



Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana
46801

Number 1620

Fort Wayne, Indiana

February, 1973

The Indiana Election—October 11, 1864

In the month of October, 1864, the strength of the Union (Republican) Party was to be tested by state contests to be held in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The Republican political prognosticators "had not dared hope for victory in Indiana."

There were certain problems confronting the Republicans in Indiana. Thousands of their voters had gone to war and the State constitution provided that these men must cast their ballots in the precincts in which they respectively resided. No law could be passed, as in other states, allowing them to vote in the field.

While it was believed that the great majority of Indiana's soldiers would vote Republican, the Democrats insisted that the soldiers were of their political faith. Leaders of both parties requested Republican Governor Oliver P. Morton, himself a candidate for re-election, to apply for furloughs for all legal Indiana voters. This he agreed to do.

In fact, Morton had already taken action in this direction and, as early as April, 1864, he had requested the Washington authorities "to permit our soldiers to come home and vote . . ." On a recent visit to Washington, he had again renewed his request. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton agreed with Morton and willingly co-operated with him, even accompanying the Governor in a meeting with President Lincoln.

In the interview with Lincoln, Morton expressed his belief that the votes of 15,000 soldiers were necessary to win the election for the Republicans. He further stated that, "if Indiana went Democratic, she would be withdrawn from the column of loyal states and would no longer furnish any substantial aid to the government." According to William Dudley Foulke in his *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, Vol. I, page 366, Lincoln answered: "It is better that we should both be beaten than that the forces in front of the enemy should be weakened and perhaps defeated on account of the absence of these men."

Another problem confronting the Indiana Republicans was a military draft to be held the latter part of September. Earlier drafts had caused a bitter feeling and, coming so near the October 11th State election, spelled political disaster in the minds of many timid Republican politicians. Morton had asked the President to delay the draft until after the State election, but Lincoln had refused.

Accordingly, Morton wrote to the Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, on September 12, 1864, the following letter, which was signed by him and fifteen influential Indiana Republicans:

"Sir—Assembled from the different parts of Indiana, and practically familiar with the influences now at work in each congressional district of the state, we express it as our profound conviction that upon the issue of the election that occurs within a month from this date may depend the question as to whether the secession element shall be effectually crushed or whether it shall acquire strength enough, we do not say to take the state out of the Union, but practically to sever her from the general government, so far as future military aid is concerned.

"We further express the gravest doubts as to whether

Casimir Mancion,
Washington, D.C.
September 19th, 1864.

Major General Sherman,

The State election of Indiana occurs on the 11th of October, and the loss of it to the friends of the Government would go far towards losing the whole Union cause. The bad effect upon the November election, and especially the giving the State Government to those who will oppose the war on every possible way, are too much to risk, if it can possibly be avoided. Should the draft proceed, notwithstanding its strong tendency to lose us the State, Indiana is the only important State, voting on October, whose soldiers cannot vote in the field. Any thing you can safely do to let her soldiers, or any part of them, go home and vote at the State election, will be greatly in point. They need not remain for the Presidential election, but may return to you at once. This is, in no sense, an order, but is merely intended to

I assure you with the confidence, to the army staff, of your doing all you safely can, yourself being the judge of what you can safely do.

Yours truly,
Abraham Lincoln

From the Lincoln National Life Foundation
Abraham Lincoln to Major-General Sherman, September 19th, 1864, L. S., 2 pages, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".

it will be possible for us to secure success at the polls on the 11th of October unless we can receive aid—

"1. By delay of the draft until the election has passed.

"2. By the return, before election day, of fifteen thousand Indiana soldiers.

"As to the draft, we propose an informal delay only, of which no public notice need be given. Reason sufficient will suggest itself in the time necessary to adjust the local quotas of townships, towns and cities, without the careful settlement of which, great dissatisfaction, even among the loyal, can not be avoided.

"Volunteering is going on rapidly at this moment, and we have no hesitation in expressing the confident opinion that if the draft be delayed, and fifteen thousand Indiana troops be ordered home before the election, with suitable arrangements for recruiting, Indiana's entire quota can and will be filled by volunteering within two weeks after election day. She is at this time ahead, after filling former quotas, fully fifteen thousand three years' men.

"Thus the government will obtain the recruits it has demanded about as soon as by pressing compulsory measures at once, and it will secure itself against the possible loss of the power and influence of the state for years to come.

"If the draft is enforced before the election there may be required half as many men to enforce it as we ask to secure the election. Difficulty may reasonably be anticipated in from twenty to twenty-five counties. If the draft goes on immediately after the election, the soldiers will be on the spot to secure its being carried into effect, should that be necessary. But we are confident that if our propositions are adopted no draft will be needed at all.

"The case of Indiana is peculiar. She has, probably, a larger proportion of inhabitants of Southern birth or parentage—many of them, of course, with Southern proclivities—than any other free state, and she is one of the few states in which soldiers are disfranchised.

"It is not on the score of Indiana's past deserts that we ask this assistance. All such considerations must give way before the public good. We ask it because the burden of this political contest is heavier than we can bear. Nor have we asked it before exhausting every effort which loyal men can make for their country. We ask it for that country's sake. We ask it, because we feel absolutely assured that in this way more readily and more speedily than in any other can the general government accomplish the object it proposes.

"If it were possible that you could see and hear what we, in the last month, each in his own section of country, have seen and heard, no word from us would be needed. You would need no argument to prove that a crisis, full of danger to the entire Northwest, is at hand.

"We do not expect any general commanding, engrossed with vast military operations, to realize this. And therefore, while of course we do not urge any withdrawal of troops that would imperil the situation in Georgia or elsewhere, we suggest that a mere re-

quest to General Sherman, or other commander, to send home, or not send home, the troops in question, as he might think best, unaccompanied by an expression of the urgent desire of the government in the premises, and a view of the vast interests at stake, would be of no avail. No commander willingly diminishes his command. To what extent it may be prudent or proper to make the order imperative, we, not having the entire situation before us, can not judge. We hope you will see, in our most precarious condition, cause sufficient to do so.

"The result of the state election, whether favorable or unfavorable to the government, will carry with it, beyond a doubt, that of the Presidential vote of Indiana.

"All which is respectfully submitted,

"O. P. Morton.

"E. Dumont, 6th District.

"Godlove S. Orth, 8th District.

"C. M. Allen, 1st District.

"Thomas N. Stillwell, 11th District.

"Ralph Hill, 3d District.

"John H. Farquhar, 4th District.

"James G. Jones, A. A. P. Marshal-General.

"W. W. Curry, 2d District.

"J. H. Defrees, 10th District.

"S. Colfax, 9th District.

"John L. Mansfield, Maj.-Gen. Ind. Legion.

"James Park, Capt. P. Mar. 8th District Ind.

"Charles A. Ray, Judge 12th District.

"A. H. Conner, Postmaster, Indianapolis, Ind.

"J. T. Wright, Ch. St. Cent. Com.

"Indianapolis, September 12, 1864."

As a result of the efforts of the Indiana Republicans in general and Governor Morton in particular, Lincoln wrote General William T. Sherman, whose headquarters from early September, 1864, until October 4th was in Atlanta, Georgia, as follows:

Executive Mansion,
Washington, D. C.
September 19th, 1864.

Major General Sherman,

The State election of Indiana occurs on the 11th of October, and the loss of it to the friends of the Government would go far towards losing the whole Union cause. The bad effect upon the November election, and especially the giving the State Government to those who will oppose the war in every possible way, are too much to risk, if it can possibly be avoided. The draft proceeds, notwithstanding its strong tendency to lose us the State. Indiana is the only important State, voting in October, whose soldiers cannot vote in the field. Any thing you can safely do to let her soldiers, or any part of them, go home and vote at the State election, will be greatly in point. They need not remain for the Presidential election, but may return to you at once. This is, in no sense, an order, but is merely intended to impress you with the importance, to the army itself, of your doing all you safely can, yourself being the judge of what you can safely do.

Yours truly

A. Lincoln

This letter appears to have been dictated by Lincoln, but is in the handwriting of his secretary, John Hay, or some other accomplished scribe. The words, "Yours truly," and the signature, "A. Lincoln," are in the handwriting of the President.

Lincoln's letter to Sherman was carried by William Mitchell, a former representative from Indiana (1861-1863) and president of the First National Bank of Kendallville, Indiana. He was accompanied by J. J. Brown of New Albany, Indiana, who in a letter addressed to John Mitchell dated March 15, 1888, stated that: "I accompanied your father in the trip from Washington to Shilo. Two others were appointed. None went to Sherman's Army but your father and myself."

The mention by Brown of Shilo is puzzling. E. B. "Pete" Long of The University of Wyoming, Laramie, made the following comment: "Shiloh was often spelled 'Shilo' and there were a number of such named places, usually churches. I know of none in Georgia and the



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

For information concerning Gen. James A. Hardie, see *Generals In Blue* by Ezra J. Warner, Louisiana State University Press, 1964, pages 204-205.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

The original envelope which contained Lincoln's letter to Sherman, September 19th, 1864. H. S. Lane, presumably attached to Sherman's headquarters, signed his name on the envelope, along with the General's initials, in acknowledgment of the receipt of the letter.

use of it by Brown mystifies me. It could hardly refer to Shiloh Church, Tennessee, near Pittsburg Landing."

In addition to owning the original Lincoln letter and envelope of September 19, 1864, the Foundation also has the War Department pass of the same date issued to "Hon. William Mitchell to Major Genl. Sherman's Headquarters and return." The pass (Not Transferable) and "By order of the Secretary of War" was signed by James A. Hardie, Col. and Inspt. Gen. U. S. A.

Sometime after the delivery of Lincoln's letter to Sherman, the following telegram was sent to the President by the courier:

Office U. S. Military Telegraph
War Department
The following Telegram received at Washington 11:45
a m Oct. 7, 1864
From Louisville
Pres. Lincoln
I have succeeded very well.
The skies are bright.

Wm. Mitchell

This telegram which is dated October 7, 1864, suggests that there must have been considerable delay in delivering Lincoln's letter of September 19, 1864.

Again on October 24, 1864, Mitchell communicated with the President in a letter in which, among other things, he mentioned his recent visit to Sherman's headquarters, "Having accomplished my mission and returned Home in time to vote at our State Election . . ."

Sherman, undoubtedly, understood Lincoln's suggestions to be a command. However, few soldiers in the field were furloughed. Next, Morton importuned Stanton who through the surgeon general granted furloughs to such men as were able to travel to Indiana. Their transportation, both ways, was to be paid by the government. The soldiers sent home gathered at the polls on election day. After frantic efforts, some 9,000 voted, a number large enough to have a considerable bearing on the outcome of the election. Some Democrats charged that in selecting soldiers for furloughs only those who promised to vote for Lincoln and Morton were allowed to go home. Another aspect of Morton's political strategy was to allow no new Indiana troops to be sent to the field until after the state election.

According to William B. Hesseltine in his book, *Lincoln And The War Governors*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948, "The Nineteenth Regiment of Vermont Volunteers voted in Indiana that day (October 11th), but many a Democrat found his vote challenged."

Some of the sick and wounded soldiers arrived only a few days before the election, while others arrived on election day. The voters gave the Republicans a twenty thousand majority (Lincoln would carry the state in November with about the same majority) with Morton leading the ticket in every county. The results were that Indiana had been saved to the Union cause and that

Lincoln would win in Indiana in the November Presidential election. The draft had not been postponed, and it had created less dissatisfaction than had been feared.

Having been re-elected on October 11th, Morton telegraphed Lincoln and Stanton on October 12th: "In consideration of the fact that nearly all of the Indiana sick & wounded soldiers furloughed from Hospitals under your late order did not reach their homes until within a few days past & many not until yesterday & the day before leaving them little or no time to see their friends &

& families & secure the rest & recuperation they so much need on account of long & arduous Journey they have performed I most earnestly ask that their furloughs be extended by a special order until after the Presidential Election say Nov (10) tenth. If this is done I feel confident hundreds of them will return to the front able for active duty. If sent on the fifteenth inst they will be worse off than ever For the best interests of the service and the sake of humanity I earnestly hope this request will be granted & the order telegraphed to me as soon as possible."

The following day, October 13th, Lincoln replied to Governor Morton: "In my letter borne by Mr. Mitchell to Gen. Sherman, I said that any soldiers he could spare for October need not to remain for November. I therefore can not press the General on this point. All that the Sec. of War and Gen. Sherman feel they can safely do, I however, shall be glad of.

"Bravo, for Indiana, and for yourself personally."

Morton replied to Lincoln's telegram which he received October 13th at 1:00 p. m. as follows: "I fear you misapprehend my dispatch of yesterday I only asked that the sick & wounded who are furloughed under Mr. Stanton's order to the Surgeon Genl be allowed to remain Genl Sherman had nothing to do with sending them home & would not be strengthened any by their return now as they would all have to go into Hospitals again It seems to me the order of extension asked for yesterday can be granted without consulting the Genl & without the least detriment, but rather benefit to the service Please let Mr Stanton see this & for God's sake let the order be made at once."

At 5:00 P. M. (October 13th) Morton telegraphed Lincoln and Stanton again, this time injecting a political note in his plea: "It is my opinion that the vote of every soldiers (sic) in Indiana will be required to carry this state for Mr. Lincoln in November. The most of them are sick and wounded and in no condition to render service and it is better to let them remain while they are here.

"It is important that this be answered immediately."

If Lincoln replied to Morton's two telegrams, such replies are not now extant and no record of any kind of a reply has been recorded. However, Morton was able to persuade Stanton to extend the soldiers furloughs until after the November election.

In March, 1929, when the Lincoln National Life Foundation purchased Lincoln's original letter to Sherman (value based on the appraisal of The Smith Book Company of Cincinnati, Ohio) from Mrs. Louise F. E. Mitchell of Kendallville, there was included in the sale, besides the envelope and the pass, two letters written by J. J. Brown dated March 15, 1888, and March 21, 1888, relative to the original letter. Why Sherman did not retain Lincoln's letter for his own files is a mystery.

The Brown letters are addressed to William Mitchell's son, John.

The March 15, 1888, letter follows:

New Albany, Indiana
March 15, 1888

John Mitchell, Esq
Kendallville
My dear Sir:

Yours 13th inst received & in reply would say that I accompanied your father in the trip from Washington to Shilo. Two others were appointed. None went to Sherman's army but your father and myself. I shall be much pleased to have you send me Mr. Lincoln's letter to look at and which I will promptly return.

I hope I may sometime have the pleasure of meeting you as it would seem like renewing the acquaintance of your respected father, whose friendship I enjoyed very much.

Will you be at Chicago at the Convention in June? If so, and you send me your address, I will take pleasure in calling on you.

Very truly
J. J. Brown

The March 21, 1888 letter follows:

New Albany, Indiana
March 21, 1888

John Mitchell, Esq
Kendallville
My dear Sir:

Your esteemed favor 17th with Mr. Lincoln's letter duly received, and I assure you it has been a very great pleasure to me & some of my friends to peruse this paper and look upon that grand man's signature. I return the same herewith & sincerely trust it may reach you safely.

I am a constant reader of Hay & Nicolay in the Century and have been intensely interested. If I go to Chicago I will let you know as I shall be much pleased to make your acquaintance.

Again thanking you for your thoughtfulness in this matter

I am Very truly
J. J. Brown

Please send (sic) me postal saying you received the letter, as I shall be anxious until (sic) I know you have received it safely.

J. J. B.

What about the October state contests in Ohio and Pennsylvania? Perhaps Lincoln gave the best answer in a telegram to Lieut. Gen. Grant, on October 12, 1864: "Sec. of War not being in, I answer yours about election. Pennsylvania very close, and still in doubt on home vote. Ohio largely for us, with all the members of congress but two or three. Indiana largely for us. Governor, it is said by 15,000, and 8. of the eleven members of congress. Send us what you may know of your army vote."

Lincoln received a telegram from John W. Forney of Philadelphia (October 12th) after he had written Grant. "We will carry the state (Pennsylvania) in November high and dry by a large majority. Spirit of opposition 'dead broke.'"

The October election results revealed to astute politicians that, "Unless all human foresight fails, the election of Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson is assured."

Editor's Note: For additional information concerning the October, 1864 elections and Lincoln's letter to Sherman, see *Lincoln Lore* Nos. 1136 and 1137. Also, see *Lincoln Lore* No. 1480, "Oliver P. Morton — Lincoln's Irritating Goad." Two books which were invaluable in the preparation of this article were Kenneth M. Stampp's *Indiana Politics During The Civil War*, Indiana Historical Bureau, 1949 and Emma Lou Thornbrough's *Indiana In The Civil War Era, 1850-1880*, Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1965.

Monaghan No. 8

Some Lincoln publications elude collectors for years only to turn up in the most unexpected places. Such is the history of a copy of Monaghan No. 8, which was published in 1854 and was acquired by the Foundation last month.

The bibliographer listed the item as follows:

(Abraham Lincoln) Illinois House. (18th Assem. Canal Claims. Communication from the Governor, Transmitting the Report of the Commissioners appointed to investigate Canal Claims; also, the Attorneys' reports on same. (Letter of transmittal signed Aug. C. French)

Cover title. (1854?) 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ "; 52 p. IHi. Report of investigation by Commissioners Noah Johnson and Abraham Lincoln.

In the report of the commissioners (dated November 2, 1852), the statement is made that Noah Johnson of Mt. Vernon and A. Lincoln of Springfield would meet at Ottawa to take evidence of the claimants against the state, on account of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. The date of the meeting was December 3, 1852.

Lincoln Day By Day — A Chronology, Volume II: 1849-1860, indicates that the commissioners met as required. On December 3, in Ottawa, Lincoln and Johnson took the oath prescribed in an act of the legislature of June 22, 1852, whereby they were appointed commissioners to hear the canal claims. Edwin S. Leland, judge of the Ninth Circuit, administered the oath.

Lincoln and Johnson next selected R. E. Goodell to assist them as a clerk, and they rented the sheriff's office in which to conduct the hearings. The hearings continued throughout the remainder of the month, though not continuously, and the two commissioners found it necessary to make two trips to Chicago to take additional testimony.

On January 7, 1853, Lincoln and Johnson submitted the report of their investigation to the legislature. Lincoln also presented his expense account which was \$65. for travel and \$4. per day for 21 days service.

While the 52 page pamphlet is not listed as one of the "100 Scarce Lincoln Books," it has taken the Foundation forty-five years to acquire a copy.

Introducing The New Editor

This will be the concluding issue of *Lincoln Lore* edited by R. Gerald McMurtry who began the series with Number 1421 after the retirement of Dr. Louis A. Warren, in July, 1956. The new editor is Mark Neely, Jr., who will be appointed Director of the Lincoln Library-Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

Mr. Neely graduated *magna cum laude* from Yale in 1966 with a degree in American Studies and a student Western History Prize for his long essay on tactics, technology, and European influence on the United States Cavalry. In the fall of that year, he entered the Yale Graduate School to study American history. There his interest in Lincoln, slavery, the origins of the Whig and Republican parties, and secession was stimulated by courses in the history of the South and in nineteenth-century politics. As his early roots in the interdisciplinary approach of American Studies suggest, Mr. Neely was trained as an historian of ideas and, therefore, has special interests in Lincoln's political and religious ideas.

At present, Mr. Neely is completing his Ph. D. dissertation, "The Organic Theory of the State in American Political Thought, 1838-1918." Primarily a study of academic political thinkers, the thesis weighs the impact of the Civil War on American conceptions of nationhood. Abraham Lincoln's interpretation of the Civil War as well as the actual policies and practices of the Lincoln administration figure prominently in the background of the thesis.

Last year, Mr. Neely taught American history at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.

Visit the Lincoln Library-Museum

With a new flexible work schedule and a four and one-half day work week for home office employees, the Lincoln Library-Museum will be open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and on Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.