituents, the tariff “is the great question of the day, it is our nigger.”⁵⁰⁸ Feuding within the Republican ranks, though worrisome to Lincoln, was far less bitter than it was among the Democrats. As a result, Andrew G. Curtin was elected governor by a vote of 262,403 to 230,239.⁵⁰⁹

Predictably, Republicans did well in Ohio, one of their safe states, winning thirteen of the twenty-one congressional races and electing their candidate for the state supreme court by 13,000 votes.⁵¹⁰ In Cleveland, a party leader observed that “Old Abe has nothing left for himself to do but to put his affairs at home in order and get ready for the White House.”⁵¹¹ A leading Bell supporter viewed the “terrible blows” that the Constitutional Unionists suffered at the polls as a “catastrophy.”⁵¹²

Lincoln received the good news “with that equanimity that marks the man in all emergencies.”⁵¹³ That night, while awaiting the returns in the capitol, Lincoln calmed his more fearful neighbors the “by saying that he was not only morally convinced that the

⁵⁰⁷ Judge William L. Helfenstein to Stephen A. Douglas, New York, 31 July 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago.

⁵⁰⁸ Pittsburgh Gazette, 24 May 1860, quoted in I. F. Boughter, “Western Pennsylvania and the Morrill Tariff,” Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine 6 (1923): 118.

⁵⁰⁹ McClure, Lincoln and Men of War-Times, 43; Erwin Stanley Bradley, The Triumph of Militant Republicanism: A Study of Pennsylvania and Presidential Politics, 1860-1872 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), 93.

⁵¹⁰ Luthin, First Lincoln Campaign, 182; Eugene Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873 (vol. 6 of Carl Wittke, ed., The History of the State of Ohio; Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944), 370.

⁵¹¹ John Coon to Benjamin F. Wade, Cleveland, 13 October 1860, Wade Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵¹² Henry Winter Davis to Samuel Francis du Pont, n.p., n.d. [mid-October 1860] and 18 October 1860, transcripts, S. F. Du Pont Papers, Hagley Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

⁵¹³ Chicago Press and Tribune, 11 October 1860. The paper added that he greeted “his friends as usual, and no one, unaware of his position, would have suspected from his deportment that the contest had more than a transient interest to him.”

people of the North, East, and Northwest would teach the Fusionists a hard lesson, but that he had precise forecasts and reports from the best-informed men in Pennsylvania, New York, and Indiana showing that his election was beyond a doubt in those states.” Favorable dispatches rolled in until finally, soon after midnight, the Republican victory seemed assured. As his friends whooped and hollered, Lincoln alone retained his composure. “His face was no more flushed than it had been before; his movements were just as calm, his language as cheerful and prudent. He only allowed himself a moment of triumph when he read out the dispatch of General Cameron, saying: ‘Now Douglas might learn a lesson about what happens when one tries to get people opposed to slavery to vote for slavery. It is not my name, it is not my personality which has driven Douglas out of Indiana and Pennsylvania, it is the irresistible power of public opinion, which has broken with slavery.’”⁵¹⁴ William Bailhache reported that “Old Abe bears himself gallantly during the present excitement. He reads the news & enjoys it like the rest of us without betraying one half the interest and emotion exhibited by some of his ardent supporters.”⁵¹⁵ When a crowd of well-wishers called at his home, he had his house guest, Lyman Trumbull, address them.⁵¹⁶

On paper, Lincoln was more effusive, writing John M. Read: “We are indulging in much rejoicing over the late splendid victories in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio, which seem to foreshadow the certain success of the Republican cause in November.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁴ Springfield correspondence, 10 October, St. Louis Anzeiger des Westens, 15 October 1860, in Rowan, ed., Germans for a Free Missouri, 130-31.

⁵¹⁵ William H. Bailhache to Mason Brayman, Springfield, 12 October 1860, William H. Bailhache Papers, Stern Collection, Rare Book Division, Library of Congress.

⁵¹⁶ Springfield correspondence by John Hay, 11 October, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 15 October 1860.

⁵¹⁷ Lincoln to Read, Springfield, 13 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:127.

Those victories, he told Seward, “have surpassed all expectation, even the most extravagant.”⁵¹⁸

But Lincoln also became more grave as he contemplated the future. After visiting Springfield in mid-October, David Davis wrote his wife that “Lincoln looked as if he had a heavy responsibility resting on him. The cares & responsibilities of office will wear on him. . . . Politicians are gathering round Lincoln. The cormorants for office will be numerous & greedy.” Davis added that Mary Lincoln, who “is very ambitious, and is in high feather,” was “not to my liking. I don[’]t think she would ever mesmerise any one.” His feelings were not unique, he said, for the “people of Springfield do not love Lincoln’s wife as they do him.” Davis was “in hopes that she will not give her husband any trouble.”⁵¹⁹ It was to prove a vain hope.

Attention now shifted to New York, which the Democrats strove to win and thus force the election to be decided by the U.S. House of Representatives.⁵²⁰ In August, Lincoln had told Weed: “I think there will be the most extraordinary effort ever made, to carry New-York for Douglas. . . . it will require close watching, and great effort on the other side.”⁵²¹ His prediction seemed borne out later when the Bell, Breckinridge, and Douglas forces agreed on a unified slate of presidential electors. The fusionists spent lavishly, causing some alarm, for the overconfident Empire State Republicans had

⁵¹⁸ Lincoln to Seward, Springfield, 12 October 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:127.

⁵¹⁹ David Davis to his wife Sarah, Clinton, 12 October 1860, Urbana, 15, 18 October 1860, Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

⁵²⁰ If Lincoln lost the fifteen Slave States plus New York, he would fall short of a majority in the electoral college.

⁵²¹ Lincoln to Weed, Springfield, 17 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:97-98.

exported money to New Jersey and Delaware and could not match their opponents' last-minute outlays.⁵²²

In June, to improve the chances of carrying New York, Joseph Medill had tried to persuade James Gordon Bennett to moderate the New York Herald's criticism of the Republican ticket.⁵²³ That paper had dismissed Lincoln as “an uneducated man – a vulgar village politician, without any experience worth mentioning in the practical duties of statesmanship, and only noted for some very unpopular votes which he gave while a member of Congress.” To compare “this illiterate Western boor” with Seward “is odious – it is Hyperion to a satyr.”⁵²⁴ After speaking twice with the crusty Bennett, Medill reported to Lincoln that the editor pledged “he would not treat you harshly,” for he “thought you would make a very respectable President, if you kept out of the hands of the radicals.” Bennett boasted to Medill that he and his fellow conservatives “could beat your man Lincoln, if we would unite, but I think it would be better for the country to let him be elected. I'll not be hard on him.”⁵²⁵ The Herald originally backed Breckinridge and later switched to support the fusion ticket of Bell-Douglas-Breckinridge electors.

Though Illinois seemed safely in his column, both Lincoln and the Republican National Committee worried that the legislature might go Democratic and thus jeopardize

⁵²² Milledge L. Bonham, “New York and the Election of 1860,” New York History 15 (1934): 124-43; Nichols, Disruption of the American Democracy, 343-49, 364-65; New York Journal of Commerce, 26 September, 4 October 1860; Thurlow Weed to Lincoln, Albany, 3 November 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester; John Stanton Gould to Weed, New York, 7 November 1860, ibid.

⁵²³ Medill to Lincoln, Chicago, 19 June 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. On the Herald's hostility to Lincoln throughout the campaign, see Williams, A Rail Splitter for President, 120-29; James L. Crouthamel, Bennett's New York Herald and the Rise of the Popular Press (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 78; Fermer, Bennett, 126-57.

⁵²⁴ New York Herald, 22, 23 May, 21 July 1860.

⁵²⁵ Medill to Lincoln, Chicago, 5 July 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

Senator Trumbull's reelection chances.⁵²⁶ In August, when it appeared likely that the Democrats would retain control of the General Assembly, Judd went east to raise \$20,000 for the Prairie State campaign.⁵²⁷ John Wentworth, whom Caleb B. Smith described as "a man of great energy & a shrewd manager" but "unscrupulous and unreliable," complicated matters by publishing radical antislavery editorials which Democrats cited as proof that Lincoln was an out-and-out abolitionist.⁵²⁸ Joseph Medill warned Lincoln that Long John's plan "is to pretend that he is your devoted friend; that you are an ultra abolitionist who will if elected put down slavery in the South. . . . While he is thus stabbing you, he is deluding a more radical anti-slavery element into the belief that he is a sincere abolitionist."⁵²⁹ To combat the deleterious effects of Wentworth's editorials, Medill wrote to newspapers in the East denouncing Long John, and the Chicago Press and Tribune regularly excoriated the mayor.⁵³⁰

Since voters in southern Illinois would be alienated by Wentworth's writings, outside speakers were dispatched to that region. When Robert C. Schenck, a "strong, terse and sometimes withering" orator from Ohio and a former Whig, offered his

⁵²⁶ Preston King to Lyman Trumbull, Washington, 14 and 22 August 1860, Lyman Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress; Trumbull to E. D. Morgan, Springfield, 22 September 1860, Edwin D. Morgan Papers, New York State Library, Albany.

⁵²⁷ E. B. Washburne to Lyman Trumbull, Galena, 12 August 1860, Lyman Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress; Lyman Trumbull, Jesse K. Dubois, and William Butler to "Our confidential friend," Springfield, 10 August 1860, copy, Trumbull Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

⁵²⁸ Caleb B. Smith to Cassius M. Clay, Indianapolis, 22 April 1860, Clay Papers, Lincoln Memorial University, Lincoln Herald, vol. 45, no. 3 (October 1943): 35; Chicago Democrat, 27 July, 11 October 1860; Chicago correspondence, 4 and 6 August, New York Herald, 14 August 1860; "The 'Irrepressible Conflict' – Important Semi-Official Decrees in Behalf of 'Old Abe Lincoln,'" New York Herald, 1 August 1860; Chicago Herald, 23 July 1860; Chicago Press and Tribune, 13 October 1860; Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 15 October 1860; Illinois State Register (Springfield), 24, 31 July; 4, 28, 29 August; 1, 2, 10, 12 October 1860; J. P. Sanderson to [Leonard Swett?], Philadelphia, 16 June 1860, David Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

⁵²⁹ Medill to Lincoln, Chicago, 9 August 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵³⁰ Fehrenbacher, Chicago Giant, 180-82.

services, Lincoln accepted enthusiastically, telling him: “We really want you.”⁵³¹ In October, Schenck and other Ohioans – including Donn Piatt, Samuel Galloway, Thomas Corwin, and David Cartter (but not Chase) – stumped throughout lower Illinois, where they impressed local Republicans mightily. Equally helpful was Caleb B. Smith of Indiana.⁵³²

Lincoln was also eager to have Republicans carry Springfield and Sangamon County, partly for sentimental reasons but mainly because Trumbull’s election depended on it. (The senatorial district comprised of Sangamon and Morgan Counties would elect Republican William Jayne by a margin of seven votes, thus giving the Republicans a majority of one in the state senate.)⁵³³ When he asked a Republican running for some county office what steps were being taken to turn out the vote, the answer was so unsatisfactory that Lincoln “detailed to the candidate his plan for procuring a full vote and securing to the Republican ticket such electors as were careless or doubtful.”⁵³⁴

Fearing that a Republican split in Vermilion County might cost the party a seat in the legislature, Lincoln urged the contending parties – William H. Fithian and Oscar F. Harmon – to patch up their quarrel. “To lose Trumbull’s re-election next winter would be

⁵³¹ Indianapolis correspondence by Charles A. Page, 30 April 1865, in Charles A. Page, Letters of a War Correspondent, ed. James R. Gilmore (Boston: L. C. Page, 1899), 375; Lincoln to Schenck, Springfield, 23 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:100.

⁵³² Donn Piatt to Horace Greeley, Springfield, Illinois, 4 October 1860, Greeley Papers, New York Public Library; David Davis to his wife Sarah, Urbana, 15 October 1860, Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library; W. H. Hanna to David Davis, Bloomington, 19 October 1860, *ibid.*; D. L. Phillips to Lincoln, Olney, 29 October 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Samuel Galloway to David Davis, Columbus, 29 March 1861, Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield; unidentified correspondent to the editor, Chicago, 2 November, Ohio State Journal (Columbus), 26 November 1860.

⁵³³ That victory prevented the Democrats from blocking the election of a U.S. Senator. Horace White, The Life of Lyman Trumbull (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 109. The loser claimed that over 100 illegal ballots were cast against him. Murray McConnell to Stephen A. Douglas, Jacksonville, 6 December 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago.

⁵³⁴ Stephen Whitehurst, statement for Herndon, [1865-66], Wilson and Davis, eds., Herndon’s Informants, 486.

a great disaster,” he wrote to Harmon. “Please do not let it fall upon us. I appeal to you because I can to no other, with so much confidence.”⁵³⁵ The appeal worked; both aspirants withdrew in favor of a third candidate.⁵³⁶

Illinois Republicans also worried about elections for state offices. When the Democratic leader Joel Matteson sought to persuade William H. Hanna to challenge the incumbent state treasurer, William Butler, Republicans apparently paid Hanna \$500 not to run.⁵³⁷

After the Republican victories in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania, Southern threats of secession grew louder. The day following that electoral sweep, the Alabama fire-eater William L. Yancey announced that if Lincoln were to win and then “undertake to use Federal bayonets to coerce free and sovereign states in this Union,” he would “fly to the standard of that state and give it the best assistance in my power.”⁵³⁸ A newspaper in Yancey’s state said ominously: “Let the boys arm. Every one that can point a shot-gun or revolver should have one. Let every community supply itself with munitions, and store them safely. Abolitionism is at your doors, with torch and knife in hand!”⁵³⁹ In mid-October, the pro-Breckinridge Richmond Enquirer lamented that “Virginia can no more prevent the dissolution of this Union after Lincoln’s election, than she can prevent that

⁵³⁵ Lincoln to Fithian, Springfield, 15 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:95.

⁵³⁶ Donald G. Richter, Lincoln: Twenty Years on the Eastern Prairie (Mattoon, Illinois: United Graphics, 1999), 260-62.

⁵³⁷ Julia Trumbull to her husband Lyman, Springfield, 25 October and 3 November 1860, Trumbull Family Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan. Mrs. Trumbull’s informant was evidently was a Mr. Able.

⁵³⁸ Speech of Yancey at the Cooper Institute, 10 October 1860, in Emerson D. Fite, The Election of 1860 (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 327.

⁵³⁹ Montgomery Mail, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 22 October 1860.

election. She will be powerless to prevent civil war, with all its horrors.”⁵⁴⁰ A pro-Douglas newspaper in Georgia defiantly announced that “the south will never permit Abraham Lincoln to be President of the United States. This is a settled and sealed fact. It is the determination of all parties at the south. And let the consequences be what they may – whether the Potomac is crimsoned in human gore, and Pennsylvania avenue is paved ten fathoms in depth with mangled bodies, or whether the last vestige of Liberty is swept from the face of the American continent. The south, the loyal south, the constitutional south, will never submit to such humiliation and degradation as the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln.”⁵⁴¹

The South’s reaction to Lincoln’s impending victory puzzled Northerners who regarded the Rail-splitter as a moderate. But, as one observer noted: “There is a matter which many in the North do not comprehend when the South speaks of the Northern Abolitionists. Large numbers of the members of the Republican party spurn indignantly the imputation of being Abolitionists when it is preferred against them, and yet they are ignorant of the characteristics of those whom the Southerners almost universally declare to be Abolitionists. The South do not think it alone requires an incendiary, cut-throat, robber, assassin, or a nigger insurrectionist to be an Abolitionist. The moderate members of the Northern Republican party think it does. But the South insist that Abolitionism consists in lesser evils than these; and those are the demands of the anti-slavery men of the North – demands they have been urging and presenting in the face of the South for years past – upon which the anti-slavery movement of the North is based, and which

⁵⁴⁰ Richmond Enquirer, semi-weekly ed., 16 October 1860.

⁵⁴¹ Atlanta Southern Confederacy, n.d., copied in the Illinois State Democrat (Springfield), 19 September 1860.

infuse into it much of its vitality, independent of the Territorial question.”⁵⁴² To Southerners, Lincoln’s call for the “ultimate extinction” of slavery conjured up visions of bloody revolts in Haiti two generations earlier.⁵⁴³

As time went by, Lincoln received more and more such warnings, but, like most Republicans, he failed to take them seriously.⁵⁴⁴ In August, he told John B. Fry: “The people of the South have too much of good sense, and good temper, to attempt the ruin of the government, rather than see it administered as it was administered by the men who made it. At least, so I hope and believe.”⁵⁴⁵ Southerners had so frequently raised the specter of secession that it lost credibility. In 1859, the New York Courier and Enquirer observed that for almost five decades “a mere handful of ignorant, reckless and unprincipled men at the South, have, by bullying and threatening, governed the millions of educated and intelligent men of the North; simply because they are men of peace and busily engaged in moral industrial pursuits which do not encourage or foster restlessness and excitement.”⁵⁴⁶ Senator William Pitt Fessenden of Maine told his son, “All this vamping about secession is nonsense, and nobody cares a button for it.”⁵⁴⁷ A Connecticut newspaper scoffed at the secessionist threat, calling it “an empty sham; those who make it have not the remotest intention of fulfilling it; or if a few of them have, their enterprise

⁵⁴² Undated, unidentified correspondence, quoted in the Lancaster correspondence, Pennsylvania Statesman (Harrisburg), 27 October 1860.

⁵⁴³ David M. Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (completed and edited by Don E. Fehrenbacher; New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 454-55.

⁵⁴⁴ On the Republicans’ skepticism about secession threats, see David M. Potter, Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 1-19.

⁵⁴⁵ Lincoln to John B. Fry, Springfield, 15 August 1860, Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, 4:95.

⁵⁴⁶ New York Courier and Enquirer, 7 November 1859, copied in the New York Journal of Commerce, 3 November 1860.

⁵⁴⁷ William Pitt Fessenden to Samuel Fessenden, Washington, 5 January [1861 – misdated 1860], Fessenden Family Papers, Bowdoin College.

has about as good a chance of succeeding as the lunatics in the Retreat at Hartford would have of capsizing the state of Connecticut into Long Island Sound. They are too few and too crazy.”⁵⁴⁸

In fact, secession threats aided Republicans, for Northern voters had grown tired of Southern intimidation and contempt for fair play. They had come to think of the typical Southerner as a Preston “Bully” Brooks, the cane-wielding South Carolina congressman who had bashed in the skull of Senator Charles Sumner four years earlier; just as Southerners regarded Brooks’ tactic as a legitimate way to deal with ideological opponents, so they viewed disunion threats as a legitimate tactic in political campaigns. The Chicago Press and Tribune assured Southerners “that they entirely underestimate the character of the Northern people, and that their ‘boo-boos’ and their ‘bug-a-boos,’ instead of frightening any one, are really helping Lincoln.” Free State residents “have become entirely satisfied that the only way to effectually stop this threat of disunion, is by the election of a Republican President.”⁵⁴⁹

That fall, many Northerners would vote Republican to protest the arbitrary, high-handed behavior of the South.⁵⁵⁰ On November 6, the New York Tribune exclaimed: “the repudiation of the Missouri Compact, the brutal bludgeoning of Charles Sumner, the wanton outrages that so long desolated Kansas, the infamous Lecompton outrage, and all the long series of plots and crimes by which Kansas and Nebraska were temporarily subjugated to Slavery, all come up for review To-Day!”⁵⁵¹ That newspaper declared that

⁵⁴⁸ Hartford Evening Press, 26 October 1860, in Howard Cecil Perkins, ed., Northern Editorials on Secession (2 vols.; New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1942), 1:65.

⁵⁴⁹ Chicago Press and Tribune, 17 October 1860.

⁵⁵⁰ See the series of editorials in Perkins, ed., Northern Editorials, 1:508-38.

⁵⁵¹ New York Tribune, 6 November 1860.

the South “is only semi-civilized. It may call itself republican; it may profess the abstract faith of Christianity; it may possess, to a certain limited degree, the arts of a cultivated people; it may live under some of the forms of enlightened society; but it wants that inherent moral sense, that accurate conception of social law, that intelligent submission to the purpose of civil government which mark the highest civilization. It is merely semi-barbarous in its spirit, savage in its instincts, reckless of human life and human rights, faithless in everything but brute force, unintelligent in its aims, and unscrupulous in the means with which it seeks to attain them.”⁵⁵² The Missouri Democrat declared that the “north has habitually yielded, until we are supposed to be craven, and incapable of the manhood to defend our common rights or liberties. This system has been carried far enough, and it must stop.”⁵⁵³ William Cullen Bryant likened the South to “a spoiled child” and the federal government to “its foolishly indulgent nurse.” Everything “asked for it has been eagerly given it; more eagerly still if it cries after it; more eagerly still if it threatened to cut off its nurse’s ears. The more we give it the louder it cries and the more furious its threats; and now we have northern men writing long letters to persuade their readers that it will really cut off its nurse’s ears if we exercise the right of suffrage, and elect a president of our own choice, instead of giving it one of its own favorites.”⁵⁵⁴

Democrats urged the public to reject black equality. “Let voters remember Lincoln’s famous declaration that it is dangerous to except one race from perfect equality; that if we deny it to the negro to-day, that denial will be used as a precedent for denying it to some other race to-morrow,” warned the Illinois State Register. “Let the

⁵⁵² “The Reign of Ruffianism,” New York Tribune, 25 February 1861.

⁵⁵³ “Mr. Lincoln Tested,” Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 30 October 1860.

⁵⁵⁴ Charles H. Brown, William Cullen Bryant (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 420-21.

national policy of the republicans, – to admit negroes to a perfect equality with the whites, be considered, and let voters pause before they give their approval to any such policy.” The editors predicted that slaves would rebel if the Republicans won: “the negroes have been taught to regard Lincoln as their destined liberator. His fanatical prediction that with the triumph of the republican party, the irrepressible conflict between the whites and the slaves will commence and that in that conflict the extinguishment of slavery will be the first and exclusive aim of the republicans, has been received by these slaves as a guaranty that his election is to be the signal for universal freedom, and that signal they propose to obey by a general strike for mastery over the whites.” In Texas, said the Register, “This fever got so high that the election of Lincoln could not be waited for; something must be done, and done at once; so, acting under the impulse men and women poisoned the wells, servants poisoned the food of their master’s family, laborers fired the dwellings, strong men used the assassin’s knife, women seized helpless infants and brained them against trees, stalwart men seized the weak females of the whites, and after perpetrating outrages too horrible to relate, mutilated with fiendish cruelty the bodies they had so recently violated. Mr. Abraham Lincoln this is the fruit of your teaching; this is the crop grown from the seed planted by you in your speeches of 1858-59.”⁵⁵⁵ After the election, Lincoln addressed such allegations, maintaining “that some of the politicians of the South had falsely announced, during the recent campaign, that if he (Mr. Lincoln) was elected armed bands were formed in the North to go down there and

⁵⁵⁵ Illinois State Register (Springfield), 11, 10, 4 September 1860. Stories of Texas slave uprisings were grossly exaggerated, though there were small-scale arson episodes in the summer of 1860. Wendell G. Addington, “Slave Insurrections in Texas,” Journal of Negro History 35 (1950): 419-34; William W. White, “The Texas Slave Insurrection of 1860,” Southwestern Historical Quarterly 52 (1949): 259-85; Billy D. Ledbetter, “Slavery, Fear, and Disunion in the Lone Star State: Texans’ Attitudes toward Secession and the Union, 1846-1861” (Ph.D. dissertation, North Texas State University, 1972), 205-19.

liberate the slaves, and the most that he feared was, that an insurrectionary movement among the slaves would result from their own teachings.”⁵⁵⁶

As he stumped the country, Douglas displayed true statesmanship by warning the South against disunion.⁵⁵⁷ Lincoln’s election might constitute “a great national calamity,” but he insisted that the South must abide by the result: “the election of any man . . . according to the provisions of the Constitution is no pretext for breaking up this Union.” In New York, Douglas told a large audience: “I know him [Lincoln] well. . . . I have no word of unkindness or personal disrespect to utter concerning him, but I do believe that he holds political opinions which, if carried out, would be subversive of all the principles of the American Constitution.” Yet “if Lincoln should be elected – which God in his mercy forbid [laughter] – he must be inaugurated according to the Constitution and the laws of the country, and I, as his foremost, strongest and irreconcilable opponent, will sustain him in the exercise of every Constitutional function [applause].”⁵⁵⁸ In Atlanta he boldly declared that “there is no grievance of which we complain for which disunion would afford an adequate remedy. I believe that there can be no grievance in this country for which the Constitution and the laws will not afford ample remedy within the Union.”⁵⁵⁹

Undermining Douglas’s claim to statesmanship, however, was his continued race baiting. He told a Rhode Island crowd “that he preferred clams to niggers.” At Baltimore and Atlanta he insisted that the U.S. government was “made by white men for the benefit

⁵⁵⁶ New York Herald, 16 November 1860.

⁵⁵⁷ Allan Nevins, “Stephen A. Douglas: His Weaknesses and His Greatness,” Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society 42 (1949): 407-9.

⁵⁵⁸ Douglas’s speech at Jones’ Wood, New York, 12 September, New York World, 13 September 1860.

⁵⁵⁹ The Daily Southern Confederacy (Atlanta), 1 November 1860.

of white men, to be administered by white men, and by nobody else, forever.”⁵⁶⁰

With the campaign drawing to a close, Lincoln became more confident. Two weeks before its conclusion, Benjamin Welch, Jr., of New York met with him in Springfield and reported that “Lincoln was in excellent spirits, regarding his election as certain.”⁵⁶¹ When asked how he could stand the pressure, he replied “that he should endeavor to sustain himself” at least until November 6.⁵⁶²

On that day, Springfield shed its customary tranquility as cannons boomed heralding the dawn. Augmenting their din, bands blared music from wagons drawn about the city to arouse the populace. Men loitering around the polls contributed their mite to the “good-natured clamor.” There was little violence, though the editor of the Illinois State Register was caned by a gentleman whom he had accused of lying.⁵⁶³

That morning at the statehouse, Lincoln, “as unconcerned as the most obscure man in the nation,” received visitors as he sat in an armchair that dwarfed him.⁵⁶⁴ “Nobody expects to find Mr. Lincoln a portly man, but at first sight his slenderness strikes one as even beyond what had been expected,” a journalist noted. Among his callers were “some rough-jacketed constituents who, having voted for him, and expressed

⁵⁶⁰ Louisiana Signal, 22 September 1860; Douglas’s speech at Baltimore, Washington States and Union, 8 September 1860; The Daily Southern Confederacy (Atlanta), 1 November 1860.

⁵⁶¹ Welch to George G. Fogg, Lafayette, Indiana, 25 October 1860, Fogg Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society. See also Nicolay’s account of an interview with Welch, Springfield, 25 October 1860, in Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 7.

⁵⁶² Springfield correspondence, 6 November, New York Tribune, 10 November 1860. The Tribune’s correspondent, Edward H. House, spent a week in Springfield. Article in the New York Sun, undated clipping with penciled annotation “1888”, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne. C. A. Dana introduced House to Herndon. Dana to Herndon, New York, 31 October 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress. On House, see James L. Huffman, A Yankee in Meiji Japan: The Crusading Journalist Edward H. House (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

⁵⁶³ Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 6 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 7 November 1860.

⁵⁶⁴ Springfield correspondence, 6 November, New York Tribune, 7 and 10 November 1860; Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 6 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 7 November 1860.

a wish to look at their man, came in timidly, were kindly received, and, after a dumb sitting of a quarter of an hour, went away, thoroughly satisfied in every manner.” Then came a few New Yorkers, who, Lincoln thought, should have remained home to vote. He told one resident of the Empire State that “he was afraid there were too many of us from New York that day.” When that caller asked Lincoln whether the South would secede if the Republicans captured the White House, he “said they might make a little stir about it before [the inauguration], but if they waited until after his inauguration and for some overt act, they would wait all their lives.”⁵⁶⁵ Queried about rail-splitting, he showed how it had been performed when he was young and contrasted that technique with the one then employed, which he acknowledged was superior. He had intended to vote late in the day to avoid crowds; in mid-afternoon, however, when informed that there were few people at the polls, he decided to cast his ballot then. The day before he had been asked for whom he would vote. “Yates,” he replied puckishly. When pressed how he would vote for president, he responded: “How vote? Well, undoubtedly like an Ohio elector of which I will tell you – by ballot.”⁵⁶⁶

As Lincoln approached the courthouse, accompanied by Ozias M. Hatch and other friends, “the dense crowd immediately began to shout with the wild abandon that characterizes the impulsive heart of the west. The crowded throng respectfully opened a passage for him from the street to the polls.” The courthouse steps were “thronged with People, who welcomed him with immense cheering, and followed him in dense numbers along the hall and up stairs into the Court room, which was also crowded.” There “the

⁵⁶⁵ Springfield correspondence by A. C. C., 7 November, Independent Democrat (Concord, New Hampshire), 22 November 1860.

⁵⁶⁶ Springfield correspondence, 6 November, New York Tribune, 7 and 10 November 1860.

applause became absolutely deafening, and from the time he entered the room and until he cast his vote and again left it, there was wild huzzaing, waving of hats, and all sorts of demonstrations of applause, – rendering all other noise insignificant and futile” All traces of partisanship “seemed to be suddenly abandoned. Even the distributors of the Douglas tickets shouted and swung their hats as wildly as the rest.” (Lincoln’s popularity impressed J. Henry Brown, who was surprised to find that “even those opposed to him in politics speak of him in unqualified terms of praise.”)⁵⁶⁷ An elderly gentleman with an armload of Democratic documents led several cheers for him. Before depositing his ballot, Lincoln cut off the names of the presidential electors so that he would not be voting for himself.⁵⁶⁸ One wag cried out: “You ought to vote for Douglas, Uncle Abe, he has done all he could for you.”⁵⁶⁹

Lincoln returned to the statehouse, making his way through a dense crowd of people “seizing his hands, and throwing their arms around his neck, body or legs and grasping his coat or anything they could lay hands on, and yelling and acting like madmen.”⁵⁷⁰ He spent the rest of the afternoon at the capitol. He manifested “a lively interest in the election” but “scarcely ever alluded to himself or his candidacy.” Rather he “was interested in the fortunes of the local candidates of his town, county and State and to have heard his remarks one would have concluded that the District Attorneyship of a county in

⁵⁶⁷ Brown, diary entry for 26 August 1860, in Wilson, Lincoln in Portraiture, 109-10.

⁵⁶⁸ Springfield correspondence by Hay, 7 November 1860, Providence, Rhode Island, Journal, 15 November 1860, in Burlingame, ed., Lincoln’s Journalist, 14; memorandum by Nicolay, 6 November 1860, Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in White House, 8; Herndon to Weik, Springfield, 14 November 1885, Herndon-Weik Papers, Library of Congress; Springfield correspondence, 6 November, New York Tribune, 7 and 10 November 1860.

⁵⁶⁹ Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 6 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 7 November 1860.

⁵⁷⁰ Springfield correspondence by A. C. C., 7 November, Independent Democrat (Concord, New Hampshire), 22 November 1860.

Illinois was of far more importance than the Presidency itself.” At one point “he mentioned a candidate for the Legislature in one of these counties who he hoped would be elected, and he would be, Mr. Lincoln added, ‘if he didn’t find Abe Lincoln too heavy a load to carry on the same ticket.’” Later “he said that elections in this country were like ‘big boils’ – they caused a great deal of pain before they came to a head, but after the trouble was over the body was in better health than before. He hoped that the bitterness of the canvass would pass away ‘as easily as the core of a boil.’”

When one of his friends mentioned the New York fusionists, Lincoln “remarked that they would probably get into such a row going up Salt River as to ‘obstruct navigation’ thereafter.” To Ozias Hatch’s observation “that it was lucky for him that women couldn’t vote, otherwise the monstrous portraits of him which had been circulated during the canvass by friends would surely defeat him,” Lincoln replied smilingly: “Hatch, I tell you there is a great deal more in that idea than you suppose,” and “then related a story of a Presbyterian church in McLean County in Illinois holding a congregational meeting to vote a call to a pastor. The elders and deacons and principal men in the church had united in recommending a certain man, and it was supposed he would be called unanimously; but in an evil hour somebody got hold of the man’s likeness and exhibited it to the sisters. They didn’t like the wart he had on his nose, so they turned out in force and voted down the call.”

When a dispatch arrived from Charleston, S.C., expressing the wish that Lincoln would win because, if he did, the Palmetto State “would soon be free,” Lincoln laughed “because the sentiment seemed a familiar one inasmuch as . . . he had received several letters, some signed by the writers, and some anonymous, of the same tenor and effect.”

He handed the message to Hatch, telling him “that the sender of it would bear watching.”⁵⁷¹

About 7 p.m., the crowd at the statehouse flooded into the room where Lincoln awaited the returns. Among them was Lyman Trumbull, who was “very uneasy,” fearing that Democrats might win control of the General Assembly and name one of their own to replace him in the senate.⁵⁷² When someone suggested that they be cleared out, Lincoln immediately objected, saying “he had never done such a thing in his life and wouldn’t commence now.” Soon the room was jammed. The candidate remained as “calm and collected as ever in his life but there was a nervous twitch on his countenance when the messenger from the telegraphic office entered, that indicated an anxiety within that no coolness from without could repress.” When the first dispatch arrived from Decatur, showing a significant Republican gain over the previous election, it was greeted with shouts and taken from the governor’s office to the assembly chamber “as a trophy to be read to the crowd.” At 8 p.m. a dispatch from Jacksonville indicating a 210-vote Republican gain “seemed to gratify Mr. Lincoln exceedingly.”

⁵⁷¹ Samuel R. Weed, “Hearing the Returns with Mr. Lincoln,” New York Times Magazine, 14 February 1932 (written in the 1880s). See also Springfield correspondence by A. C. C., 7 November, Independent Democrat (Concord, New Hampshire), 22 November 1860. Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher expressed skepticism about Weed’s account, but he was a journalist in St. Louis in 1860. (Recollected Words, 460.) He is listed in the 1861 St. Louis city directory as an editor. According to Who Was Who, he was a reporter and writer for the press in San Francisco and St. Louis, 1858-61. Who Was Who, vol. 1, p. 1315. In 1865, he was a reporter for the St. Louis Missouri Democrat. Samuel R. Weed, Journey of the Common Council of St. Louis to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Manchester, N.H. (St. Louis: Missouri Democrat Press, 1865). The Missouri Democrat reporter covering Lincoln on November 6 and 7 signed his first dispatch “W.” The November 7 dispatch he filed was also published in the San Francisco Alta California and signed with the initials S. R. W. The correspondent for that West Coast journal wrote on November 13, “I happened to spend Election Day and the two days which succeeded it at the home of the President-elect and saw so many sights and heard so many incidents related, that I have concluded to recite a portion of the experience for the benefit of the Alta.” He then reproduced the Springfield dispatch of November 7 that appeared in the Missouri Democrat. San Francisco Alta California, 2 December 1860.

⁵⁷² David Davis to his wife Sarah, Danville, Illinois, 11 November 1860, Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

An hour later Lincoln and some friends (including David Davis, John M. Palmer, Jesse K. Dubois, and Edward L. Baker) left the statehouse for the telegraph office to await the returns. As fragmentary reports came in from nearby counties, “Lincoln seemed to understand their bearing on the general result in the State and commented upon every return by way of comparison with previous elections. He understood at a glance whether it was a loss or a gain to his party.” He was gleeful when news arrived from Saline County, where in 1856 Frémont had received one lone vote while Buchanan got nearly 2,000; but now three of the main precincts in that southern Illinois county gave Lincoln a majority of nearly 200 over Douglas. “He laughed heartily and exclaimed that that was ‘a tribute from Egypt to the success of our public school fund.’” As the good news rolled in, Lincoln’s friends and the telegraph operators could hardly contain their enthusiasm. The nominee himself, however, remained calm. The New York Tribune reporter noted that he “accepted everything with an almost immovable tranquility.” He did not seek “to conceal in the slightest degree the keen interest he felt in every new development; but, while he seemed to absorb it all with great satisfaction, the intelligence moved him to less energetic display of gratification than the others indulged in. He appeared, indeed, to be as fully alive to the smaller interest of some local districts, in which the fortunes of his friends were concerned, as to the wider and more universally important regions.”⁵⁷³

A dispatch announcing that Lincoln had won by 2,500 votes in Chicago occasioned a “joyous thrill.” The candidate instructed: “Send it to the boys” in the statehouse. There “[o]ld men, young, middle aged, clergymen and all” responded by

⁵⁷³ Springfield correspondence, 7 November, New York Tribune, 8 and 12 November 1860; Weed, “Hearing the Returns with Mr. Lincoln;” Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 7 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 8 November 1860.

“singing, yelling! shouting, . . . [and] dancing.”⁵⁷⁴ Lincoln was equally delighted with good news from St. Louis, where he bested Douglas by over 900 votes. When word from Pittsburgh arrived indicating the Lincoln carried Allegheny County by 10,000 votes, he “remarked that this was better than expected.”⁵⁷⁵

Soon returns arrived from more distant points. Lincoln betrayed some anxiety about the result in New York, “remarking that ‘the news would come quick enough if it was good, and if bad, he was not in any hurry to hear it.’” Around 10:30, in response to a hopeful message from Thurlow Weed, Lincoln “remarked that the news was satisfactory so far, only it was not conclusive.” Then New Jersey returns “began to excite surprise, as report after report gave Fusion [i.e., Douglas-Bell-Breckinridge] majorities.” Offsetting this bad news were “cheering returns from New England, which by this time, past 11 o’clock, began to arrive in profusion” They “banished the depressing effect of the New Jersey returns.” When word came in that Massachusetts had gone for him by 50,000, Lincoln called it “a clear case of the Dutch taking Holland.”⁵⁷⁶ As expected, Lincoln carried Pennsylvania easily, a result which he said could be accounted for “only on one supposition and that is that the Quakers voted.”⁵⁷⁷ (The Democrats had feared a large

⁵⁷⁴ Mrs. James C. Conkling to her son, Clinton Conkling, Springfield, 7 November 1860, in Harry E. Pratt, ed., Concerning Mr. Lincoln, in which Abraham Lincoln is Pictured as He Appeared to Letter Writers of His Time (Springfield: The Abraham Lincoln Association, 1944), 27-28.

⁵⁷⁵ Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 7 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 8 November 1860.

⁵⁷⁶ Weed, “Hearing the Returns with Mr. Lincoln.”

⁵⁷⁷ George W. Brinkerhoff to Edward McPherson, Springfield, 19 November 1860, McPherson Papers, Library of Congress.

Quaker turnout in Philadelphia, a city which Lincoln won with 52% of the vote.)⁵⁷⁸

Worries about New York, however, persisted.

After hours of mostly positive news, returns began arriving from Democratic states. “Now we should get a few licks back,” Lincoln remarked.⁵⁷⁹ As predictable results continued to roll in from the South, Lincoln and his friends took a break shortly after midnight, visiting the collation prepared by the women of Springfield, who “surrounded, and took possession of, and clung to” the candidate. “The female enthusiasm bubbled up so spontaneously that somehow . . . a movement began to kiss the ‘dear man.’ Before he had time to either protest or retreat at least a half dozen girls and their mothers had saluted him with hearty kisses on the cheek.” Lincoln’s “good-humored resistance was quite in vain as he finally yielded with the suggestion that this was ‘a form of coercion not prohibited by the Constitution or Congress.’ He surrendered meekly enough and took the proffered kisses as one of the duties which he had, on that day, been elected. The women simplified his tasks by forming a line in single file and circling around the table as they greeted him with their salutes on the ‘fire and fall back’ principle.” He had come “as near being killed by kindness as a man can conveniently be without serious results.” After partaking of “oceans of coffee and continents of food,” he and his companions returned to the telegraph office. There encouraging news from New York thrilled Lincoln’s companions, but he observed solemnly: “Not too fast, my friends. Not too fast, it may not be over yet.”

⁵⁷⁸ James A. Bayard to S. L. M. Barlow, Wilmington, Delaware, 4 October 1860, Barlow Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; William Dusinger, Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856-1865 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 101.

⁵⁷⁹ Springfield correspondence, 7 November, New York Tribune, 8 and 12 November 1860; Henry Guest McPike in Walter B. Stevens, A Reporter’s Lincoln, ed. Michael Burlingame (1916; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 64-65.

When even more favorable reports arrived, Dubois asked: “Well, Uncle Abe, are you satisfied now?” Lincoln “replied with a smile, ‘Well, the agony is most over, and you will soon be able to go to bed.’” When it was learned that Bell had carried Virginia, Lincoln “suggested that this was the most hopeful return for the peace of the country he had heard and he hoped the majority was so large as to crush out the fire-eaters completely. He spoke with considerable emphasis and satisfaction about the strength shown for the conservative American ticket in the border States.”

Finally, when definitive word of his victory in New York arrived, he read the fateful dispatch “with evident marks of pleasure.”⁵⁸⁰ So did the crowd at the statehouse, where men “pushed each other – threw up their hats – hurrahed – cheered for Lincoln – cheered for Trumbull – cheered for New York – cheered for everybody – and some actually lay down on the carpeted floor and rolled over and over.” Men dashed through the streets to inform the citizenry that Lincoln had won. “Springfield went off like one immense cannon report, with shouting from houses, shouting from stores, shouting from house tops, shouting from everywhere. Parties ran through the streets singing ‘Ain’t I glad I’ve joined the Republicans’ till they were too hoarse to speak.” Throughout the night “there was howling for Lincoln – cheers for ‘Old Abe’ kept up, and towards morning some of the boys procured a cannon and fired several rounds.”⁵⁸¹ The town rapidly became “as drunk as Bacchus.”⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Springfield correspondence, 7 November, New York Tribune, 8 and 12 November 1860; Weed, “Hearing the Returns with Mr. Lincoln;” Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 7 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 8 November 1860.

⁵⁸¹ Springfield correspondence by [Samuel R.] W[eed], 7 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 8 November 1860.

⁵⁸² David Davis to his wife Sarah, Danville, Illinois, 11 November 1860, Davis Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

After accepting hearty congratulations, Lincoln prepared to leave. When a messenger announced that he had won Springfield by sixty-nine votes, he abandoned his reserve and gave “a sudden exuberant utterance – neither a cheer nor a crow, but something partaking of the nature of each. And then, laughing contentedly, he said good night to the little company.” While Dubois dashed off to inform the crowd at the capitol, Lincoln returned home.⁵⁸³ (Though he won Springfield, he lost Sangamon County by forty-two votes.)⁵⁸⁴

Later, when serenaders called at his house, Mrs. Lincoln reportedly “cursed – swore and held him back, so that it was with difficulty that he went out to meet the people.”⁵⁸⁵

The next day he “sat a portion of the time in a big armchair with his feet on the upper edge of a large stove and had a word for everybody. Very early in the day he had said to one group of callers, ‘Well, boys, your troubles are over now, but mine have just commenced.’” Lincoln “repeated this remark a half-dozen times in two hours.” As callers became more numerous, he stood up and held a regular levee, shaking the hands of all, including an elderly farmer who exclaimed: “Uncle Abe, I didn’t vote for yer, but I am mighty glad yer elected just the same.” Lincoln responded: “Well, my old friend, when a

⁵⁸³ Springfield correspondence, 7 November, New York Tribune, 8 and 12 November 1860. Lincoln received 1395 votes to Douglas’s 1326, Breckinridge’s 31, and Bell’s 16.

⁵⁸⁴ Sangamon County gave Lincoln 3556 (48.3%) and Douglas 3598 (48.9%). The congressional race there saw the Republican candidate win 3628 (50%) and his opponent 3629 (50%). In the gubernatorial contest, Yates won 3609 (49.2%) and his opponent 3601 (49.1%). In the special House election in January 1859, the county gave the Republican candidate 1711 (44%) and his Democratic opponent 2817 (56%). In the 1856 presidential race, Frémont won 2232, Buchanan 2519. In the 1858 House race, the Republican won 2803 (47.3%) and the Democrat 3010 (50.8%). Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, eds., Illinois Elections, 1818-1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).

⁵⁸⁵ Herndon’s account in Caroline Dall, “Journal of a tour through Illinois, Wisconsin and Ohio, Oct. & Nov. 1866,” entry for 29 October 1866, Dall Papers, Bryn Mawr College.

man has been tried and pronounced not guilty he hasn't any right to find fault with the jury.”⁵⁸⁶ David Davis reported that “Lincoln seems as he always does. You would not think he had been elevated to the highest office in the world.” Similarly, Mary Lincoln appeared “well & unconstrained & not at all as if she was elated.”⁵⁸⁷

Lincoln made no formal response to his victory until a grand celebration took place in Springfield two weeks later. During that time he received advice to make a Union-saving address which would appease southern fire-eaters, but Joseph Medill insisted that “We want no speech from Lincoln in the 20th on political questions. W[e] are content with the Republican platform, his letter of acceptance and his published speeches.”⁵⁸⁸ The capital was subdued, as Nicolay told his fiancée five days after the election: “The contest has been so long and so exhaustive, that this town almost immediately settled down into its usual quietness. Seeing the city, . . . one would not imagine there had been a Presidential election for a year. People look and act as if they were almost too tired to feel at all interested in getting up a grand hurrah over the victory and I believe they would not do it at all were it not that it is a formality which in this case cannot well be omitted. I suppose we will get up a good celebration some time this week and do our best to show how happy we are.”⁵⁸⁹ Sobered by the Deep South's earnest preparations to secede, Springfielders postponed their celebration several times. It finally took place on November 20, when the city, jammed with visitors, was brilliantly

⁵⁸⁶ Weed, “Hearing the Returns with Mr. Lincoln.”

⁵⁸⁷ David Davis to his son George, Danville, 14 November 1860; Davis to his wife Sarah, Danville, 11 November 1860, David Davis Family Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library.

⁵⁸⁸ Joseph Medill to O. M. Hatch, Chicago, 16 November 1860, copy, Hatch Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield.

⁵⁸⁹ Nicolay to Therenia Bates, Springfield, 11 November 1860, Burlingame, ed., With Lincoln in the White House, 10. A similar point was made by Henry Villard. Springfield correspondence, 20 November, Cincinnati Commercial, 24 November 1860.

illuminated, its streets “flooded with vari-colored lights,” with joy shining “out of every house in the blaze of windows” or bursting forth “eruptively in transparencies and Chinese lanterns,” and the sky was “vexed with rockets.” The statehouse had “the appearance of four walls of fire,” with “every window gleaming like the lidless eye of a dragon; while from the lofty dome, four locomotive head-lights flashed their fierce triumph over desolate leagues of startled prairie.”⁵⁹⁰

Although Lincoln won only 39.9% of the popular vote (far more than the 29% which the runner-up, Douglas, received), he took a solid majority of the electoral votes, 180 out of 303.⁵⁹¹ He carried all the Free States except New Jersey, where the Bell, Breckinridge, and Douglas forces created a fusion ticket at the last moment and took 52.1% of the ballots cast. But because some anti-Lincoln voters refused to go for the fusion slate, the Republicans received four of the state’s seven electoral votes.⁵⁹²

According to John Bigelow, “That little State, the property of a railroad company [the Camden and Amboy] which runs through it and twirls it around like a Skewer[,] voted against him because it has the misfortune to be inhabited by two men, each of whom wished to be Secretary of the Navy and hoped by making the State look insecure, to get an offer of terms.”⁵⁹³ Those men were William L. Dayton and William Pennington,

⁵⁹⁰ Springfield correspondence by Ecarte (John Hay), 20 November, Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 22 November 1860; Springfield correspondence by Henry Villard, 16 and 20 November, New York Herald, 21, 22 November and 4 December 1860; Illinois State Journal (Springfield), 21 November 1860.

⁵⁹¹ Breckinridge received 72 electoral votes and 848,019 popular votes (18.1% of the total), Bell 39 electoral votes and 590,901 popular votes (18.6% of the total), and Douglas 12 electoral votes and 1,380,202 popular votes (29.5% of the total). These figures are somewhat misleading, for in South Carolina, where Breckinridge’s candidacy was popular, presidential electors were chosen by the legislature, not citizens at the polls. Greeley estimated that Breckinridge probably would have received 50,000 votes in the Palmetto State. Horace Greeley, Recollections of a Busy Life (New York: J. B. Ford, 1869), 394n.

⁵⁹² William Gillette, Jersey Blue: Civil War Politics in New Jersey, 1854-1865 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 102-3.

former speaker of the U.S. House. Their lackluster support of the ticket was widely criticized.⁵⁹⁴

The Republicans triumphed because of their party's unity and the bitter split within the Democracy; because of the rapidly growing antislavery feeling in the North, where the Lecompton Constitution and the Dred Scott decision outraged many who had not voted Republican in 1856; because of the North's ever-intensifying resentment of what it perceived as Southern arrogance, high-handedness, and bullying; because Germans defected from the Democratic ranks; because the Republican economic program appealed both to farmers (with homestead legislation) and to manufacturers and workers (with tariffs) far more than the Democratic economic policies adopted in response to the Panic of 1857; because the rapidly improving economy blunted fears of businessmen as they contemplated a Republican victory; and because of public disgust at the corruption of Democrats, most notably those in the Buchanan administration. Lincoln did especially well among younger voters, newly eligible voters, former nonvoters, rural residents, skilled laborers, members of the middle class, German Protestants, evangelical Protestants, native-born Americans, and most especially former Know Nothings and Whig-Americans.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹³ John Bigelow to William Hargreaves, New York, 10 November 1860, Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library. In New Jersey the fusion ticket received 62,801 votes to Lincoln's 58,234.

⁵⁹⁴ J. P. Sanderson to William Penn Clarke, Philadelphia, 11 November 1860, Clarke Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines; J. P. Sanderson to David Davis, Philadelphia, 12 November 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Gillette, Jersey Blue, 107.

⁵⁹⁵ *Huston, Panic of 1857, 231-75; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, "Why the Republican Party Came to Power," in George Harmon Knoles, ed., The Crisis of the Union, 1860-1861 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 3-20; William E. Gienapp, "Who Voted for Lincoln?" 50-77; William E. Gienapp, "Nativism and the Creation of a Republican Majority in the North before the Civil War," Journal of American History 72 (1985): 529-59; Thomas W. Kremm, "Cleveland and the First Lincoln Election: The Ethnic Response to Nativism," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 8 (1977): 69-86; Richard J. Carwardine, "Lincoln, Evangelical Religion, and American Political Culture in the Era of the Civil War," Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association 18 (1997): 27-56; Richard J. Carwardine, "Methodists, Politics, and the

In the absence of opinion surveys and exit polls, it is difficult to say with precision why these groups were more likely to vote Republican than Democratic or Constitutional Unionist. Correspondence, newspaper commentary, and other anecdotal sources suggest that Lincoln's victory was in part due to his character, biography, and public record. In July, John A. Kasson reported from Iowa: "I never talk to an audience of farmers without noticing the intense interest as they listen to the story of his early life & trials in making himself what he is, – the ablest & most eminent man in the West."⁵⁹⁶ An Ohio farmer praised Lincoln as "a self-made man, who came up a-foot. We like his tact – we like his argumentative powers – we like his logic, and we like the whole man."⁵⁹⁷ A resident of Champaign, Illinois, wrote that "[e]very man who is struggling to improve his fortune by honest toil and patient endeavor, feels that in Abraham Lincoln he has a generous and confiding friend, and dignified representative. Instances are daily accumulating, here, of men who from early bias, and the force of party influence, have voted the Democratic ticket; but who now find themselves irresistibly impelled by their reverence for the public virtues of Mr. Lincoln."⁵⁹⁸ Another Sucker denied that "honest

Coming of the American Civil War," Church History 69 (2000): 578-609; Richard J. Carwardine, Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 196-307; Daniel Walker Howe, "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North during the Second Party System," Journal of American History 77 (1991): 1216-39; Frederick C. Luebke, ed., Ethnic Voters and the Election of Lincoln (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971), passim. In four southern Indiana townships where a majority of voters were German, the Democratic presidential vote declined from 80% in 1856 to 53% in 1860. In that region the Know Nothing vote of 1856 went heavily to the Republicans four years later. Elbert, "Southern Indiana Politics on the Eve of the Civil War," 217, 220. A resident of Fort Wayne reported that "there are 3 German converts for any other." David Davis to Thurlow Weed, Bloomington, 3 September 1860, Weed Papers, University of Rochester. Precinct returns suggest that Iowa Germans voted heavily but not exclusively for Lincoln. Charles Wilson Emery, "The Iowa Germans in the Election of 1860," Annals of Iowa, 3rd series, vol. 22 (1940): 421-52.

⁵⁹⁶ John A. Kasson to Horace Greeley, Des Moines, Iowa, 1 July 1860, Greeley Papers, New York Public Library.

⁵⁹⁷ A letter from "an intelligent and substantial farmer in Union County, Ohio," New York Tribune, 6 June 1860.

⁵⁹⁸ Letter by "Sangamon," Champaign County, 25 May 1860, Chicago Press and Tribune, 30 May 1860.

Old Abe Lincoln” thought “a nig[g]er is as good as a poor man” and insisted that the candidate “is a working man” who “respects the poor man a good deal more than drunken old Stephen A Douglas or any of the democratic clicque.”⁵⁹⁹ On the stump, Henry S. Lane of Indiana called Lincoln “an apt illustration of our free institutions.” This “obscure child of labor spent a large portion of his life in the humble vocation of farm laborer, and when I look over this vast assembly, composed in part of young men, my heart grows stronger and my hope grows brighter. There listens to me, perhaps, this day, some honest son of toil who will yet reach the . . . position of President.”⁶⁰⁰ Frank Blair claimed that by choosing a candidate with such a humble background, Republicans demonstrated “that their hearts are with the people.”⁶⁰¹ Lincoln “is the representative of the great idea of the Republican party – labor – free labor,” Richard Yates told a crowd at Springfield “The poor boy . . . can point to Abraham Lincoln, and straighten himself up and say, ‘I have the same right and same opportunity to be President as any other boy.’”⁶⁰²

The rail-splitter image helped underscore that message.⁶⁰³ Throughout the campaign, Republicans emphasized rail-splitting in posters, transparencies, newspapers, rallies, cartoons, and oratory.⁶⁰⁴ The Breckinridge-Democratic candidate for governor of New York sneeringly asked “whether it would not be just as good reasoning to claim that a man ought to be made President of the United States because he had once carried a

⁵⁹⁹ James Ruston to Mattie Kirkpatrick, LaSalle County, Illinois, 17 September 1860, Vertical Files, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.

⁶⁰⁰ New York Tribune, 11 June 1860.

⁶⁰¹ Speech of F. P. Blair, Jr., St. Louis, 22 May 1860, New York Times, 26 May 1860.

⁶⁰² Speech of Richard Yates, Springfield, 7 June, New York Tribune, 20 June 1860.

⁶⁰³ Wayne C. Temple, Lincoln the Railsplitter (La Crosse, Wisconsin: Willow Press, 1961), 17-22; Plummer, Oglesby, 52-53.

⁶⁰⁴ Hayes, Lincoln Runs for President, 131-36.

hod?”⁶⁰⁵ Horace Greeley responded that the sobriquet rail-splitter “is merely an emphatic way of stating that he rose from the class of men stigmatized by slave-holding Senators as the ‘mud-sills’ of society.” Since he advanced “from rail-splitting to be a prominent citizen of Illinois, and a candidate for the Presidency, there must be talent and capacity enough in him to qualify him for the discharge of the duties of that office. The main object, however, is an appeal . . . to the sympathy and the self-respect of that great body of voters who spilt rails or follow similar laborious employments.”⁶⁰⁶ According to the Milwaukee Free Democrat, “it is not because Abe Lincoln once mauled and split rails for a living that he thus takes hold of the popular heart, but because from the position of occupation of a common farm laborer he has ascended to the position of a probable President, without ever stooping to a mean thing or in any way tampering with his integrity.”⁶⁰⁷ The Houston Telegraph called Lincoln “the most dangerous politician in the Union – doubly dangerous from the fact of his popularity as a self-made man.”⁶⁰⁸ In Pennsylvania, a Republican operative predicted that speeches like Charles Ogle’s notorious 1840 attacks on the alleged elitism of Martin Van Buren “will win in the Campaign of 1860.” He urged a congressional candidate “to tell the people that you are a plain man[,] one of themselves, that you are the representative of the laboring & working men – that you belong to their ranks – that you do not possess the advantages of a

⁶⁰⁵ Speech by James T. Brady, 24 September, quoted in the New York Tribune, 27 September 1860.

⁶⁰⁶ “Rail-Splitting,” New York Tribune, 11 June 1860.

⁶⁰⁷ Milwaukee Free Democrat, n.d., copied in the New York Tribune, 26 May 1860.

⁶⁰⁸ Houston Telegraph, n.d., copied in the Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican, 13 June 1860.

collegiate education but you have endeavored to make a good use of an ordinary education.”⁶⁰⁹

In addition to his identity as a rail-splitter, Lincoln’s reputation as “Honest Abe” helped his cause significantly.⁶¹⁰ Corruption in the Pierce and Buchanan administrations, as well as in state and local governments throughout the 1850s, had scandalized the nation.⁶¹¹ The Republican Congressional Campaign Committee distributed thousands of copies of a condensed version of the Covode Committee report on corruption in the incumbent administration.⁶¹² Many voters shared Indiana Congressman David Kilgore’s desire “to see this God forsaken Hell deserving set of corrupt politicians turned out of office, and honest men put in their places.”⁶¹³ The Missouri Democrat was sure that “the deep and just hatred of the corrupt and reckless National Democracy” would carry Lincoln to victory and stay “the waves of the deluge of corruption.”⁶¹⁴ On election eve the New York World remarked that many thousand “intelligent men support the candidates of the republican party, not that they care a broken tobacco-pipe for the negro question, but because they see no other way to honest management at Washington. They believe that the democratic party has been so long in power that it has become corrupt;

⁶⁰⁹ James G. McQuaide to John Covode, Indiana, Pennsylvania, 1 March 1860, Covode Papers, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

⁶¹⁰ Summers, Plundering Generation, *passim*; Potter, Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis, 190; G. S. Boritt, “Was Lincoln a Vulnerable Candidate in 1860?” Civil War History 27 (1981): 32-34; Carwardine, Lincoln, 123-24.

⁶¹¹ Summers, Plundering Generation, 280 and *passim*; Meerse, “Buchanan, Corruption, and the Election of 1860,” 116-31.

⁶¹² Preston King to Lyman Trumbull, Washington, 30 August 1860, Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress; Edward W. Chester, “The Impact of the Covode Congressional Investigation,” Western Pennsylvania Magazine of History 42 (1959): 343-50.

⁶¹³ David Kilgore to Richard W. Thompson, Indianapolis, 5 September 1860, Richard W. Thompson Collection, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne.

⁶¹⁴ Missouri Democrat (St. Louis), 22, 21 May 1860.

that it understands too well the crooked arts by which partizan pockets are lined at the public expense; and that it is safer to try an experiment with new men and a young party, than to continue a set of old party hacks at the public crib. If Mr. Lincoln's administration shall prove honest, economical and tranquillizing, they will be quite satisfied, though he should never once allude to free soil in any of his annual messages."⁶¹⁵ Similarly, the Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican noted that Democrats "cannot deny the demoralization that has come over the democratic party by its long lease of power, or the gross corruptions that have disgraced the recent administrations of the general government, and they think it will be a good thing to put the cormorants who have so long hung around the federal offices on a low diet for four years at least."⁶¹⁶ Joseph Medill asserted that "[w]e got Lincoln nominated on the idea of his honesty, and elected him by endorsing him as honest Abe."⁶¹⁷ Joshua R. Giddings, when asked by friends for his opinion of the candidate, said: "Lincoln is an honest man." Giddings clearly admired Lincoln's antislavery principles, but he chose to emphasize his integrity above his opposition to slavery, evidently thinking that it was a more salient consideration for voters.⁶¹⁸

After the election, a Republican congressman noted that many "true men, from all parties, joined our standard because of the corruptions of the national administration."⁶¹⁹

Another Republican congressman assured Lincoln that "[n]othing did more to secure the

⁶¹⁵ New York World, 23 October 1860.

⁶¹⁶ "Public Faith in Lincoln's Election," Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican, 27 September 1860.

⁶¹⁷ Joseph Medill to Horace White, Washington, 4 January 1861, Charles Henry Ray Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁶¹⁸ Giddings to Lincoln, Chicago, 19 May 1860, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶¹⁹ Francis E. Spinner to Salmon P. Chase, Washington, 22 January 1861, Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

enthusiasm and unanimity in your favor than the general impression and belief of the corruption of the present administration and the confident belief that your character and history afforded the best guarantee of a change for the better.”⁶²⁰ Agreeing was Republican Senator James W. Grimes, who said: “[o]ur triumph was achieved more because of Lincoln[’]s reputed honesty & the known corruptions of the Democrats, than because of the negro question.”⁶²¹ Grimes’ colleague Lyman Trumbull shared that view, arguing that the “country has become disgusted with the profligacy, plunder & stealing here [in Washington] in the Departments. Mr. Lincoln owes his election in a great degree to a desire for a reform in these respects.”⁶²² A leading Democrat, August Belmont, echoed those Republican leaders: “The country at large had become disgusted with the misrule of Mr. Buchanan, and the corruption which disgraced his Administration. The Democratic party was made answerable for his misdeeds, and a change was ardently desired by thousands of conservative men out of politics. This feeling was particularly strong in the rural districts, and did us infinite harm there.”⁶²³ (A leading New York Democrat complained that “our rural people, like those of New England, are so thoroughly & generally anti-Slavery that they will support Lincoln in an almost compact mass – & so they would do if they knew disunion would be the result.”⁶²⁴ Democrats did

⁶²⁰ John P. Verree to Lincoln, Washington, 1 January 1861, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶²¹ Grimes to Lyman Trumbull, Burlington, Iowa, 13 November 1860, Trumbull Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶²² Trumbull to David Dudley Field, Washington, 3 January 1861, copy, Trumbull Papers, Lincoln Presidential Library.

⁶²³ August Belmont to John Forsyth, New York, 22 November 1860, in Letters, Speeches and Addresses of August Belmont (privately printed, 1890), 24. See also same to same, New York, 19 December 1860, *ibid.*, 36-39. A leading New York Constitutional Unionist made a similar observation. Washington Hunt to John Bell, Lockport, 21 November 1860, John Bell Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶²⁴ Henry S. Randall to Caleb Cushing, Cortland Village, New York, 3 November 1860, Cushing Papers, Library of Congress.

well in urban areas. Although receiving 55% of all votes in the North, Lincoln failed to win a majority in seven of its eleven cities with a population of 50,000 or more.)⁶²⁵ A New Englander assured John J. Crittenden that “[m]ultitudes of us voted the republican ticket because we wanted honesty to displace corruption.”⁶²⁶ A case in point was the economist David A. Wells, who said: “I voted for Mr. Lincoln, not because I hated slavery, or thought it a sin, or wished in any way to do my neighbor a wrong, – but because I was disgusted with the present Administration, & wished for a change.”⁶²⁷ In Rhode Island, a Democratic literary luminary insisted that Republican success “is not owing to anti-slavery; it is owing to the failure of the Democratic federal administration, – a failure caused by corruption and one-sidedness and an ultra pro-slavery policy.” If Buchanan had “been honest and able, the Republicans would have been badly beaten.”⁶²⁸ Even in neighboring Massachusetts, abolition of slavery was not the central issue.⁶²⁹ Horace Greeley, who doubted that many Northerners hated slavery on moral grounds, thought that they desired above all things “a Radical reform in the patronage and expenditures of the Government.”⁶³⁰

The New York Courier and Enquirer had predicted that the Democrats stood no chance in 1860 because “the people have determined now, as in 1840, to get rid of

⁶²⁵ Potter, Impending Crisis, 443.

⁶²⁶ James H. Reed to Crittenden, Greenwich, Connecticut, 17 January 1861, Crittenden Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶²⁷ David A. Wells to Andrew Johnson, Troy, New York, 29 December 1860, Johnson Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶²⁸ George Henry Calvert to John Pendleton Kennedy, Newport, 5 January 1861, Kennedy Papers, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.

⁶²⁹ Edith Ellen Ware, Political Opinion in Massachusetts during Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), 83.

⁶³⁰ Greeley to Salmon P. Chase, New York, 28 September 1858, Chase Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Democratic rule and Democratic corruption.”⁶³¹ The Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette cited the overthrow of corruption as the “great idea settled by this election.” Disenchanted voters “saw examples of corruption and profligacy go not only ‘unwhipped of justice,’ but even encouraged and favored by those to whom the guardianship of the public treasury had been confided.” They also saw “our material interests neglected and injured, the press subsidized, elections controlled by money extorted from Federal office-holders, unworthy partisans rewarded by jobs and contracts, nepotism spread through the departments, defalcations common and countenanced, the laws evaded or misinterpreted, and abuses audaciously defying opinion everywhere.” Hence the electorate determined that the Democrats should be ousted from power.⁶³² The Philadelphia lawyer, gentleman farmer, plantation owner, and political essayist Sidney George Fisher thought “the corruptions and excesses of the [Buchanan] administration were very influential in producing the result.”⁶³³ The New York Times asserted that “tens of thousands throughout the North, who had but little sympathy with the Republican Party in regard to the Slavery question, voted for Lincoln because they hoped thus to arrest the downward progress of the Government The abuse had become outrageous and unendurable.”⁶³⁴

⁶³¹ New York Courier and Enquirer, 6 July 1860.

⁶³² “Victory and Its Consequences,” Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette, 7 November 1860.

⁶³³ A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher Covering the Years, 1834-1871, ed. Nicholas B. Wainwright (2 vols.; Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), 1:370 (entry for 24 November 1860).

⁶³⁴ “Appointments to Office by the New Administration,” New York Times, 6 March 1861.

Lincoln himself interpreted his election as a rebuke to corruptionists.⁶³⁵ During an interview in June, he “spoke with great freedom of corruption in high places. He regarded it as the bane of our American politics; and said he could not respect, either as a man or a politician, one who bribed or was bribed.” The New York journalist to whom he said this remarked: “I wish the thousands of people in my own State who loathe corrupt practices could have heard and seen Mr. Lincoln’s indignant denunciation of venality in high places. I can now understand how the epithet of ‘Honest Abraham Lincoln’ has come to be so universally applied to him by the Great West.”⁶³⁶ His reputation as an honest man was as important as his reputation as a foe of slavery in winning the election.

Essential to his victory were the Fillmore supporters of 1856, especially in Pennsylvania, New York, and the Midwest. Bell won only 78,000 Northern votes, whereas Fillmore had received 395,000 four years earlier.⁶³⁷ The Fillmorites who in 1856 had shied away from the Republicans because of the party’s radicalism on slavery regarded Lincoln’s antislavery views as acceptably moderate. They also favored protectionism and other economic measures endorsed by the Chicago Convention, and appreciated the Republicans’ willingness to enact nativist legislation in several states and to share patronage plums with Know Nothings. In addition, they hated corruption, not just among immigrants, but also among the cynical native politicians who manipulated their votes. Moreover, the Know Nothings did not want to waste their votes on Bell, who

⁶³⁵ J. K. Morehead, interview with John G. Nicolay, Washington, 12 and 13 May 1880, Burlingame, ed., Oral History of Lincoln, 41; Lamon, Lincoln, 460.

⁶³⁶ Springfield correspondence, 21 June, Utica, New York, Herald, 27 June 1860, copied in the New York Tribune, 9 July 1860.

⁶³⁷ Don E. Fehrenbacher, “Comment on Glyndon G. Van Deusen, ‘Why the Republican Party Came to Power,’” in Knoles, ed., Crisis of the Union, 25.

had no chance of winning, or to throw the election into the House.⁶³⁸ Know Nothings like Richard W. Thompson feared that if the election were to be settled in Congress, Democrat Joseph Lane (the running mate of Breckinridge and widely regarded as a disunionist) seemed likely to win the presidency.⁶³⁹ Some nativists voted Republican because they would do “anything to beat the Democrats.”⁶⁴⁰ Washington Hunt complained that in New York “a portion of the old Whigs, who are still inclined to be national, could not be induced to cooperate heartily with the democrats. They could not be made to realize the full danger to the country from a sectional election.”⁶⁴¹ Anti-Catholic bigots feared that Douglas’s Catholic wife might persuade him to become “an instrument of evil in the hands of the Pope in Rome.”⁶⁴² The Chicago Press and Tribune appealed to anti-Catholic prejudice in urging its readers to reject Douglas, who, that paper suggested, was a tool of the Roman Church.⁶⁴³ These were voters whom Seward probably could not have won. The returns suggest that the delegates at the Chicago Convention who regarded the Sage of Auburn as unelectable were right.⁶⁴⁴

⁶³⁸ John A. Myssong to Stephen A. Douglas, Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, 27 June 1860, Douglas Papers, University of Chicago; letter of J. H. Prescott, n.p., n.d., New York Evening Post, 10 October 1860; Evansville, Indiana, Journal, n.d., copied in the Hartford Courant, 28 May 1860; Huston, Panic of 1857, 232; Tyler Anbinder, Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 122-24, 246-70; Gienapp, “Who Voted for Lincoln,” 65-66, 77; Gienapp, “Nativism and the Creation of a Republican Majority before the Civil War,” 548-59.

⁶³⁹ Luthin, First Lincoln Campaign, 200-1. The Constitution stipulated that if no candidate won a majority of the electoral votes, the president would be chosen by a majority of the House, where each state was to have one vote. If no majority could be formed there, then the senate was to choose between the two vice-presidential candidates with the most electoral votes.

⁶⁴⁰ Jacob Devries of Pennsylvania to Alexander Boteler, 10 February 1860, quoted in Huston, Panic of 1857, 234.

⁶⁴¹ Washington Hunt to John Bell, Lockport, 21 November 1860, John Bell Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁴² Bureau County Republican (Princeton, Illinois), 16 August 1860.

⁶⁴³ “Politics and Theology,” Chicago Press and Tribune, 10 August 1860. On the anti-Catholicism of the Republicans in 1860, see Carwardine, Evangelicals and Politics, 300.

⁶⁴⁴ Potter, Impending Crisis, 429-30.

Ironically Maryland, the only state voting for Fillmore in 1856, failed to go for Bell. There Breckinridge eked out a narrow victory, while Lincoln received a paltry 2300 votes. Henry Winter Davis's support of the Constitutional Union party's ticket deprived him of several thousand more.⁶⁴⁵

The profound significance of the election was widely recognized. "Nothing more sublime . . . has happened in political affairs in our time – if ever in history," observed a minister in New York, who spoke for many Northerners.⁶⁴⁶ "The country (from its nightmare & falsely democratic delusion) has fairly turned over in its sleep & waked up," rejoiced a co-religionist in Boston.⁶⁴⁷

The outcome delighted some Radicals, including Frederick Douglass, who exulted: "For fifty years the country has taken the law from the lips of an exacting, haughty and imperious slave oligarchy. . . . Lincoln's election has vitiated their authority, and broken their power" and "has demonstrated the possibility of electing, if not an Abolitionist, at least [a man with] an anti-slavery reputation to the Presidency."⁶⁴⁸ Salmon P. Chase, though deeply hurt by the failure of his home state to support him unanimously at the convention, endorsed Lincoln promptly. He acknowledged that the candidate "may not be so radical as some would wish" but predicted that he "will never surrender our principles."⁶⁴⁹ Wendell Phillips was less charitable, charging that president-

⁶⁴⁵ Worthington G. Snethen to John P. Hale, Baltimore, 20 November 1860, Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

⁶⁴⁶ Henry W. Bellows to Cyrus Augustus Bartol, New York, 7 November 1860, Henry W. Bellows Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁶⁴⁷ Cyrus Augustus Bartol to Henry W. Bellows, Boston, 8 November 1860, Henry W. Bellows Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁶⁴⁸ Douglass's Monthly 3 (December 1860): 370.

⁶⁴⁹ Chase to George W. Julian, Columbus, 15 December 1860, Giddings-Julian Papers, Library of Congress.

elect was “hardly an anti-slavery man” and that he “believes a negro may walk where he wishes, eat what he earns, read what he can, and associate with any other who is exactly the same shade of black he is. That is all he can grant.”⁶⁵⁰ (Responding to such criticism of Lincoln, the Springfield, Massachusetts, Republican termed Phillips “a political Ishmaelite whose hand is against every man.”)⁶⁵¹

At the opposite end of the political spectrum, Southern fire-eaters prepared to carry out their secession threats. Well before the election, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi had provided that in case of a Republican victory, they would hold conventions to determine how to respond. On November 10, the Palmetto State legislature unanimously authorized a secession convention to be elected three weeks later. Georgia and the five Gulf States rapidly followed suit.⁶⁵² When the New York Herald predicted that “Lincoln’s troubles will begin on the first day after his election,” for the “selection of his cabinet will sow the bitterest discord among his supporters,” it was only partially correct.⁶⁵³ Lincoln faced the daunting challenge of uniting not only his party but also the nation; and yet he would be unable to exercise power for four long, frustrating months, during which time seven Slave States pulled out of the Union and others seemed likely to join them.

⁶⁵⁰ Wendell Phillips, speech in Boston, 7 November 1860, Boston Atlas and Bee, n.d., copied in the National Anti-Slavery Standard (New York), 17 November 1860.

⁶⁵¹ “Lincoln, the Candidate,” Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican, 13 July 1860.

⁶⁵² Potter, Lincoln and His Party, 6-8, 45.

⁶⁵³ New York Herald, 30 June 1860.

It is no wonder that Lincoln remarked upon learning of his triumph, “I feel a great responsibility. God help me, God help me.”⁶⁵⁴ That new responsibility weighed so heavily on him that even though he was “much fatigued and exhausted he got but little rest,” as he told a friend. The next morning, he “rose early, oppressed with the overwhelming responsibility that was upon him and which he had not before fully realized.”⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵⁴ Lincoln allegedly said this to the mayor of Springfield, Goyn A. Sutton. Statement by Frederic W. Sutton, the son of the mayor, Evanston, Illinois, 7 April 1926, copy enclosed in Oliver R. Barrett to Albert J. Beveridge, Chicago, 17 June 1926, Beveridge Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶⁵⁵ Gideon Welles, “Recollections in regard to the Formation of Mr Lincoln’s Cabinet,” undated manuscript, Abraham Lincoln Collection, Beinecke Library, Yale University. See also Howard K. Beale and Alan W. Brownsword, eds., Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson (3 vols.; New York, W.W. Norton, 1960), 1:81-82.