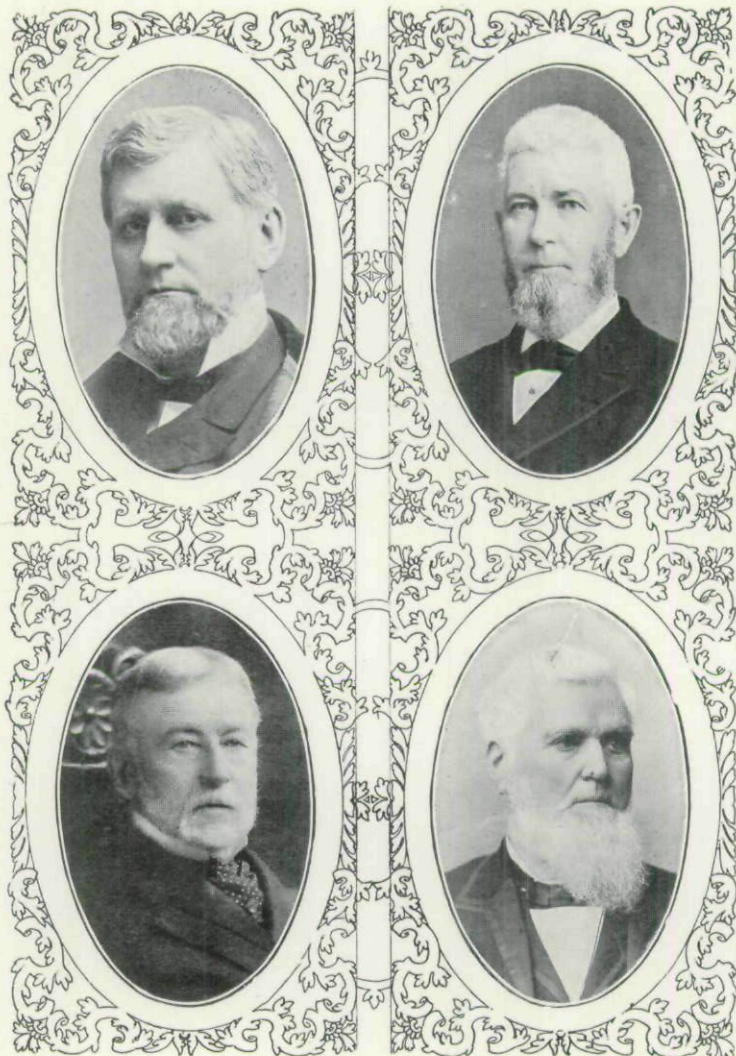


SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES.

WILLIAM B. ALLISON,  
U. S. SENATOR.

JAMES F. WILSON,  
U. S. SENATOR.



JOHN A. KASSON,  
U. S. DIPLOMAT.

ALVIN SAUNDERS,  
U. S. SENATOR.

CHICAGO CONVENTION, MAY 16-18, 1860.

# ANNALS OF IOWA.

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3D SERIES.

## IOWA AND THE FIRST NOMINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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The delegates from Iowa will go to Chicago to nominate a Presidential ticket—the strongest ticket possible—and to this end will be glad to listen to the suggestions of well informed friends at Washington or elsewhere, but they go unpledged, uncommitted, and fully at liberty to hear all suggestions and then to do what shall commend itself to their unfettered judgment as best for the cause. As it is in Iowa, so it will be elsewhere.—Horace Greeley (Feb. 8, 1860).<sup>1</sup>

. . . the blot does not rest upon the history of the Union, that this [Lincoln's nomination] the most fate-pregnant decision which an American convention had ever to make, was brought about by blind chance in combination with base intriguers. Far from it. It was the conscious act of clear-sighted and self-sacrificing patriots to whom honor and gratitude in the fullest measure are due.—Von Holst (1892).<sup>2</sup>

### I.

#### EXPECTATIONS AND THE MEAGRE MINUTES.

The average Iowan is wont to indulge in the presumption that Iowa's politicians and statesmen have always played prominent parts in our national affairs. While often expressed in language more exuberant and vasty than modesty or truth sanctions, the assumption is fairly well founded. In recent years no one will gainsay this State's prominence in our Federal councils. Fifty and sixty years ago the case was likewise. Iowa's chiefs commanded attention and exacted consideration in the conduct of the national government.

Mr. James G. Blaine in closing his characterization of the leaders of the Senate at Washington in the momentous session of 1850, says: "Dodge of Wisconsin and Dodge of Iowa, father and son, represented the Democracy of the remotest

(1) *New York Tribune*, Feb. 17, 1860.—Extract from letter dated at Mansfield, Ohio, written after making circuit of the Northwestern States.

(2) *Constitutional and Political History of the United States*, Vol. VII, p. 173.

The triumph of James W. Grimes in 1854 made him a national figure. His election as Governor was a surprise to the entire country. This was not strange for Iowa was looked upon as a "hot-bed of dough faces,"<sup>1</sup> and the annals of the *ante bellum* period contain no clearer, stronger, or more courageous pronouncement against the aggressions of the Slavocrats than his address "To the People of Iowa" when he accepted the nomination for Governor.<sup>2</sup> His election was mostly his personal achievement and not the result, as it would be nowadays, of organization and widely concerted effort. Senator Chase of Ohio wrote the new champion that he had waged "the best battle for freedom yet fought."<sup>3</sup> Giddings declared that he had made "the true issue" on which the battle had to be fought in the northern States.<sup>4</sup> In the Senate from 1859 to 1869 he was distinguished "for iron will and sound judgment"<sup>5</sup> and became, says Perley Poore "a tower of strength for the administration" in the crises of the war.<sup>6</sup>

Grimes's victory in 1854 sent James Harlan to the Senate in 1856. He, too, says a distinguished historian, immediately made his "mark."<sup>7</sup> His speech on the Lecompton Constitution won Seward's admiration.<sup>8</sup> The Republican Association at Washington printed and sold at a low price Senator Harlan's speeches along with those of Collamer, Hale, Seward and Henry Wilson.<sup>9</sup> Harlan was a statesman the country reckoned with, Mr. Blaine telling us that he later became "one of Mr. Lincoln's most valued and most confidential friends and subsequently a member of his cabinet."<sup>10</sup>

No fact, in the writer's judgment, indicates more strikingly the potency of Iowa's influence at Washington fifty years ago than President Lincoln's appointment in the forepart of his first term of Samuel F. Miller as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court. He was endorsed strongly by Iowa's bench and bar and by others in States adjacent. The President, however, delayed making the appointment. Upon per-

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(1) Von Holst, Vol. V, p. 78. (2) Salter's *Life of Grimes*, pp. 34-50. (3) *Ib.*, p. 54. (4) *Ib.*, p. 63. (5) Blaine, *Ib.*, p. 321. (6) Poore, *Ib.*, Vol. II, p. 100. (7) Rhodes' *History of U. S.*, Vol. II, p. 130. (8) Pike's *First Blows*, etc., p. 417. (9) Rhodes, *Ib.*, p. 131. (10) Blaine, *Ib.*, p. 321.

sonal inquiry, Mr. John A. Kasson, then Assistant Postmaster-General, learned that the reputation of the Keokuk lawyer "had not then even extended so far as to Springfield, Illinois" (a distance but little over one hundred miles).<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the appointment was made and Justice Miller became almost immediately the "dominant personality" of our great court.<sup>2</sup> The significance of his elevation is this—President Lincoln was not a petty spoilsman and he had no special fondness for the office monger; but he was a politician *par excellence*. He made appointments with an eye single to the public good, which was then the preservation of the Union, yet he always gave close attention to the influence of the Potentialities back of the aspirants for office who pressed their claims upon him.<sup>3</sup> Government is not a philosophical abstraction or an academic thesis. It is a constantly shifting balance of contrary and divergent forces and interests. It was essential to success in combating the nation's enemies at the front for the President so to co-ordinate factors and control conditions behind him as to assure him at once non-interference and efficient support. Justice Miller's appointment must have appeared to President Lincoln not only creditable and safe, but eminently worth while, insuring strength upon the bench and influential support for his administration, both in Congress and in Iowa. Besides consideration of the influence of Iowa's leaders we should naturally presume that recollections of the prominent part taken by Iowans on his behalf in the Convention that first nominated him for the Presidency played no small part in deciding President Lincoln to select the then but little known jurist of Keokuk.

This presumption, however, is apparently upset if the curious make casual inquiry. There is nothing whatever in the record of the proceedings of the Convention showing that Iowa did anything for any candidate worthy of special note or remembrance. One of Iowa's delegates moved an amendment to a motion to thank Chicago's Board of Trade for an invi-

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(1) Mr. John A. Kasson to Charles Aldrich—letter dated Washington, D. C., Nov. 10, 1893. See *Annals*, Vol. I, p. 252. (2) Characterization of Chief Justice Chase quoted in *Annals*, *Ib.*, p. 247. (3) See Mr. Horace White's introduction to Herndon & Weik's *Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. XXII.

tation to an excursion on Lake Michigan.<sup>1</sup> Another delegate secured an amendment allowing each State to choose its member of the National Committee as it pleased.<sup>2</sup> When the Committee on Credentials reported that Iowa had "appointed eight delegates from each Congressional district [Iowa had only two] and sixteen Senatorial delegates," when entitled to but eight votes, the minutes record "[laughter]."<sup>3</sup> In the entire proceedings of the Convention, Iowa is credited with but one significant performance and that was manifestly either a blunder due to excitement or a play to the galleries—A delegate elicited "great applause" by seconding the nomination of Abraham Lincoln "in the name of two-thirds of the delegation of Iowa."<sup>4</sup> Yet, on the first ballot immediately following, Iowa gave Lincoln only two votes, or one-fourth of her quota; and on the third ballot even when it was clear that the candidate of Illinois was almost certain to be nominated Iowa gave over a third of her vote to other candidates.<sup>5</sup> After Mr. Cartter of Ohio changed four of Chase's votes to Lincoln and decided the result then a delegate from Iowa joined the chorus and on behalf of the delegation moved to make it unanimous.<sup>6</sup> But there is nothing in all this that denotes conspicuous achievement or influence, neither staunch service nor effective generalship such as politicians exact.

If we turn to formal histories or accounts of national currency or general use our presumption is further seriously disturbed. Iowa's influence in the nomination seems to have been conspicuous chiefly by its absence. There are no references to Iowans whatever in scores of volumes relating the events of the convention week. One would almost imagine that Iowa's men were not present at all. In practically but one case has the writer found mention of Iowa's influence in a favorable connection and even here the assertion is disputed. In two other instances distinguished national historians refer to her representatives in Chicago in derogatory terms that

(1) *Proceedings of the First Three Republican National Conventions of 1856, 1860, 1864*, published by Charles W. Johnson, p. 91. (2) *Ib.*, p. 107. (3) *Ib.*, p. 110. (4) *Ib.*, p. 149. (5) *Ib.*, pp. 149, 153. (6) *Ib.*, p. 154.

seem to imply conduct not worthy of commendation or respect.

In spite of appearances thus to the contrary there are substantial reasons for thinking that men from Iowa played an influential part in bringing the Convention to what Von Holst declares was "the most fate-pregnant decision which an American Convention ever had to make," verifying precisely Horace Greeley's prediction three months before, to-wit, "As it is in Iowa, so it will be elsewhere." In what follows I shall deal with the animadversions referred to and then exhibit the growth of Republican sentiment in Iowa regarding the Presidential nomination, the character of Iowa's delegates, and the nature of their work in the Convention.

## II.

### DID CLANS OR CHIEFS CONTROL THE CONVENTION?

Notwithstanding Professor Von Holst's conclusive demonstration to the contrary<sup>1</sup> there still prevails a widespread notion that the first nomination of Abraham Lincoln was received by the country at large with surprise and shock, a consummation believed to be the issue of either cabals and machinations against New York's candidate or the irrational overwhelming influence of a shouting, surging mob round about the delegates, or of both combined. This notion is not a common popular prejudice merely, but the deliberate conclusion of academic chroniclers and savants.<sup>2</sup> In a general way Mr. James Ford Rhodes seems to agree with Von Holst's presentation of the major facts and their interpretation, us-

(1) Von Holst, *History*, Vol. VII, pp. 149-186. (2) Judge J. V. Quarles in *Putnam's Monthly*, Vol. II, p. 59 (April, 1907), says that the nomination was a "tremendous surprise"; Admiral French E. Chadwick in *Causes of the Civil War, 1859-1861* (Amer. Nation: A History, Prof. A. B. Hart, editor, Vol. 19, 1906), says "the result was a shock of surprise to the country at large," p. 119; Dr. Guy Carlton Lee in *The True History of the Civil War* (1903), says: "The nomination was received with a shock of surprise by the country," and he adds Wendell Phillips' harsh exclamation in *The Liberator*, "Who is this huckster in politics?" Goldwin Smith in *The United States* (1893), p. 241, says: "But it was mainly to cabal against Seward that Lincoln owed the Republican nomination"; Professor Alex. Johnston says: "Much of the opposition to Seward came from the mysterious ramifications of factions in New York." Lalor's *Cyclopedia of Political and Social Science* (1882), reprinted in his *Amer. Political History*, [edited by Professor J. C. Woodburn, 1906], Vol. II, p. 212.

ing the same or similar evidence. But the sweep and implications of his assertions give color and substance to the general opinion. In his account of the conditions precedent and determining the developments and results during the Convention week, May 14-18, 1860, Mr. Rhodes makes the following statements in his *History of the United States*, Vol. II:

Contrasting the Republican National Conventions of 1856 and 1860, he says: \* \* \* then [1856] the wire pullers looked askance at a movement whose success was problematical, now [1860] they hastened to identify themselves with a party that apparently had the game in its own hands; then the delegates were liberty-loving enthusiasts and largely volunteers, now the delegates had been chosen by means of the organization peculiar to a powerful party, and in political wisdom were the pick of the Republicans (p. 457).

Seward's claim for the nomination was strong. \* \* \* Intensely anxious for the nomination, and confidently expecting it, he was alike the choice of the politicians and the people. Could a popular vote on the subject have been taken, the majority in the Republican States would have been overwhelmingly in his favor. One day at Chicago sufficed to demonstrate that he had the support of the machine politicians (p. 460).

While much of the outside volunteer attendance from New York and Michigan favoring Seward was weighty in character as well as imposing in number, the organized body of rough fellows from New York City, under the lead of Tom Hyer, a noted bruiser, made a great deal of noise without helping his cause. \* \* \* All the outside pressure was for Seward or Lincoln, there being practically none for the other candidates. While many of Seward's followers were disinterested and sincere, others betrayed unmistakably the influence of the machine. *Lincoln's adherents were men from Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, who had come to Chicago bent on having a good time and seeing the rail-splitter nominated, and while traces of organization might be detected among them, it was such organization as may be seen in a mob (pp. 462-463).* (Italics here.)

Several important facts are clearly asserted in the foregoing and some serious implications are no less apparent. First, politicians and wire pullers rather than earnest self-sacrificing patriots made up the dominant forces of the Chicago Convention of 1860. Second, Seward was the choice of the politicians and people alike. Third, honesty or sincerity was for the most part lacking among the rank and file of Seward's followers at Chicago; fourth, earnestness or serious purpose was notably absent from the followers of Mr.

Lincoln. By "adherents" he apparently refers chiefly to the "volunteer outside influence," namely, unofficial attendants, rather than to accredited delegates. Yet the comprehensiveness and variable sweep of portions of previous paragraphs suggest that a first impression that delegates were also included is not unwarranted. And, fifth, Mr. Rhodes would have us conclude, we may infer, that Lincoln's nomination was an amazing conclusion resulting from the variable but coercive suggestions of a dominant organized mob. It is but fair to say, however, that Mr. Rhodes seems to shrink from this last conclusion, for later he says: "One wonders if those wise and experienced delegates<sup>1</sup> interpreted this manipulated noise as the voice of the people" (p. 468).

Since Edmund Burke confessed his inability to discover "a method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people," scholars and scientists have not deemed it appropriate or safe to condemn institutions, parties or governments, let alone peoples *en bloc*. Mr. Rhodes is not a pseudo-historian who imagines that cynical contempt for the commonality is a solid basis for historical scholarship; and he does not proceed on the assumption that all men in politics are scamps or scoundrels, although he squints occasionally in that direction. He has deserved renown as a scientific historian who depends upon extensive and minute researches and basic facts, whose narrative is characterized by judicial balance and impartiality, by caution and sobriety of statement. Common prudence makes one hesitate to question his assertions or conclusions. Nevertheless several queries are pertinent which are not wholly academic for there are scores, probably hundreds of men still living, men of eminence in letters and politics in many cases, who took part in that conclave at Chicago. I shall not here undertake to discuss all the phases of the assertions referred to except indirectly as they affect the character or conduct of Iowa's representatives at the Convention.

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(1) Enlarging upon Blaine's notation (*Twenty Years of Congress*, Vol. I, p. 164), Mr. Rhodes gives a list of some of "the many noted men, or men who afterwards became so," mentioning e. g. E. H. Rollins (N. H.), John A. Andrews, George S. Boutwell, E. L. Pierce (Mass.), Gideon Wells, William M. Evarts and George W. Curtis, David Willmot and Thaddeus Stevens, Francis P. and Montgomery Blair, Carl Schurz, "John A. Kasson of Iowa," p. 469.



We may take the statements involving the character and conduct of the Iowans in one of two ways. Either the writer meant all that the paragraph implies or he did not mean to be taken strictly. In either case we may ask if character and sincerity were confined conspicuously to the unofficial Seward supporters hailing from New York and Michigan and hence his discrimination of them in the forefront of the paragraph whence the quotation. There were ardent admirers of the statesman of Auburn from Iowa as well as from Massachusetts who mingled in the throngs that surged the lobbies of the Tremont and Richmond Hotels; such men as Fitz Henry Warren of Burlington and Samuel A. Bowles of *The Springfield Republican*. Men of like character and local fame by scores and hundreds were with them from the same States and from Wisconsin and Minnesota, and other States as well; men who worked just as earnestly for Senator Seward and felt the bitter disappointment of his defeat as keenly as did his followers from Michigan and New York. Seward sentiment in Iowa, as will be shown in some detail later, was intense, staunch and wide-spread and when the news of his non-success came his partisans in many a community almost wept in grief and vexation and gloom held them for awhile.<sup>1</sup>

Another implication that seems to be necessarily involved in the discrimination made in the citation under review is that there was an utter absence of weighty character and sincerity among the "outside volunteer" followers of other candidates. Such a conclusion doubtless was not contemplated nor desired perhaps. If so, it may seem unkind to take the statement in all its rigor, but words are rather flinty substances and if thrown recklessly and they strike, hurt and mar. Such a construction is not a captious inference. The

<sup>1</sup> (1) Hon. W. G. Donnan, a Representative of Iowa in the Forty-Second and Forty-third Congresses (1871-75), was born and educated in New York. He came to Iowa in 1856. In 1860 (as now), he resided at Independence, and was a strong admirer of Seward. In a letter to the writer (February 4, 1907), he says: "Went over from Union College, where I was then a student, and heard Seward's great speech, organizing the Republican party. Could have wept when 'the Great New Yorker' failed of the nomination. How fortunate for the country and the party that Lincoln was made the nominee."

uninformed or indiscriminating reader usually rests with first impressions and the impression made is not favorable to the people and representatives of other States. In these halcyon days we are used to wholesale indictments of public men and political conventions in our partisan press and periodicals that retail the "literature of exposure;" but we do not expect them from scholars who work in the clear, cool air and the dry, white light of a library.

But what is the significance and what is the justification of the assertion that "Lincoln's adherents were men from Illinois, Indiana and Iowa who had come to Chicago bent on having a good time?" Why such a discrimination? Were the admirers and promoters of the "Rail-Splitter" more inclined to that sort of thing than the crowds that shouted for "Old Irrepressible?" What is meant by a "good time," harmless diversion or reprehensible license?

With pious and proper persons a good time implies nothing more serious than an excursion or picnic with its mild ecstasies and hysterics. No doubt hundreds and thousands, when they joined the throngs bound for Chicago, thought only of the cheap rates and seeing the crowds and "the sights" of the city. Among gay lords and certain politicians, however, a good time signifies often, if not generally, fun and frolic that begins with huge fuss and noise and reckless abandon that, unless curbed, rapidly runs the leeways into riot and carousal. If the latter is meant is there any special reason to suppose that Lincoln's adherents had a greater predisposition in that direction than the workers for Seward from the same States or from other States!

Mr. Rhodes is usually careful to give his authorities, chapter and verse, for his important assertions. He cites accounts of several participants in the Convention, Messrs. Greeley, Welles and Halstead for statements in the first part of the paragraph, but there is none given upon the point here referred to. Their reports, however, do not seem to warrant any such differentiation. If we are to believe Mr. Halstead's particular and synchronous account there were few if any States whose representatives were not largely given to noisy demonstration, intemperance and rowdyism. If any State achieved

sorry pre-eminence in this respect it was New York and not any western State.<sup>1</sup>

If the truth, and nothing but the truth, should be told in its painful particulars anent this common phase of political conventions some excerpts from Halstead's racy narrative should have been reproduced. On board the train carrying easterners to Chicago, including New Englanders probably, New Yorkers, Pennsylvanians and Ohioans certainly, he found a degree of intoxication that was "much greater" than that he witnessed on trains entering Charleston at the Democratic convention a few weeks before. The number of "private bottles" was "something surprising;" and "our Western Reserve was thrown into prayers and perspiration last night by some New Yorkers who were singing songs not found in hymn books." As to conditions in Chicago he avers: "I do not feel competent to state the precise proportions of those who are drunk and those who are sober. There are a large number of both classes; and the drunken are of course the most conspicuous and according to the principle of the numerical force of the black sheep in a flock the most multitudinous."<sup>2</sup> He was compelled to sleep in a room in his hotel that was full of revellers in a state of "glorious" exhilaration "o'er all the ills of life victorious;" and "irrepressible" until a late hour. In the morning he was aroused by the "vehement debate" of a galaxy of volunteers or delegates sitting up in bed "playing cards to see who would pay for gin cocktails all around, the cocktails being considered an indispensable preliminary to breakfast."<sup>3</sup> He does not inform us whether those assiduous patriots were adherents of Bates or Chase, Seward or Lincoln. Another paragraph written later may indicate: "The New Yorkers here are of a class unknown to western Republican politicians. They can drink as much whisky, swear as loud and long, sing as bad songs and 'get up and howl' as ferociously as any crowd of Democrats you ever heard or heard of."<sup>4</sup>

All of which, if true, only makes for tears. But the fact is

(1) Halstead's *Conventions of 1860*, p. 121: See also Carl Schurz's *Reminiscences of a Long Life*, *McClure's Magazine*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 413. (February, 1907). (2) Halstead, p. 121.

(3) *Ib.*, p. 122. (4) *Ib.*, p. 140.

utterly fallacious if it suggests the conclusion that such men numerically predominated in the Chicago Convention or that noise and the maudlin influence and inanities of hysterical and intoxicated men chiefly controlled the deliberations or decisions of the duly accredited representatives of the Republican party into whose hands the freemen of the north had committed a great cause. The people everywhere throughout the north were conscious that the Convention held the Nation's fate in its hands. Old party lines had fast disappeared. One common cause, one common fear lest slavery should engulf them, made partisans forget their differences and unite. They knew that fortune was with the Republicans if wisdom controlled their councils. Lincoln's searching questions at Freeport in 1858 and Douglas' fatal answer "no matter what may be the decision of the Supreme Court" had split the Democracy in twain at Charleston.<sup>1</sup> The people of the north with common impulse journeyed to Chicago because they were certain as were the yeoman and gentry journeying to Naseby that a spectacle was to be witnessed—their leaders and their cohorts in contention for championship and the right to lead the Lord's hosts against a common foe. As to the character and conduct of the throngs and contestants the reports of two eye-witnesses may suffice. Writing home to his paper *The Guardian* (May 16) Mr. Jacob Rich, then of Independence, one of Iowa's most forceful editors in those days and later a Warwick himself in our politics said:

It is a matter of universal comment that if the whole country had been methodically picked over, there could scarcely have been procured a concourse containing the same amount of ability and respectability as is manifested by the immense crowd in attendance on the Convention. The great mass of the men on the platform as delegates are men of age, of experience, of reputation, of judgment. Gray heads and bald heads are in the ascendant which bespeaks for the action of the Convention calmness and deliberation. In fact, inside and outside there seems to be less of boisterous enthusiasm than earnest, thoughtful action—fewer ebullitions of zeal than exhibitions of determination and confidence. Still, livelier demonstrations are not wanting.

(1) On his train going to Charleston, Mr. Halstead says: "The Mississippians have the Freeport speech of Douglas with them and intend to bombard him in the Convention with ammunition drawn from it." *Ib.*, p. 6.

Mr. Rich was young then and perhaps prejudiced as young men sometimes are, and he may not have estimated correctly, but the late Carl Schurz, who always saw clearly and spoke his mind, essentially agrees with his conclusions. Reviewing in the evening of his life the events of his great career Mr. Schurz says of that Convention in which he took no small part:

The members of the Convention and the thousands of spectators assembled in the great Wigwam presented a grand and inspiring sight. It was a free people met to consult upon their policy and to choose their chief. To me it was like the fulfillment of all the dreams of my youth.<sup>1</sup>

There is another assumption or implication in the narrative quoted above that is common in the majority of accounts of the Chicago Convention, namely, that the crowds in the city at the time consisted chiefly of the friends of the "Rail-Splitter." New York's candidate had his workers to be sure, but they were, so to speak, mostly organized troops or regulars, bands and marching clubs, e. g., Gilmore's band from Massachusetts and Tom Hyer's contingent from New York, whereas the militia, the masses, the crowds, "the mob" that surged the hotel lobbies and the streets were the plain people who had come to Chicago to work for Honest Abe.

It is difficult to reconcile this common notion with ante-

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(1) *McClure's Magazine*, Ib., p. 416.

Besides Fitz Henry Warren, Mr. Jacob Rich, and Governor S. J. Kirkwood mentioned above, Iowa's volunteer attendance at the Chicago convention included among others—Mr. James B. Howell, then editor of *The Gate City* of Keokuk and later U. S. Senator from Iowa; Mr. James B. Weaver of Bloomfield, soon afterward Brevetted Brig. General for distinguished gallantry at Ft. Donelson, Shiloh and Corinth, who represented Iowa several times in Congress, and in 1880 and 1896 was a nominee of a national party for the Presidency receiving, in 1896, 1,042,531 votes and 22 ballots in the Electoral College; Mr. James Thornton, of Davenport, a member of Congress from Iowa 1855-57; Mr. Hiram Price also of Davenport who represented Iowa for eight years in Congress; Judge John F. Dillon, likewise of Davenport, then a judge of the district court, afterwards Chief Justice of Iowa, U. S. Circuit Judge 1869-79, Professor in Columbia Law School, distinguished writer on legal subjects—the author of a classic on *Municipal Corporations* and an inspiring treatise on the *Laws and Jurisprudence of England and the United States*; Mr. Amos N. Currier, then instructor in Central University of Pella, who a few days since retired from active service as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts of the State University of Iowa; Mr. F. W. Palmer then of Dubuque, who had served two terms in the legislature of New York and who later represented Iowa for two sessions in Congress 1869-1873, and later editor of *The Inter Ocean* of Chicago.

cedent probabilities resting on sundry facts that were notorious at the time and that are obvious in nearly every account of the Convention extant. Historians and biographers of the chief candidates all declare with little or no qualification that the country at large expected Mr. Seward's nomination. Most of them assert that the country was "shocked" at least "surprised" at his defeat. Col. A. K. McClure has always maintained that "two-thirds of the delegates" wanted to vote for Seward.<sup>1</sup> Being in a large sense direct representatives of local sentiment in their several States is it probable that the crowds which poured into Chicago along with them from all points of the compass to cheer and support their delegates were contrary minded! Lawyers would pronounce this notion a violent presumption.

Outside of the delegates who finally voted for Lincoln all the visitors from New England, excepting probably Connecticut, were almost certainly friends of Seward. New York's contingent, excepting the few following the lead of Greeley and Dudley Field, was all for Weed and Seward. So it must have been with the crowds that poured in from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. "Bleeding Kansas" was staunch for their champion in the Senate. Northern Indiana and Illinois were both strongly tinctured with Sewardism, those sections having been settled largely by New Englanders and New Yorkers, the leaders of both delegations from those States having hard work to hold some of the delegates from breaking away.<sup>2</sup>

Three-fourths of Iowa's Republicans probably went to Chicago desiring and expecting Seward's nomination because such was the hope in the strongly Republican communities of Iowa. Down in Lee county round about Keokuk a "perfect revolution in sentiment" in favor of Seward took place between March 15-30. His Senate speech (March 1) says an Iowan's letter quoted in *The Tribune*, March 30, "seems to have set our

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(1) Leonard Swett's Letter to Joshua H. Drummond, May 27, 1860, partially printed in Oldroyd's *Lincoln's Campaign*, p. 71; McClure's *Lincoln and War Times*, p. 28; *Our Presidents and How We Make Them*, p. 155; and a letter to the writer, May 6, 1907. (2) Authority for statement as to Indiana, a letter of Col. A. C. Voris, of Bedford, Ind., (one of her delegates) to the writer, May 3, 1907.

prairies on fire with Republican enthusiasm for him and his teachings."<sup>1</sup> Writing Governor Kirkwood May 13, three days before the delegates convened in Chicago, Eliphalet Price, of Elkader, in northeast Iowa, a keen and earnest Republican, declared "that nine-tenths of the Republicans north prefer Seward there can be no doubt." Out in then remote Sioux City the Republicans "expected" Seward's nomination at Chicago.<sup>2</sup> When the news reached Sioux City "a feeling of incredulity and disappointment," says *The Times*, May 25, "prevailed at first. Here where party ties are weak and party lines loose most Republicans favored the nomination of Bates and Hickman. Seward had some admirers."

New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio, Maryland and Missouri, certainly did not send Lincoln delegations or crowds to Chicago. Connecticut sent a Bates delegation. So did Indiana. Although neighbors it took three days' hard work on the part of Messrs. Davis, Judd, Logan, Palmer and Swett to persuade Indiana's delegates to abandon Bates and go to Lincoln. It is true that all of the delegates of the States mentioned turned to Lincoln eventually, but that is another matter.

Reason and rhyme alike require us to expect that the crowds which played such a conspicuous role at the Convention were either predominantly for Seward or not *prima facie* for Lincoln. One fact makes it almost necessary to think so. Abraham Lincoln was not formally put in nomination for the Presidency by the Illinois Republicans until May 10, six days before the Convention was to assemble. His managers, as Mr. Blaine long ago observed, had "with sound discretion" kept his name back.<sup>3</sup> A few papers of Illinois had advocated his nomination, but not with such vigor as to prevent the resolution instructing the delegates to work for his nomination being declared a "surprise" to the Decatur Convention itself.<sup>4</sup> "Lincoln's own delegation from Illinois," says Colonel McClure, "embraced one-third of positive Seward men. They were instructed for Lincoln with no hope of his nomina-

<sup>1</sup> *New York Tribune* (semi-w.) March 30. <sup>2</sup> Hon. E. H. Hubbard to writer, April 22, 1907. The writer is indebted to Mr. J. C. C. Hoskins of Sioux City for the extract from the *Sioux City Times*. <sup>3</sup> Blaine's *Twenty Years*, p. 167. <sup>4</sup> *Ib.*, 168.

tion at the time."<sup>1</sup> The mass of the people in northern Illinois and through the north—the general promiscuous population we call the "public"—who swarmed to Chicago were hardly alive to the fact that Abraham Lincoln was a candidate of high potential. Even after reaching the city the crowds could at first see few or no signs that would normally impel the miscellaneous and irresponsible elements that make up a convention crowd to join Lincoln's cohorts with enthusiasm. Up until midnight preceding the nominations the chances were clearly in favor of Seward. Thursday midnight says Mr. Halstead "Greeley was terrified" and sent his celebrated dispatch conceding Seward's victory and Mr. Halstead telegraphed *The Cincinnati Commercial* likewise.<sup>2</sup>

This discouragement of the anti-Seward men was no less decided among Lincoln's adherents. Anxiety and depression among them were general and obvious. They slept scarcely at all, they were so fearful and active. Col. Alvin Saunders, Mr. Chas. C. Nourse and Gov. S. J. Kirkwood were probably the most influential Lincoln workers among the Iowans. "Early in the evening of the night before the nomination was to be made," says Mr. Nourse, "I had gone up to my room to get some rest. I was fagged by the long strain of the day. The outlook for Lincoln was gloomy, indeed. I recall Saunders coming in. He was depressed and dubious about our chances of overcoming the New Yorkers. Kirkwood came in later. He was nervous and very uneasy and glum."<sup>3</sup> It was not until the small hours of the next morning that their hopes of success became energetic.

If these facts have any significance whatever they seem to compel the conclusion that in the forepart of the week at least and in all probability on Wednesday and Thursday the crowds or mobs were more inclined toward Seward than toward Lincoln. It can scarcely be doubted that the correspondent of *The New York Times* signing himself "Howard" was correct when on Monday night, May 14, he telegraphed

<sup>1</sup> McClure's *Our Presidents*, p. 155; Leonard Swett says there were eight out of the twenty-two Illinois delegates favorable to Seward, Oldroyd, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Halstead, p. 141. <sup>3</sup> Interview with Hon. Chas. C. Nourse, Attorney-General of Iowa, 1861-1865, Des Moines, Iowa, April 26 and May 12, 1907.



that "Illinois alone works hard for Lincoln."<sup>1</sup> Commenting in 1883 on his grandfather's defeat (viz. Weed's), Greeley's defection and the fast flying rumors of a "break" in the New York delegation in consequence, Mr. Barnes says: "But streets and hotels were crowded with enthusiastic friends of Seward and even his opponents did not appear to believe that he could be defeated."<sup>2</sup> Seward's latest biographer declares that "excepting the applause received from residents of Chicago all the other candidates together had not popular support enough to equal the enthusiasm of the "irrepressibles."<sup>3</sup>

On Thursday the second day when the platform was adopted and the Seward men were confident and sought to secure a ballot before adjournment Mr. Halstead reported that "the cheering of the spectators during the day indicated that a very large share of the outside pressure was for Seward. There is something irresistible in the prestige of his name."<sup>4</sup> And even on the third day when the crisis was culminating and all knew that the nominee was to be Lincoln or Seward, notwithstanding Lincoln's managers had shrewdly crowded the Wigwam with their shouters while Seward's phalanxes were parading the streets, the same authority, describing the scene following the mention of Seward's name says, "Above, all around the galleries, hats and handkerchiefs were flying in the tempest together. The wonder of the thing was that Seward outside pressure should, so far from New York be so powerful."<sup>5</sup> One of Lincoln's chief field managers, Leonard Swett, says that Seward's nomination in the Wigwam "was greeted with a deafening shout which, I confess, appalled us a little."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, May 15: Some may suspect this assertion because of the known prejudice of the management of *The Times* for Mr. Seward, Mr. Henry J. Raymond being Weed's first or second lieutenant at Chicago, but the impartiality of subsequent dispatches disarms such doubt.  
<sup>2</sup> Barnes' *Weed*, Vol. II, p. 269. <sup>3</sup> Bancroft's *Seward*, Vol. II, pp. 531-532.

<sup>4</sup> Halstead, p. 140. <sup>5</sup> *Ib.*, 145. Colonel McClure, who took part in the Convention scenes, seems to contradict Mr. Halstead in his *Our Presidents*, etc. (1900); he says: "As the ballots were announced, every vote for Lincoln was cheered to the echo while there were but few cheers for Seward except from the delegates themselves," p. 158. The two accounts are not reconcilable. <sup>6</sup> Oldroyd, p. 72.

If we are not seriously in error the glamour surrounding the memory of President Lincoln has produced a notable confusion in the explanations of his astonishing success at Chicago. Logicians define it as reasoning *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Mr. Seward's nomination was expected; Mr. Lincoln's was not. Crowds were conspicuous at the Convention; nothing like their numbers or performances had ever before been witnessed. Popular feeling, excitement and uproar were phenomenal. But as one chronicler puts it, it was the unexpected that happened. When the clans and tribes assembled, keen-eyed chiefs soon perceived that the real contest lay between the candidates of Illinois and New York. The opponents of Seward in the doubtful States months previously had realized the necessity for his defeat. The chiefs of the clans had no sooner assembled than they discovered that Lincoln was the only man on whom all could concentrate. Later the crowds hailing from the States whence the leaders came began to respond to the appeals of their chiefs. Then the ground-swells of partisan enthusiasm began to run heavily in Lincoln's favor. By the time the balloting began the surge and the roar of the anti-Seward sentiment became portentous terrific, overwhelming. The result, however, was not *ergo propter hoc*. There was, of course, much of local fondness for Abraham Lincoln, there was perhaps somewhat (but little) of "the West versus the East." Engulfing and overmastering all was a Cause, its success and the Nation's safety.

Crowds and mobs, now and then, do exert a potent influence upon the decisions of deliberative bodies. But we utterly misconceive the nature of the result at Chicago if we conclude that the shouting throngs determined the votes of the delegates. The outcome was not the ordering of the clans and tribes clanging their spears and shields, but the decision of their chiefs in council. It was a battle of captains and not a plebiscite of the militia's rank and file. The clans and the ranks listened to the pleadings and protests of Greeley and Field of New York, of Curtin and McClure of Pennsylvania, of Welles of Connecticut and the Blairs of Maryland and Missouri, of Lane and DeFrees of Indiana, of Davis, Judd and Swett of Illinois, of Kirkwood and Saunders, Nourse and Wil-

son of Iowa, and their favor turned. Convinced soon that the champion of their choice could not triumph such chiefs and captains as Mr. John A. Kasson and Judge Reuben Noble, Mr. John W. Rankin and Mr. Wm. P. Hepburn, Mr. Coker F. Clarkson and Mr. William B. Allison concurred.

Their concert was not the prejudice of the crowd nor the changeable opinion of a mob. It was the conviction of men trained in the tactics and strategy of party strife—of men who knew that the People's Cause was not to be won merely by the recognition of a theory or the exaltation of a favorite champion, of men who knew that the imperative condition of success was the conquest of stubborn adverse conditions. They were not idealists or prophets simply, but practical politicians. They knew that victory perches upon the banners of the best organized and best led battalions. Sanguine anticipations and zeal are needed but are not enough. A study of maps and regions in dispute, a specific knowledge of the battlefields and a certain commissariat are also prerequisites.

Politicians in their hysterics and rhapsodies following success are wont to regard victory as *vox populi*. Thus Leonard Swett exclaimed a few days following the convention: "The nomination is from the people and not the politicians. No pledges have been made, no mortgages executed, but Lincoln enters the field a free man."<sup>1</sup> Enough has been exhibited to make one skeptical of his assertion. If ever politicians controlled, or rather directed, a convention, if ever leaders courageously resisted the emotional and erratic impulses of the mob or if you please "the people" the Chicago Convention was a case in point. We know now that Abraham Lincoln was of all the leaders in view the best that could have been chosen to guide our ship of State through the storms about to break. So much so that all will incline to agree with Admiral Chadwick that if an All-Wise Providence directs the destiny of these United States His favor was manifest indeed on May 18, 1860.<sup>2</sup> But the decision was not the voice of the people that spoke but the judgment of patriotic politicians who saw or felt the steady ingathering of black and fearful

<sup>1</sup> Oldroyd, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Chadwick, *Causes of the Civil War*, p. 123.

forces whose terrific momentum was to wrench the very foundations of the Deep itself. In choosing their pilot some of the methods of politicians were exemplified. Abraham Lincoln sought the nomination but he wished it without lien or prejudice. But the prize was not so awarded. Leonard Swett either did not know or he forgot about the negotiations of Lincoln's field officer, Judge David Davis, with Indiana and Pennsylvania, whereby Caleb Smith and Simon Cameron were assured of position in the Cabinet if the Rail-Splitter was nominated and victory perched on the party standards on the Ides of November following. If he was not privy to them his Shade must have suffered distress on reading the revelations of Lamon and Herndon.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### WERE IOWA'S DELEGATES ON THE TRADE?

Addressing the Republican State Convention of Iowa at Des Moines in 1904 Senator William B. Allison said that of all the events in his long career as a public servant he was most proud of the fact that as a young man he enjoyed the confidence of his fellow republicans to such a degree that he was selected as one of Iowa's delegates to the convention that first put Abraham Lincoln in nomination for the Presidency.

Fame in the last analysis is chiefly the historian's favorable verdict. The patriot's ambition is the hope that he may serve his country in great affairs and be thought well of by his compeers and his successors. But it seems to be the fate of the patriot or statesman to suffer much from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. In the clash of political strife he expects and endures with what patience he may bold aspersions or gross hints adverse to his honor. He knows that good men suffer because evil men work, flourish and escape. When, however, the storm and stress are over and passion is still he does not expect their reiteration in cool blood and unless amply justified he resents it. Obviously the greater

<sup>1</sup> Lamon, *Life of Lincoln*, pp.449-450, 457-461—Herndon, *Ib.*, p. 181.

a man's eminence and the finer his type of character the more sensitive he is to charges or suggestions implying reprehensible conduct or petty behavior in matters of great concern. Irritation is not lessened when a reflection comes via a partial statement that discreetly hits no one in particular but in general each and all thereby involved. It mitigates the smart but little when it appears in the sober narrative of an erudite and distinguished historian, buttressed by the awesome authority of quotation marks. The greater the headway the greater is the leeway to twist a quip of Oliver Wendell Holmes. The situation is enhanced of course if perchance it turns out that no facts justify the allegation or give it even the color of justification. Resentment then becomes indignation.

In a biography of Salmon P. Chase, written by Dr. Albert Bushnell Hart, professor of American History in Harvard University, a few years since for the well-known series of "American Statesmen," appears the following paragraph:

As the time for the Convention approached, Chase found a few friends and staunch delegates from other States; but he got glimpses also of a stratum of intrigue into which he could not descend. The Spragues were said to have bought the Rhode Island State election for \$100,000, and some of the Rhode Island delegates were "purchaseable;" *some delegates from Iowa were on the "trading tack,"* and in Indiana there was "a floating and marketable vote." A Philadelphia editor wrote to him with unblushing frankness that he had worked for Cameron but that "if any little subcontract could be given us which would enable us to realize a little profit, we would endeavor to serve Ohio to the full extent of our ability." But neither Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Iowa nor Indiana gave any votes for Chase at Chicago. (pp. 189-190. Italics here.)

One receives two decided impressions on reading the foregoing. First, there was an astounding amount of corruption prevalent in the preliminaries, if not in the proceedings, of the Republican National Convention of 1860. Second, the character or conduct of Iowa's delegates was smirched with the same pitch that soiled the delegates from other States. All of which, in the classic phrase of Horace Greeley, is "mighty interesting, if true."

The paragraph, however, is a sort of omnibus of damnable citations and sinister suggestions. As is usual with the

contents of such vehicles the assortment cannot with ease be precisely defined or interpreted for the reason that the statements are somewhat ill-conditioned and indefinite in their suggestiveness. A sharp scrutiny of the paragraph leaves one in some perplexity. It is not quite clear whether transactions prior to the assembly of the National Convention are referred to only or the proceedings during the Convention week are included. It is immaterial for the terms offered Chase by the thrifty patriots clearly contemplated specific performance in the Convention and thereafter delivery of the benefits or goods bargained for, whether cash, contracts, or patronage. There is perhaps a distinction but certainly not a difference between a delegate who impudently insists upon a *quid pro quo* in the form of an office before supporting a candidate or measure and a man who openly resorts to bargain and sale for cash on delivery. The unlikeness is scarcely important, it being merely a sugar-coating or veneer disguising a disagreeable thing.

Although reprehensible conduct is plumply asserted none of the statements it is instructive to note are direct or positive so that an explicit charge is posited or particular individuals are pinioned or pilloried. The Spragues "were said." What Spragues! The family into which Miss Kate Chase married! "Some" of Rhode Island's delegates; "some of Iowa's delegates were on the trading tack;" and Indiana had "a floating and marketable vote." Does the latter relate to the electors or to the delegates? Was the trading of the Iowans with a view to cash, contracts or offices?

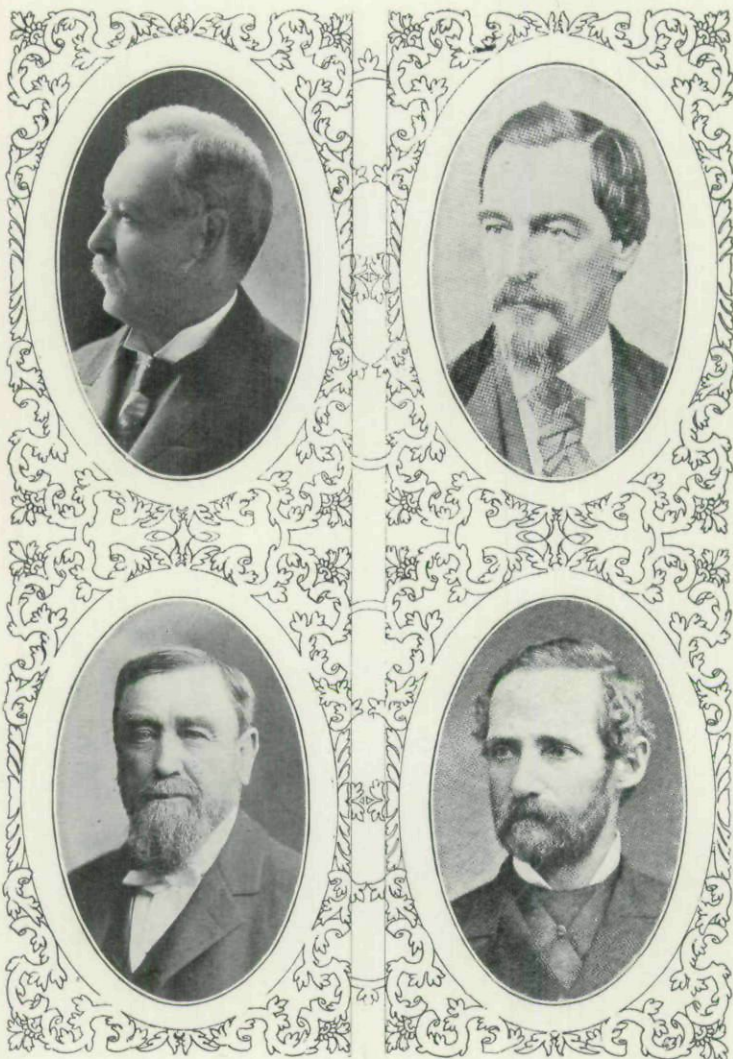
Stated ordinarily in common political discussion the reference to Iowa would be taken to mean but little else than the prosaic practice of making combinations or "deals" in the final clinch of a convention. But the context with its serious accusations or assertions of gross misconduct makes the casual reader and the student alike conclude that Iowa's delegates were guilty of crass venality.

No one needs to be told that in nearly every case Professor Hart in effect flatly charges conduct that smacks of criminality. No effective corrupt practice act would tolerate such proceedings. Disgrace and ouster, if not fine and imprison-

SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES.

WM. P. HEPBURN,  
U. S. REPRESENTATIVE.

WM. PENN CLARKE,  
SUPREME COURT REPORTER.



CHARLES C. NOURSE,  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF IOWA.

HENRY O'CONNOR,  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF IOWA.

CHICAGO CONVENTION, MAY 16-18, 1860.

ment, would promptly ensue, upon the submission of proofs. Disagreeable truth must now and then be told. If this is or may be necessary the particular persons chargeable with offensive conduct should be explicitly referred to.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise associates free from blame are equally involved, being besmudged or damned by implication. "Professor Hart should not make the charge against the honor of our State," says one of the delegates yet living who enjoys international fame in Diplomacy, Letters and Politics, "without producing some proof of its own verity. Indeed, his charge is made in the lowest terms. 'Some delegates from Iowa were on the trading tack.' Such indefinite charges it is difficult to answer."<sup>2</sup>

Who were the traders? The delegates who voted for Chase, e. g., Judge Wm. Smyth of Marion, and Mr. William B. Allison of Dubuque? Or the delegates who did not and would not vote for Chase, e. g., Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke, of Iowa City, or Col. Alvin Saunders of Mt. Pleasant, Mr. Jas. F. Wilson of Fairfield, or Mr. Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, Mr. Wm. P. Hepburn of Marshalltown, or the Rev. H. P. Scholte of Pella, Mr. Coker F. Clarkson of Metropolis or Lieut. Gov. Nicholas Rusch of Davenport, or Messrs. C. C. Nourse and John A. Kasson of Des Moines? Such inquiries are not idle or irrelevant but intrusive and inevitable; both on the part of the delegates living and the relatives and friends of the dead, and on the part of associates and citizens interested in the good name of the commonwealth; for as we shall see later few States sent delegations to the Chicago Convention having greater caliber and character than was found among the official representatives of the Hawkeyes.

Professor Hart enjoys great fame as a historian. He is at once an indefatigable student and narrator and a leading au-

<sup>1</sup> If Professor Hart cares to examine an instructive illustration of the sort of direct and explicit charge that justice requires if wrongdoing is to be asserted, he will find it in the pages of Mr. Charles E. Hamlin's *Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin*, where in the latter's defeat in the Baltimore convention in 1864 and the nomination of Andrew Johnson for the Vice-Presidency is specifically charged to the "unscrupulous action" of the then Governor of Iowa—the charge being accompanied by exhibits of very damaging evidence that seem to substantiate the accusation. (See pp. 477-479.)

<sup>2</sup> Mr. John A. Kasson, to the writer. Letter dated Nahant, Mass., August 28, 1906.



thority in historical criticism and scientific procedure. He is therefore entitled to the presumption that he means what he says or he does not; that he must have examined the official list of Iowa's delegates and realized that many of them afterwards acquired celebrity in our national history or he did not; that he must have carefully sifted the evidence for his statement or he did not. In all cases either alternative entitles us to call for specific references and proof, so that the innocent shall not suffer with the guilty or to insist upon retraction or modification, if his animadversion is unsupported.

The offense against good men is not lessened in these premises but increased by the fact that Professor Hart utilized and apparently wholly depended upon Salmon P. Chase's private correspondence. An eminent public man like Chase is daily in receipt of letters from scores of friends, admirers or strangers, freely relating their views of men and measures. Such epistolary declarations are usually colored greatly by the prejudice of the writer's personal or partizan friendships or desires; and are often heedless or reckless. As they are not intended for the public eye the indiscriminate statements matter but little as the recipient is seldom so heedless or reckless as to give them publicity. We certainly may presume that Chase did not give much currency to the revelations of his various correspondents. Certainly he did not expose them to the hurt of official and party contemporaries whom he held in great esteem or respect; and he no more would have desired to have any use made thereof even after his death during the lives of his associates. Messrs. James F. Wilson, John A. Kasson and William B. Allison were the official and party associates of Chase between 1861 and his death in 1873 and each one of them enjoyed national fame for ability and high character. And the two last mentioned were living in 1899 when the biography in question was published and they are still living! Something of a very serious character exhibiting elaborate or enormous iniquity affecting adversely either the public welfare or actually thwarting Chase's ambition as regards the nomination at Chicago alone can justify the exposure of that correspondence in such wise as needlessly to

besmudge the good names of honorable delegates yet living in Indiana and Iowa, and perhaps Rhode Island.

Inquiry develops the fact that the whole basis for the statement affecting Iowa is the following letter!<sup>1</sup> Its contents are given entire. Their use or misuse in the foregoing is the only justification for their exhibition here. Only the initials of the subscriber are given although as will be apparent, there is really no particular reason for withholding his name:

Gate City Office, Keokuk, Feby. 24, '60.

Hon. S. P. Chase,

Dear Sir: Some time since I had your views on the Tariff published in the *Gate City*, and I have just republished the New Orleans Bulletin's notice of your election to the Senate.

I was at our State Convention, but I found the delegates, who were all aspiring politicians, very wary, & it was difficult to sound them, though I judged you had about as many friends as anybody.

We have just received *The Tribune* of the 20th, which comes out for Bates. We were not unprepared for such a move, & yet it rather strikes us with surprise. Our impression now is that it will not damage you or Seward in this State.

The Chicago delegates from this (Lee) county are Senator Rankin, of this place, & Dr. Walker of Ft. Madison,—both, no doubt, in favor of Cameron first & both of them rather on the trading tack.

I am sorry to say that, as a politician & with leading politicians of the State, our friend Ex-Governor Lowe has little influence.

Will you do me the favor to send, if convenient, a copy of your first inaugural—or the one which contained your argument on the Single District System.

Mr. Denison and family are well; Mrs. R. is not very well, but joins me in kind regards.

Respectfully,

W.— R.—

P. S. At present, I have no pecuniary interest in the *Gate City* Office. But as the Editor-in-Chief, Mr. Howell, broke his leg last November, & is still on his back, and his partner, Mr. Briggs, was gone to Washington to fill some place obtained for him by our Col. Curtis,—I am left here in full charge for present, but am not certain as to my future.

W. R.<sup>2</sup>

As a base for a serious reflection upon a body of delegates we are greatly mistaken if most persons will not regard the foregoing letter as utterly inadequate. It is a basis so narrow and thin that few persons even in the heat of bitter partizan debate would venture to make use of it adverse to any one. From beginning to end there is nothing whatever in it either directly or by fair inference warranting Professor Hart's use of the letter in the connection exhibited above. It relieves

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hart to writer, Aug. 29, 1906.

<sup>2</sup> From Papers of Salmon P. Chase in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

the two delegates actually mentioned, as well as all of the others from adverse criticism or judgment. The letter, together with a communication of a contemporary of W. R. yet living, gives us the following facts:

W. R. was a personal friend or old-time acquaintance of Salmon P. Chase. He came to Keokuk in 1854 and until 1861 was business manager of *The Gate City*. He admired Chase much, became a watcher and worker in behalf of the Ohioan's candidacy for the presidential nomination and promoted his interests so far as feasible. He attended as a delegate the Republican State Convention that met at Des Moines January 18, 1860, to select delegates to the Chicago Convention. He evidently found the delegates—it is not clear whether he refers to delegates to the State or to those to the national convention—chary of expression and wary of questions as to their preferences or probable course in regard to the national convention. He found, however, or felt, that Chase enjoyed about equal favor with the other candidates mentioned. Horace Greeley's advocacy of Edw. Bates he did not seem to regard very seriously, yet he confesses some surprise. Finally, he found the delegates to Chicago selected from his own district and county to be both favorably disposed towards Cameron of Pennsylvania but both of them *rather* on the trading tack. The next year (1861) W. R., it is interesting and instructive to note, secured a position in the Treasury Department at Washington under Secretary Chase, wherein he continued many years until his death a decade ago; an appointment that was very appropriate, too, for my informant says that his "mind was completely wrapped up in finances and he wrote almost entirely on that subject" while in Keokuk.<sup>1</sup>

The exact language of W. R. has not been quoted by Professor Hart and it is highly significant. Evidently W. R. had pressed Senator Rankin and Dr. Walker for an expression of their preferences and probable course without much success for he concludes that "no doubt" they were for Cameron, that is, they had not told him so explicitly, but he, W. R. had inferred so; and further from their manner and perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. W. Delaplaine of Keokuk to the writer, Jan. 22, 1907.

bits of conversation he suspected that they were "rather" on the trading tack. He does not so much as intimate that they had broached or hinted at a trade or mercenary transaction. What W. R. refers to he *does not assert as a fact—he merely intimates a surmise* of his whereas Professor Hart omits the "rather" and absolutely asserts that "some of Iowa's delegates were on the 'trading tack,'" his assertion being a bold presumption wholly his own, with no substantial proof offered therefor.

In fine, Professor Hart apparently is clearly subject to criticism on several counts. First, he misuses Chase's correspondence while official colleagues and party associates are yet alive. Second, he has by a partial statement imputed reprehensible conduct to thirty-two prominent citizens of Iowa when only two, if any, were by any manner of means derelict. Third, he does gross injustice to the two delegates in question for he asserts as a fact what the authority on whom he depends, does not so assert and intimates nothing that gives even color to such a charge of misconduct. Fourth, by an important omission of a qualifying word he perverts the sense of W. R.'s statement and thus seriously misrepresents the authority he relies upon. Fifth, Professor Hart's language in the last sentence of the paragraph quoted above indicates that he did not scrutinize the tally sheets of the Convention very carefully.

Professor Hart says that "neither Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Iowa nor Indiana gave any votes to Chase at Chicago." The statement is correct as to Pennsylvania and Indiana, but it is grossly in error as to Rhode Island and impliedly so as to Iowa. On the first ballot Rhode Island gave Chase one vote, on the second three votes, and on the third one vote. Iowa gave Chase one of her eight votes on the first ballot and one-half a vote on the second and third ballots.<sup>1</sup> The vote of Iowa represented four Chase delegates on the first and two delegates on each of the other ballots. If Professor Hart means to be taken literally, Iowa, of course, gave Chase no "votes" because she cast but one for him, but Rhode Island certainly gave him votes.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, pp. 149, 152, 153.

Responding to the writer's inquiry as to the meaning of his statement and the authority therefor, Professor Hart in closing his letter says: "I did not suppose when I quoted the phrase that any one would take it to mean that the delegates were trading for money. They were probably trying to get some assurance as to cabinet appointments, a vice presidential candidate, or something of that kind." Professor Hart's disclaimer of harmful purpose in quoting W. R.'s harmless phrase must be accepted as complete and final. But the explanation, while it relieves the situation somewhat, does not restore the *status quo*. It does not abolish the paragraph with its positive declaration, with its ugly implication. There are few libraries in the country that lack the classic volumes of "American Statesmen," the series in which Professor Hart's Life of Chase appears. Thousands have read and thousands will yet read that, when patriots were called upon to make the "most fate-pregnant decision" a national convention ever had to make, Iowa's notables were mere hucksters and petty traders and they will conclude that they were worse.

In view of the exhibit and analysis of the evidence for the adverse charge under consideration a defense of the character or conduct of Senator J. W. Rankin of Keokuk, or of Dr. J. C. Walker, the former a delegate-at-large, and the latter a district delegate is superfluous. Senator Rankin was the law partner of Samuel F. Miller, whose elevation to the Supreme Bench has already been referred to. Tradition has it that he was Keokuk's most brilliant lawyer in the days when the Gate City shone with such brilliants. Dr. Walker we shall see was a man who enjoyed the confidence of his fellow townsmen and was held in high esteem. Characterizing them in a personal interview with the writer, Hon. Charles C. Nourse, now as in 1860 of Des Moines, one of the leaders of Iowa's Lincoln forces before and during the Convention says of his associates: "Dr. Walker and Senator Rankin were both men of great ability and solid character with a fine sense of honor in public matters. Neither pettiness nor desire for private gain were moving motives with either."<sup>1</sup> Whatever Dr.

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Hon. Charles C. Nourse. *Ib.*

Walker's preference may have been in February, in May and at Chicago his voice and votes were from first to last for Abraham Lincoln.<sup>1</sup> Senator Rankin, on the other hand, was a firm advocate of the nomination of Simon Cameron. One of Keokuk's noted lawyers labored for several days prior to the Convention to persuade him to vote for Lincoln but without effect.<sup>2</sup> At Chicago, however, Senator Rankin turned to Illinois' candidate as soon as he realized that Cameron's chances were nil.

Taking the phrase "trading tack" in a large and honorable sense, and a common sense, and it is not improbable that the two delegates mentioned did have certain ambitious plans in contemplation for securing vice presidential honors for Iowa. As will be shown in a subsequent section, there are reasons for thinking that friends of James Harlan, Iowa's distinguished senior senator at that time, were not unmindful of a political situation that contained many chances in favor of such a consummation. The matter was broached both privately and publicly and may have been in the minds of Senator Rankin and Dr. Walker.

#### IV.

##### MEN AND METHODS IN CONVENTION..

A political convention in a Democracy like ours is of necessity a fortuitous concourse. No one ordinarily expects to find such an assembly composed only of philosophers and scientists, saints and statesmen. On the other hand such conclaves are seldom made up of shysters, knaves or fools. For the reason, in both cases doubtless, that neither would be tolerated by the general public. If the area of interests involved is extended or the issues at stake vital and momentous, the confluence of forces at the common center, no matter how quietly they may originate or serenely they may flow in, must produce commotion. If the currents thus concenter with great momentum a convention in the nature of the case concludes in a maelstrom. To the unemotional onlooker in lobby or gallery and especially to the scholastic who coolly studies

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. P. Cruikshank of Ft. Madison to the writer, April 26, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Henry Strong, now of Chicago, to the writer, June 4, 1907.

the records, the din and noise, the excitement, tempests and uproar seem utterly absurd and dangerous. Nevertheless they are not unnatural. Wisdom does not always predominate in their proceedings but no more does irrationality, or stupid perversity always prevail.

Two classes of persons compose our political conventions be they state or national. One class consists of those who care only for issues or principles. The other class is principally concerned with individuals or personalities—namely champions, or themselves. Such gatherings if they are to prove efficient must be composed of both classes in about equal proportions; since cranks and visionaries are as certain to run amuck and make success impossible, as petty heelers and sordid spoilsmen are to offend the law and the prophets.

Each class divides into two groups. The first class consists of the extremists who insist strenuously upon explicit and heroic measures, and declarations of doctrine regardless of contrary considerations of time or place, and of the moderates whose foremost interest is always the success of their cause but who realize that conditions determine success and should control practical measures—hence they support this or that champion of their principle believing that their cause will attain success more speedily by his promotion. Some of the latter type stand staunchly by their champion through thick and thin, hoping all things and doing all things in his behalf. Others deliberately canvass the situation, coolly calculate the chances of this or that representative candidate, and if they perceive that fortune does not favor their own preferences throw their influence in the direction that seems most likely to assure approximate success. Further, if their first estimate proves wrong they then change. The claims of friendship or admiration are not their chief concern; it is consideration for the success of their cause that dominates them. Iowa had some excellent illustrations of these types in the Convention at Chicago.

Judge Wm. Smyth cast votes for Chase at each ballot even when he must have seen that the Ohioan did not have a ghost of a show but he was staunch for a principle. Wm. Penn Clarke, Rev. H. P. Scholte and six or seven others stood firm

for Seward throughout the balloting notwithstanding the breaks in his columns in the New England States on the second and third ballots. The Lincoln men under the lead of Col. Alvin Saunders and Mr. C. C. Nourse, in spite of heavy odds, worked from the first for the candidate of Illinois. Mr. Coker F. Clarkson was a steadfast admirer of both Judge McLean and Governor Chase, having enjoyed personal and political associations with each in Ohio. In the Convention, however, he cast his vote on the first and second ballots for Judge McLean. On the third ballot he went to Lincoln.

The second general class instead of contemplating chiefly general principles and grand results is interested principally in personalities, either champions or themselves. They insist upon and care for correct principles and righteousness in a practical way, as do the former class, but they visualize them more in tangible leaders. This class probably comprises usually the larger numbers in conventions. This class too is easily discernible in two groups or kinds. One kind is made up of hero-worshippers, the major number perhaps. They feel and see the issues of right and wrong only through personalities. A leader who champions their cause they ardently admire. There is little or no analysis, no comparison, no synthesis of views or points of conduct. The champion's ability, his looks and manner, his prowess in debate, his successes, his steadfastness in the faith, his sacrifices for the cause enthrall the mind and energize heart and hand. They join his forces and work and proselyte in his behalf. Ardor and sentiment are likely to characterize their performances rather than cool calculation and reasoning, youth rather than age; and in the progress and culmination of a canvass they are wont to hear *vox dei* in the noise of the shouting throngs of the street and the amphitheatre. But enthusiasm and zeal if faults are exceedingly common—indeed, most normal persons regard them as commendable virtues. Few regard the character of those so delinquent as worthy of indictment on the score of sincerity or intelligence for the reason probably that it would include most of us. "I was," says Henry Villard, "enthusiastically for the nomination of Wm. H. Seward  
\* \* \* \* \* The noisy demonstrations of his followers



and especially of the New York delegation in his favor made me sure, too, that his candidacy would be irresistible."<sup>1</sup>

Most critical persons with a cynical turn of mind are wont to sneer much at this sort of thing. But it is not so irrational or illogical as may seem at first flush. Large numbers united and vocal for a candidate or cause indicate decided unanimity of opinion or general concurrence of interests or views. Such concurrence of numbers is presumptively the result of rational considerations and sensible conclusions. Most men are too busy to give particular attention or devote time to the study of conditions and causes, of the *pros* and *cons* of men and measures in issue. They turn to the men of "light and leading" to whom they have been accustomed to look and defer. They do not supinely follow their leadership but generally the consideration that decides them is the feeling that the numbers indicate a better or more informed judgment than their own.

The second sort who are interested in personalities rather than causes or principles is the group that think of their own individual welfare. They may be manifest in that aggravating species who seek to be on the winning side—they flit and flutter between the lines, anxious and uncertain lest they decide unwisely. This class is discouragingly numerous, not only in conventions but everywhere else. They mean well and usually are harmless in intent; they lack acute intelligence and steady nerve. They seek popularity and cannot endure the idea of defeat or nonsuccess. Another species comprises those who follow politics for a livelihood or as a profession. Not all or for that matter the major portion are petty and sordid in seeking their own interest. There are few men who do not covet public honors and promotion, and all must live. Affiliation with a party is the chief mode of advancement in politics. One ambitious for honors or anxious for a livelihood in politics must align himself with some faction, interest or issue. Otherwise such an one will be *vox clamantis in deserto*. Hope of immediate personal success may

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, Vol. I, 137. Mr. Villard later became the President and creator of the Northern Pacific Railroad. He also was a financial backer if not a decisive factor in the management of the two great journals of New York, *The Nation* and *The Evening Post*.

be and usually is coupled with the noblest aspirations for human welfare. Some thus animated, however, are willing, if need be, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of the cause, as witness Lincoln's deference to Trumbull and his insistence upon putting the Freeport Questions. Others permit the ardor of desire to blur the vision and impel disregard of the niceties of conduct as was the case with Ohio's noble Roman, Salmon P. Chase, in his later relations with his great rival and coadjutor.

There are, of course, in conventions, no small number who are narrow, petty and sordid in their calculations and strife for immediate benefit. They regard such a conclave as a sort of fair or market where hucksters gather for bargain and sale and higgling and haggling is the rule. Oftentimes, alas, the dickering is corrupt and utterly vicious. Shakespeare describes the conduct of this miserable fraternity in his lines depicting the species of human kind that

Dodge  
And palter in the shifts of baseness.

The latter class are an abomination and should be given short shrift. The former class exhibit a low order of political intelligence and virtue. They are simply petty and stupid but not necessarily shysters or scoundrels.

Academicians and arm-chair critics are wont to over-emphasize or misjudge the numbers and the significance of the huckstering or corrupt politicians in conventions. A few black sheep in a flock makes most persons reach hasty and sweeping conclusions whence one infers that the entire number is discolored. Taking the daily occurrence of horrible headlines in our sensational press they talk as if crime and divorce were universal and rampant. Pettiness, sordidness and corruption are found in politics and conventions and perhaps are more impudent and obtrusive but they are discoverable and prevalent in all other walks of life in similar measure. Again it is not easy to differentiate the bad or undesirable from the necessary. Petty trading in offices is not particularly laudable. Yet combinations or "deals" in the large, adjustments of forces and compromises of conflicting interests are imperative if a convention is to avoid futile con-

troversy that easily invokes serious estrangements or concludes in disruption.

Among the men from Iowa in the Convention of 1860, were a number who possessed rare powers of discernment and achievement. They were masters in political tactics and strategy; men who shortly thereafter attained great eminence in public life and just fame. They severally had their preferences but the triumph of anti-slavery principles and success of the party at the polls were the predominant considerations with them. Mr. John A. Kasson preferred Edward Bates of Missouri and Mr. Wm. B. Allison's choice was Salmon P. Chase; but after they realized the futility of their hopes both threw their votes and influence in favor of Lincoln. Col. Alvin Saunders at heart would have rejoiced if Seward could have been made the candidate but an extended correspondence prior to going to Chicago with leaders in Illinois, Indiana and Pennsylvania convinced him that the nomination of the New Yorker put success in jeopardy. Consequently notwithstanding his attachment to Senator Harlan, who earnestly desired Seward's selection, Colonel Saunders went to Chicago and did yeomen service for the Illinoisan. Governor Kirkwood, at bottom prejudiced in favor of Chase because of early associations as Democrats in Ohio, frankly wrote Iowa's senior Senator that if long and able service were decisive Mr. Seward was entitled to the nomination, especially because he had long been the "best abused man" in the party. Nevertheless he concluded that other matters had the right of way. Saunders and Kirkwood were perhaps Iowa's leaders in promoting Lincoln's candidacy: One or the other probably taking part in the "Committee of Twelve" whose decision doubtless exercised a potent if not decisive influence upon the final result.<sup>1</sup>

A fact of the greatest significance in the conduct of all the Iowans in the Convention was their staunch stand and sturdy fight in the presence of overwhelming odds. Two of the Chase delegates, all of the Seward delegates stood fast throughout the three ballots. All of the others apparently decided to go

<sup>1</sup> Matters referred to above will be dealt with at length in a later section.

to Lincoln, when his chances were not favorable, when Horace Greeley had telegraphed *The Tribune* that the opposition to Seward could not unite and conceded the latter's nomination. If Iowa's contingent had been petty traders and hucksters, or politicians of the weather-vane sort, they certainly would not have aligned themselves with the "Rail-Splitter" and his uncertain prospects. They would have joined the supporters of Seward the "popular" man, the man whose forces were led by the wizard Weed, the man for whom Col. A. K. McClure says "two-thirds" of the delegates really wanted to vote.

(To be continued.)

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FAST TRAVELING—A gentleman of this place arrived yesterday morning on the Rolla having come up from New Orleans in ten days, less seven hours, including twenty-seven hours spent in St. Louis. This is the quickest trip ever made on the Mississippi.—*Iowa News (Dubuque)*, June 9, 1838.

A HARD CASE—I am about to quit business in Dy Buque. I have been in it over two years and have not made "Salt to my Porridge." To those of my *friends* who have been indebted to me since I started, I would say, that I know it is monstrous hard that I should ask them to pay me *so soon*, but the fact is, I want money and *must* have it, as neither my creditors nor myself can live on barnicles and bottles of smoke.—Geo. L. Nightingale.—*Iowa News (Dubuque)*, March 17, 1838.

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