

Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of the
LINCOLN HISTORICAL RESEARCH
FOUNDATION

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CONVENTION REACTIONS

The intelligence of the convention which nominated Abraham Lincoln has often been challenged. There were many who held that the candidacy of Lincoln was successful because his friends bought votes, bartered offices, and packed the convention with a howling mob, "filling every available space and much that they had no business to fill." The immediate reaction of the two radical elements in America was the best evidence then obtainable that the convention had made a very wise choice.

The Abolitionists of the North, whose one obsession is indicated by their name, began at once a vicious attack on the Republican nominee. Wendell Phillips, the editor of the "Liberator," published an article under the caption, "Abraham Lincoln, the Slave-Hound of Illinois." He took occasion to remark that "notwithstanding the emptiness of Mr. Lincoln's mind, I think we shall yet succeed in making this a det cent land to live in."

The Slavery group of the South were more pronounced in their dissatisfaction with the Republican nominee than the Abolitionists. Slavery meant more to them than the preservation of the Union, and they immediately attacked Lincoln as a recognized foe of the institution which they had nourished, and which now sustained them.

That "politics make strange bed-fellows," was never more clearly exhibited than in the united attack upon Lincoln by both the Slavery and Anti-Slavery groups. Those who sponsored the candidacy of Lincoln anticipated just such a reaction, and saw the wisdom of choosing a man whose course would not be influenced by either of these radical elements.

Such literary men as Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Greenleaf Whittier, William Cullen Bryant, George William Curtis, and James Russell Lowell sanctioned the nomination of Lincoln and gave him their support. They recognized in him one whose chief passion would be to save the Union. Lowell set forth his convictions as follows: "We are persuaded that the election of Mr. Lincoln will do more

than anything else to appese the excitement of the country. He has proved both his ability and integrity; he has had experience enough in public affairs to make him a statesman and not enough to make him a politician."

BY TELEGRAPH

At least five telegrams reached Abraham Lincoln in Springfield shortly after he had been nominated at the Chicago convention on May 18, 1860. Although there is some difference of opinion as to which one he received first, the order most generally accepted follows:

1. Lincoln: "You are nominated." J. J. S. Wilson.
2. Abe Lincoln: "We did it, glory to God." Knapp.
3. Abraham Lincoln: "You're nominated and elected." J. J. Richards.
4. Hon. A. Lincoln: "You were nominated on 3rd ballot." J. J. Richards.
5. Hon. A. Lincoln: "Vote just nounced. While No. necessary to choice, 234 Lincoln, 354 votes not stated. On motion of Mr. Evarts of New York the nomination was made unanimous amid intense enthusiasm." J. J. S. Wilson.

John James Speed Wilson was superintendent of the Eastern Division of the Caton Telegraph Lines with headquarters at Springfield. Mr. N. M. Knapp lived in Winchester, Illinois, and worked hard for Lincoln's nomination. J. J. Richards was a resident of Springfield and was connected with the Great Western Railroad.

NEIGHBOR LINCOLN

One of the reporters who made the Chicago convention was Charles C. Coffin. After the assembly adjourned he accompanied the committee of notification to Springfield where he remained for some days gathering items about the newly nominated Republican candidate for President. The second morning after his arrival he made this interesting observation: "I crossed the public square and entered the office of Mr. Lincoln. A pine table occupied the center of the room, a desk one corner. The May sun shone through uncurtained windows upon ranges of shelves filled with law books, pamphlets, and documents—a helter-skelter arrangement. Newspapers littered the floor. Mr. Lincoln was seated at the desk, clad in a linen duster, with a pile of letters and a wooden inkstand before him. He had a hearty welcome for all who came. There was no sign of elation. To friends, neighbors, old acquaintances and strangers alike he was simply Abraham Lincoln."

EDITORS ON THE NOMINATION

"While Mr. Lincoln's position as a Republican renders him satisfactory to the most zealous of the party, the moderation of his character, and the conservative tendencies of his mind, long aproved and well known of all men in public life, commend him to every section of the opposition." New York Tribune.

"'Honest Abe Lincoln,' as everybody calls him where he is best known is just the man that this sorely swindeled and disgraced nation needs for President. He 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, straightforward, able man." New Haven Palladium.

"Mr. Lincoln, so far as we are aware, has not until recently occupied a prominent place in the list of distinguished citizens from which it was supposed the Republicans would make a selection in nominating a candidate for the Presidency." National Intelligencer.

"Mr. Lincoln has not that long experience in public service which we could have wished, but he has something better in the strong, sagacious mind, cool and unshaken nerve, and intelligent familiarity with public measures, which lie at the bottom of all true statesmanship." Buffalo Commercial Advertiser.

NOMINATION AUTOGRAPHS

Those who are collecting autographs of men associated with Lincoln will find several names of distinction among the committee that officially informed him of his nomination. The ten men who were chosen to advise Lincoln of the convention's decision were: George Ashmun of Massachusetts, Francis P. Blair of Missouri, George S. Boutwell of Massachusetts, Samuel G. Bowles of Massachusetts, David K. Carter of Ohio, William M. Evarts of New York, William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania, Carl Schurz of Wisconsin, Amos Tuck of New Hampshire, and Gideon Wells of Connecticut.