distribute the mail as soon as it arrives on Sundays as well as any other days, and to open the office as soon as it is done, and keep it open one hour.

Can this regulation be procured *now?*—if not, if there is virtue in a change of administration, may we not look for it soon after the 4th of March.

IOWA AND THE FIRST NOMINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By F. I. HERRIOTT,
Professor of Economics, Political and Social Science, Drake University.

1. First Expressions—1856-1857.

Forecasting the Presidential fates is an inveterate habit of Americans, particularly of editors and politicians. The quadrennial election is no sooner over than some venture upon predictions or suggestions as to candidates for the ensuing Presidential contest. The practice was vigorous in the fifties. The returns showing Buchanan's triumph in 1856 had hardly been certified before the *N. Y. Herald* ran up Fremont's name as the best candidate for the Republicans in 1860. It asserted that the opponents of the Slavocrats could "only hope" for success "under the name of Fremont;"[1] that his nomination would signify the popular overthrow of the oligarchical rule of politicians "who care for no earthly thing but the spoils;"[2] and after pointing out that he had excelled Jackson and Harrison in popularity it declared that "in every direction the Fremont papers are running up his name for 1860."[3]

After quoting his eastern contemporary Mr. J. B. Howell, Editor of *The Gate City* of Keokuk closed an editorial (November 11) with the prediction that the next president "will be John Charles Fremont! Look over the field calmly and considerately, and, answer, Why not?" On the same date Mr. John Mahin said in the *Muscatine Daily Journal:* "We would rather run his name to our mast head today for the

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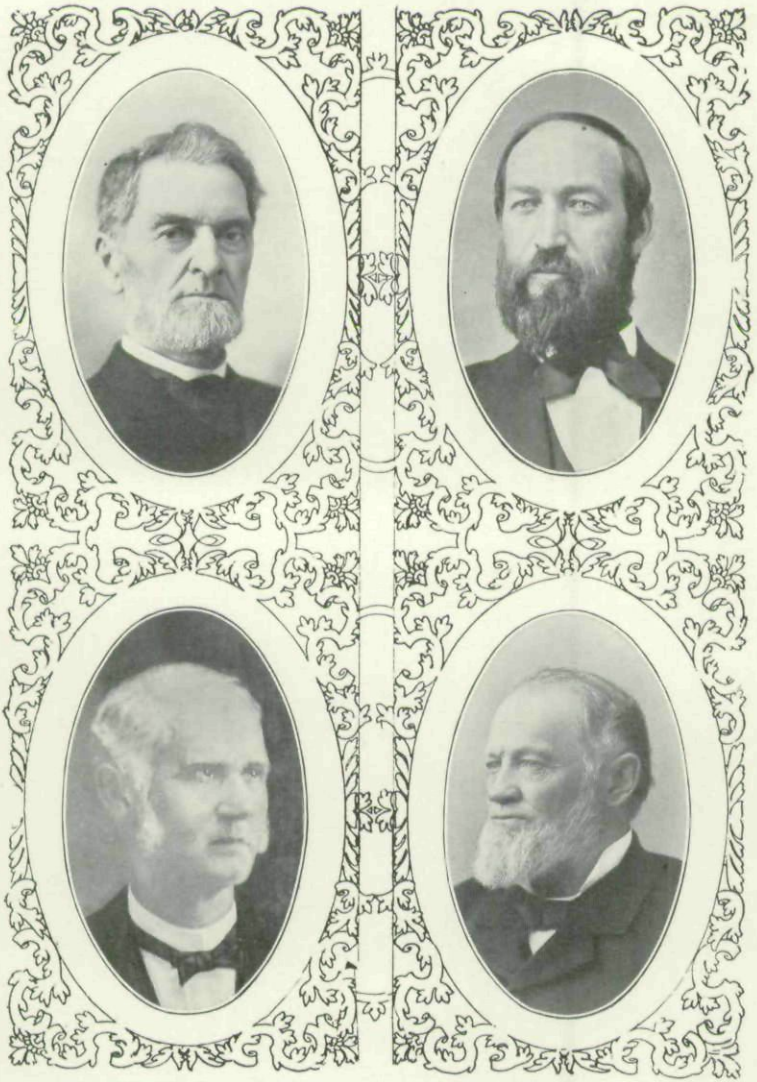
[1] *N. Y. Herald*, Nov. 8, 1856. 2. Ib., Nov. 9. 3. Ib., Nov. 12. Before 1860 the management of *The Herald* suffered a radical change, Seward and John Brown causing it to become a violent opponent of the Republican party.

SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES

Chicago Convention, May 16-18, 1860



REUBEN NOBLE
District Judge

WILLIAM SYMTH
U. S. Representative

WM. M. STONE
Governor of Iowa

JOSIAH B. GRINNELL
U. S. Representative

conflict of 1860 than that of any other man in America. Such we believe the sentiment of the Republican party everywhere." Just a week later Mr. C. C. Flint urged caution in the *Dubuque Daily Republican* under the suggestive caption "Let us Go to Work:"—"It is not wise to keep up the names of Presidential candidates for the next four years, with all the drill of a Presidential campaign. We say this without abating in the least the love and honor which we shall always bear to Colonel Fremont, and with the firm determination of supporting him for the Presidency in 1860. He is our man for that office and we know that we shall elect him then if he lives. But men die; times change, principles—the principles of Truth and Justice embodied in the Republican platform—they alone are permanent. What then, shall we do! Let us keep up our local organization." The writer was not certain whether he should let prudence or sentiment prevail. It was not strange perhaps for we are told that the Fremonters of St. Charles (now Charles City) felt their defeat so intensely that on November 27 they not only had their party pennants still flying but had the national ensign "dressed" in mourning and displayed at half-mast, and though defeated "seem to have lost none of their energy, none of their enthusiasm for their youthful leader."[1] Mr. Mahin, on the same day urged Republicans to direct their attention to the "organization:" "Such is the watchword everywhere." He then gives some sound advice that their recent defeat made very pertinent, namely, to conciliate the Fillmore vote by "as liberal policy towards the American party as fidelity to the fundamental principles of our creed will permit."

Specific discussion of candidates and issues for 1860 suffered a lull for several months. Discussion was stirred in the east when in June 1857 the Republicans of New Hampshire at their State Convention by resolution commended Fremont to the country for the Presidency in 1860. There were but few echoes in Iowa. Mr. Howell briefly noted the fact with the cautious observation: "It is too early yet to commit ourselves very decidedly. But if, when the proper time comes, the name of Fremont should prove most acceptable to the re-

[1] *St. Charles Intelligencer*, Nov. 27, 1856.

publican masses, we shall do battle for him with a right good will."[1] The State campaign that year, however, elicited a noteworthy expression from Mr. A. W. Hackley, editor of the *Dubuque Daily Tribune* (September 11, 1857): the immediate considerations in the local canvass provoked it but he clearly had ultimate developments in mind. Discussing "The Real Issue" his initial sentences were:

"The real issue now before the people is Slavery, and this will continue to be the all controlling issue until either Freedom or Slavery triumph. Two such antagonistic principles cannot long exist and both be struggling for mastery; one or the other must yield."

Mr. Hackley here stated forcefully the same thought that Abraham Lincoln ten months later put into more luminous phrase in his speech at Springfield (June 16) when he was chosen to contest the Senatorship with Stephen A. Douglas; and that Wm. H. Seward later expressed in his celebrated speech at Rochester (October 25) which Von Holst tells us had the effect of a "mighty clap of thunder."[2] Complete originality cannot be claimed for Mr. Hackley as the Richmond (Va.) *Enquirer* had in 1856 (May 6) clearly pointed out the inherent antagonism between Free Labor and Slavery.

A point may here be noticed in passing as it indicates the nature and range of general public interest in Abraham Lincoln in Iowa three years before his nomination. The Republicans of Iowa had good reason to regard their prospects in the Fall elections of 1857 with anxiety and their leaders looked here and there for assistance. Sometime in July or August Governor Grimes wrote Mr. Lincoln and tried to secure his promise to come over and speak one or more times during the campaign for the adoption of the new constitution. Mr. Lincoln was not unwilling to come but his court engagements, the Rock Island Bridge case in particular, prevented his giving more than a conditional promise. He agreed to speak at Davenport in case the court should require a personal examination of the physical conditions of the bridge at Rock Island, and

[1] *The Gate City*, July 20, 1857.
[2] *History*, Vol. VI, p. 265.

he asked Governor Grimes for data relative to the points in issue affecting the old and new constitutions. He was unable to fulfill his promise, but the fact that Governor Grimes, one of the keenest judges of political ability and popular speakers, should seek to secure the assistance of Lincoln in such a campaign indicates very clearly that the Illinois lawyer was then a man with an interstate reputation.[1]

In commenting upon an address of N. P. Banks before the American Institute in New York Mr. A. B. F. Hildreth in an eulogistic editorial comes very near putting him forward as a candidate but he merely recognizes his strong qualities and suggests that his remarkable achievements theretofore would not make his achievement of Presidential honors at all surprising.[2]

So far as I can discover the first clear cut expression of specific preference and advocacy of a candidate was made in northern central Iowa. In the issue of *The Hamilton Freeman* of December 10, Mr. Charles Aldrich placed at the head of his editorial column:—"For President, 1860—JOHN C. FREMONT," and immediately below "For United States Senator—James W. Grimes." The names appeared with little comment and no exhortation. In an editorial note of a few lines he says simply:—they are "two statesmen whom we ardently desire to see chosen. . . They are so thoroughly known and appreciated by the people of North Western Iowa, that we shall not today enter into any exposition of their merits—Believing them to be the men of all others whose eminent services are demanded by the exigencies of the times, we shall contribute our humble efforts to swell the tide of their success."

The conjunction of the two names was probably not without significance. Governor Grimes was then a national figure. As early as 1855 a Cleveland (O.) paper had suggested his nomination for Vice-President as a running mate for Salmon P. Chase.[3] Notwithstanding the hue and cry in northern Iowa for the selection of a Senator from the north half of the

[1] Salter's *Grimes*, p. 95.
[2] *The St. Charles Intelligencer*, Nov. 5, 1857.
[3] Salter's *Grimes*, p. 79.

State Mr. Aldrich urged Governor Grimes as one most fit to complete the party triumph begun in 1854. The announcement, however, has a more decided significance. Mr. Aldrich had but recently come from central western New York where he had been an influential factor in local and State politics as editor of *The Olean Journal*. He was there in the thick of the party contentions when Know-Nothingism and Temperance agitation were rampant, working the temporary defeat of his personal friend, Congressman, later Governor and Senator, Reuben E. Fenton. Being a New Yorker we should naturally anticipate that Mr. Aldrich would have been an enthusiastic advocate of his State's distinguished Senator for the Republican nomination for the Presidency. On the contrary we find neither advocacy nor so much as favorable reference to Mr. Seward. His reticence respecting the statesman of Auburn continued from 1857 up to the assembling of the convention in Chicago in 1860.

Following Mr. Aldrich a few days later Mr. Hackley at Dubuque noting the increased speculation of "politicians and wireworkers" and the action of the Republicans of New Hampshire respecting Fremont says that Fremont's name "is at the head of a number of country journals;" but he does not indicate whether in Iowa or not. Of possible candidates he says that N. P. Banks is "not unlikely to become one of the most prominent;" but "Wm. H. Seward is at the present time probably the strongest man in the party."[1]

2. *Coalition among the Opposition Discouraged.*

During 1858 the discussion of the Presidential succession almost ceased. When the excitement over the Lecompton constitution was at its height in Washington Charles Sumner wrote Theodore Parker "What is doing in Massachusetts? Is everybody asleep?" As one reads the newspapers of Iowa for 1858 the same query suggests itself—the absence of definite, vigorous interest, the lack of views and suggestions are noteworthy. Everybody seemed to be awaiting developments. Editors occasionally reprinted extracts of articles in eastern

[1] *Dubuque Daily Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1857.

papers that made favorable mention of a possible candidate or referred in favorable terms to some of their public utterances. Thus Mr. Mahin made note of the "powerful" letter of Edward Bates against Buchanan's administration;[1] and Mr. John Teesdale notwithstanding the criticism of Hale and others lauded Seward as a Hampden and a Burke for his speech of March 5 that "poured such an avalanche of burning truth" upon the Administration.[2] Mr. Mahin pronounced "sensible" the suggestion of the *Richmond Whig* that the Southerners would do well to "fraternize with and support Seward for the Presidency" rather than Douglas whom they denounced as "worse than Seward."[3] The *Crescent* of New Orleans in June declared that "Wm. H. Seward will be the next President if he lives and the Union lasts" and forthwith urged disruption as preferable. Mr. Howell reprints, but indicates no preference; he simply expresses defiance, observing—"if he is elected, or any other of the great republican leaders, all such fanatics as the Crescent . . . . will be driven like dogs to their kennels or hung by the wayside as a warning to traitors."[4] Mr. Aldrich kept Fremont's name at the head of his editorial page continuously until Nov. 5, 1858. He did not urge the consideration of Fremont editorially. He referred to him once. So far as I can learn he elicited no favorable echo from the party press of the State. He removed the name without comment and did not refer again to Fremont in his discussion of Presidential candidates. His purpose may have been, and probably was, purely strategical, namely, to develop public sentiment *pro* or *con*. If such was his purpose he certainly discovered that the sentiment was not *pro*.

One matter only seems to have educed any strong expressions during 1858. The violent break of Douglas with Buchanan and the southern leaders and his stout fight against the Lecompton constitution made a number of the Republican leaders in the east urge an alliance with him and the promo-

[1] *Muscatine Daily Journal*, March 17, 1858.
[2] *Tri-Weekly Citizen*, March 16, 1858.
[3] *The Muscatine Journal*, June 29, 1858.
[4] *The Gate City*, June 30, 1858.

tion of his leadership. Many expected and not a few advocated a new party organization that might comprehend all varieties of the opposition to the Administration especially the large body of Americans that had supported Fillmore. With Greeley of *The Tribune* favoring the former and Raymond of *The Times* suggesting the probability of if not promoting the latter a new order of things seemed immanent. The response in Iowa from the Republicans was not favorable.

Mr. Mahin while admiring Douglas' heroic opposition to the Administration and inclining to credit his course to sincere and patriotic motives nevertheless closed a judicial editorial with the following unequivocal language: "In whatever light we may regard him, we must still be forced to the conviction that he is unworthy of the confidence of the North until he arrays himself in sackcloth and ashes for his past political sins and by protracted service in the cause of freedom proves his faith by his works."[1] The proposal that a new political party be organized he gave short shrift: "It is idle to talk of any other party than the Republican to oppose the Administration. . . . The issue before the country is slavery or freedom . . . As Republicans we are not in favor of compromising . . . Our platform is broad enough for all the brave hearted freemen of the country to stand on. It needs no enlargement nor any additional planks."[2]

The scheme and schemers for the reconstruction or coalition of the opposition parties met with a scornful reception from *The Hamilton Freeman* (June 24). Mr. Aldrich's editorial on "The Reconstruction of Parties" presents the case with such vigor and gives so many points of the hostility to the plan that it is given at length. There is much in the phraseology and in the attitude of the writer towards compromise that we find later in the racy letters of Fitz Henry Warren to J. S. Pike and to Samuel Bowles of *The Springfield* (Mass.) *Republican* in the forepart of 1860 when a movement somewhat similar was vigorously promoted.

There seems to be a general movement, says Mr. Aldrich, on the part of the Fillmore wing of the American Party, aided and

[1] *The Muscatine Journal*, Dec. 29, 1857.
[2] Ib., May 29, 1858.

abetted by some of the more eccentric of the Republican press to reconstruct parties, meaning by this, a union of that faction with the Republican party upon the basis of a new organization, a new party with a new name, with a platform that shall discard the doctrines of the Republicans—that "Freedom is National and Slavery Sectional," and that shall also be silent in regard to the extension of slavery into the Territories—in short, a party bound together and cemented by the sole object of opposition to the present administration and a *division of the spoils.*

The game of Americanism has been played out, and these old fossils have been left "sticking out,"—they now desire part and parcel with the victorious republicans, but true to their instincts and antecedents they must bring the great triumphant and rapidly increasing Republican party down to their own level. They have the unblushing impudence and effrontery to ask us to give up the republican organization—to strike from our Platform ALL for which we have been contending—ALL that gives life or vitality to the party —ALL that makes us any more elevated than the Democratic party —to stultify ourselves—renounce our principles—give up our name and all for what? Why simply, to allow this miserable, lying, petrified squad of unadulterated old fogies, who traduced John C. Fremont in 1856—and elected Buchanan President—to come in and share in the spoils of victory that the Republicans are sure to win *without them*—and (can impudence go farther?) upon terms dictated by themselves and disgraceful to us!

If we are wrong in our conclusions—if the Fillmore men do not desire this surrender on the part of the Republicans—but are willing to adopt our principles—and are from principle anxious to aid in the overthrow of the present party in power why do they demand any surrender of names or principles on our part? We have as a party conscientiously opposed James Buchanan, from the day he was nominated—and all measures of his administration. If the Fillmore men had done the same—if they had cast their votes for the only man who stood the least chance of defeating Mr. Buchanan—instead of throwing them away upon Mr. Fillmore—a good, reliable, competent republican would have stood at the head of the government at this moment—safely guiding the ship of state over the shoals and rocks on which Mr. Buchanan has well nigh foundered it.

The Republican Party to-day are in the majority in every free State in the Union with the exception, perhaps, of California; and yet this little squad of antiquated politicians, who are unable to control half a dozen school districts in the United States, gravely ask the Republican[s] to reorganize their party on such a basis, as will admit them to share the spoils, without any surrender on their part. Our preference stands at the head of our columns, [viz. Fremont.]

Mr. Hildreth while not advocating a coalition recognized that the concurrent and conciliatory actions of various factional leaders of the Opposition in Congress in resisting the Lecompton frauds would doubtless lead to new party alignments favorable to Freedom and the Republican program. Noting the gathering interest in Presidential candidates and coalitions he said in the forepart of October: "The Presidential future begins to be discussed. The elements are various and curious. . . . As to the Republican party it is impossible to predict anything" He believed that the recent "patriotic votes" of the Republicans on the Crittenden-Montgomery bill in Congress, Corwin's national canvass in Ohio, Greeley's concessions to Popular sovereignty and the indisposition of the Republicans to insist on "no more slave states" would bring about a new alignment of national parties and hence the futility of predictions or the aggressive promotion of particular candidates.[1]

3. *The Lincoln—Douglas Debates.*

Biographers, historians and literateurs have exalted beyond all peradventure the Debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in 1858 as the *causa causans* of Lincoln's later exaltation and the major fact that brought the people of the nation to their senses respecting the great issue in the quadrennium preceding the political revolution in 1860. More than this not a few would have us believe that the people were tremendously aroused and universally alert in their appreciation of the crucial character of the encounter. Thus one learned historian tells us that the debate "was followed by the whole people with strained attention."[2] This may have been so; but if so the people of Iowa were for the most part in the state of mind described by Sir Walter Scott's little friend—"more than usual calm."

An examination of some seventeen different papers published in ten different communities demonstrates that the public interest in the debates on this side of the Mississippi was

[1] *The St. Charles Intelligencer*, Oct. 7, 1858.
[2] Von Holst, *History*, Vol. VI, p. 287.

very various and curious withal. One or two editors only seem to have had a lively sense of the strategic importance of the contest but none apparently at the time perceived that anything besides Douglas' senatorial and perhaps his presidential chances hung in the balances. Most of those who manifest any interest at all exhibit but little beyond the common concern that is aroused by an interesting spectacle. Several of the influential papers, both Democratic and Republican, show practically no interest, scarcely noticing it either in editorial or in news column. As Douglas spoke at Galena and Rock Island, and Lincoln at Augusta and Carthage, and both met at Quincy all within hail and each separately crossed the river, visited and spoke at Burlington during the canvass the amount of attention to the progress of the debates was somewhat more in the eastern cities of Iowa than in the inland towns. A brief summary of the notes and comments is not inappropriate nor without value.

The columns of *The Gate City* contain nothing especially noteworthy. Lincoln's challenge and the virulent opposition of the Administration to Douglas are noted. Douglas' gross misrepresentation of Lincoln's connection with the "Abolition" conspiracy and platform in 1854 in the initial debate at Ottawa are branded by Mr. Howell as a "forgery." (Aug. 31.) The fatal answer of Douglas to the second Freeport question is noted (Sept. 17); an extract from Lincoln's Charleston speech relative to negro quality is given (Oct. 1). An excursion to Quincy ($1.50 round trip) is advertised and "several hundred" went down. The debate at this place is concisely related and the jubilation of the Republicans and the depression of the Democrats at the outcome are asserted (Oct. 15). When Lincoln was advertised to speak at Carthage all who desired "to hear one of the most celebrated" orators were advised to go (Oct. 20). But there is nothing whatever that signifies public interest that is abnormal; at most there is nothing more intense than is frequently witnessed in national and state campaigns.

In the latter weeks of the contest between the meetings at Galesburg and Quincy the people of Burlington were per-

mitted to hear Abraham Lincoln speak on the great questions in issue. Douglas had spoken in the city a short time before. The chairman of the Republican county committee, Mr. Charles Ben Darwin, one of the best lawyers of Burlington, knowing Lincoln's tactics of following close on Douglas' trail, invited him to favor the city with an address. As he was listed to speak in the afternoon of Oct. 9 at Oquawka he consented to stop over and speak in Burlington in the evening, in the open air if the weather would permit. The arrangement apparently was not announced before the morning of the 8th. A brief but effective notice of the speech and the speaker was published in *The Hawk-eye*. Referring to the debate at Galesburg, Editor Clark Dunham states: "Those we conversed with think Mr. Lincoln the ablest and most popular speaker they ever heard and say he had altogether the advantage of Douglas in the argument, even Douglas' friends acknowledging it." The notice closes with "Huzza for Lincoln." In the next morning's issue three separate notices are inserted, one, two and three line notices—one of which reads: "There will be a Grand Concert at the People's Garden this evening immediately after Mr. Lincoln's speech." Concerning "Abe Lincoln's Speech at Grimes Hall," Mr. Dunham remarks on Monday:

> Grimes' Hall was filled to its full capacity . . . So great is the sympathy felt here in the spirited canvass in Illinois, and so high is the opinion entertained of the ability of Mr. Lincoln as a speaker that a very short notice brought together from twelve to fifteen hundred ladies and gentlemen.
>
> High, however, as was the public expectation, and much as was anticipated, he, in his address of two hours, fully came up to the standard that had been erected. It was a logical discourse, replete with sound argument, clear, concise and vigorous, earnest, impassioned and eloquent. Those who heard recognized in him a man fully able to cope with the little giant anywhere, and altogether worthy to succeed him.
>
> We regret exceedingly that it is not in our power to report his speech in full this morning. We know that we could have rendered no more acceptable service to our readers. But it is not in our power.
>
> Mr. Lincoln appeared Saturday evening fresh and vigorous, there was nothing in his voice, manner or appearance to show the arduous

labors of the last two months—nothing to show that immense labors of the canvass had worn upon him in the least. In this respect he has altogether the advantage of Douglas, whose voice is cracked and husky, temper soured and general appearance denoting exhaustion.[1]

Several queries suggest themselves that are pertinent in determining the degree of public interest in Burlington regarding Lincoln at that time. Was the Grand Concert referred to one of the inducements to lure a crowd to hear him? If so much was expected of the speaker why, with two or three days' notice, was not *The Hawk-eye* prepared to give its readers a verbatim report of the speech? If the speech so greatly exceeded anticipation why was not the public not present given a detailed summary of the main points made by the noted speaker, so that the cause which Mr. Dunham favored no less could be promoted far beyond the circuit of that particular audience? The three hundred words or so devoted to the occasion and the man, while highly laudatory, do not demonstrate an abnormal or extremely acute public interest. I have found no reference in the contemporary press of the State to the fact that Burlington was favored with the presence of the two noted political gladiators during the progress of their celebrated canvass in 1858 and no one now-a-days, aside from old residents of Burlington is aware of the fact.[2]

So far as his pages indicate the editor of *The Journal* at Muscatine felt but little more than a languid interest in the forensic contest on the other side of the river. A short dispatch or extract from some account by another appears relative to most of the debates but there is no especial editorial

[1] *The Hawk-eye*, Oct. 11, 1858.

[2] The writer is indebted to Dr. William Salter, Iowa's venerable historian, to Mr. W. W. Baldwin, Tax Commissioner of the C., B. & Q. Ry., and to Miss Daisy N. Sabin, Librarian of the Free Public Library—all of Burlington for the data in the paragraphs above relative to Douglas and Lincoln's appearances in Burlington. Mr. Baldwin's letter of June 10, 1907, relates the following incident that strikingly illustrates the simplicity of manner and method of Judge Douglas' opponent, an eye-witness telling him the story.

When Mr. Lincoln arrived at the old Barrett House where he stopped while in Burlington he had in his hand a small package, wrapped in a newspaper. Handing it to the clerk at the desk he asked him to "Please take good care of that. It is my boiled shirt. I will need it this afternoon." It was his only "baggage".

As Mr. Baldwin remarks in a later letter the incident is interesting for the contrast it affords with the methods of far less important people, who can not go about without a valet or a retinue of servants.

mention. The space given seldom exceeds a "stickful." Mr. Mahin evidently went up to Rock Island where he heard Douglas; and he closes his summary of the speech with the interesting observation: "We venture to say that the majority of his audience went away with the conviction that Mr. Douglas was on the wrong side and knew it himself but feeling more sorrow than anger in the conviction." (Oct. 30.) The organ of the Democrats in that city although it devotes some space to Douglas' speeches in July gives the debates no consideration. It expresses great satisfaction when the returns gave Douglas the senatorship,[1] but there is no sign of recognition of the political revolution that was so greatly hurried forward by that now celebrated tournament.

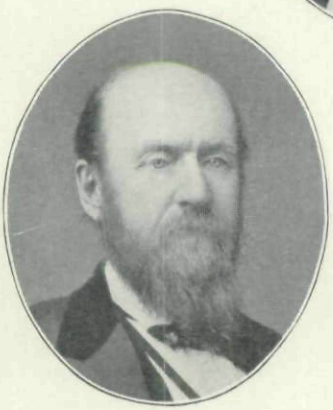
The liveliest interest in the Illinois contest is manifested perhaps in the *Davenport Daily Gazette*. Its editor, Mr. Add H. Sanders, realizes the national importance of the campaign. "Our sister state is in a gloriously excited condition . . . . Indeed with the elections approaching in many other states, the eyes of politicians everywhere appear to be turned most anxiously toward the election in Illinois. The reason is the coming election fixes the political destiny of Stephen A. Douglas, so far as any single event can accomplish that object. If defeated he will be politically dead. If successful it will give him higher hopes of attaining the great goal of his ambition, than he could have reasonably indulged during the last four years." (Sept. 3.) There is considerable space given to accounts of Douglas' triumphal journeys, to extracts from Lincoln's speeches, to comments upon the course of the discussion and to fraternal commiseration of the dire fratricidal dissention among the Douglas and Administration Democrats in Iowa.[2] At Dubuque, *The Express and Herald*, a Douglas organ, paid more or less attention to Douglas' campaign but seldom mentioned Lincoln and then only with contempt. It printed (Aug. 4) a Chicago dispatch that designates Lincoln as a cringing, fawning "Uriah Heap," when referring to his pres-

[1] *The Iowa Democratic Enquirer* (wk.), Nov. 11, 1858.

[2] The writer is under obligations to Mr. Otha Thomas of Valley Junction and to Mr. Harry E. Downer of Davenport for the above citations from the *Davenport Daily Gazette*.

SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES

Chicago Convention, May 16-18, 1860



J. C. WALKER
Physician

JOHN SHANE
District Judge

THOMAS SEELEY
Farmer

GEO. A. HAWLEY
Lawyer

A. F. BROWN
Lawyer

ence at the Douglas meeting in Chicago, July 9; and sneers at "That rank Abolitionist Lincoln" who dares to presume to seek the place of the "Little Giant," who it declares, is "the greatest man in the American Senate." Aug. 25.) At the Galena meeting Mayor Hetherington of Dubuque was one of the notables who escorted Douglas to the platform. (Aug. 26.)

Going inland we find much less interest in the debates so far as the pages of newspapers afford evidence thereof, although there were at least two instances of marked appreciation of their importance. The *Ottumwa Courier* reprints Lincoln's entire speech at Chicago, July 10th—seven solid columns—and Mr. J. W. Norris observed editorially (Aug. 12): "The indications are that it will be the most exciting canvass that we have ever had in this country." Mr. Norris immediately thereafter went east and nothing further is found in his columns about the contest in Illinois. Mr. A. J. Dowling, editor of the *Montezuma Weekly Republican,* has frequent notes and comments upon the debate but none that indicate extraordinary interest.

At Vinton, the editor of *The Eagle,* Mr. Thomas Drummond, indicates a keen appreciation of the contest in Illinois. Lincoln's great Springfield speech he reprinted almost entire (Aug. 21). He makes the following observations upon the character and significance of the senatorial contest (Oct. 23):

> The political contest now waging in Illinois in the earnestness, zeal, and even bitterness with which it is conducted by all parties exceeds anything of the kind ever before known in that state or perhaps in the Union. Even the memorable campaign of '40 sinks below it for intensity and enthusiasm. Men now think of nothing else—the struggle is for life or death. Upon the result in Illinois this year depends the Presidency in 1860. If Douglas is beaten now for the Senate he is beaten forever and consigned to political oblivion. If he is successful he will be the acknowledged chief of the whole Democratic Party, hold Buchanan at his mercy and without doubt receive the nomination of the Charleston convention.

Mr. Drummond thought that Lincoln would triumph over Douglas, although he perceived that an unjust apportionment might give the legislative majority to the latter. In his comments upon the victory of Douglas Mr. Drummond says that Lincoln's defeat was due to two causes; first, the adverse

apportionment and, second, the attitude of the eastern press, saying scarcely a word in condemnation of Douglas and dubiously commending the Republicans of Illinois who had to bear the brunt of the bitter fight. Mr. Drummond, while he watched the debates with keen zest, says nothing about Lincoln that indicates that he perceived his remarkable ability and achievements and he makes no mention of the Freeport questions.[1]

At Indianola, was the *Weekly Visitor*, an "Independent" in policy, whose editor, Mr. James H. Knox, had strong anti-slavery extension views, but one can find no mention of the debates. The same is true of the two Democratic papers published at the State capital. Neither the *Iowa State Journal* nor the *Iowa Statesman* demonstrate even ordinary interest in the debates; after the decision, the latter observes (Nov. 11): "We have one gratification in the recent elections which covers up a multitude of misfortunes. DOUGLAS IS SAFE! The struggle has been a political Waterloo, with this difference—the 'man of destiny' is victorious over the allied powers." The columns of both papers are filled with discussions of new railroad projects, agricultural meetings, court house controversy, Des Moines River lands, Taxes, and "Gold! Gold!" [Pike's Peak]. Such prosaic affairs chiefly engaged the interests of their readers.

North and east of Des Moines the indifference of the press, and of course, the people was equally noteworthy. The *Boone County News* (Oct. 1) gives a column to the debate and the week following quotes from Lincoln's tribute to the Declaration of Independence; the *Hamilton Freeman* makes no direct reference to the contest; the *St. Charles Intelligencer* says nothing editorially but prints two letters from a correspondent in Illinois (Oct. 7, 14), who recounts some incidents of the debate. The *Quasqueton Guardian*[2] takes no notice of the contest. If anything more than another demonstrates that many of the preceptors of the great party of high moral ideas were "more than usual calm" anent the great debate

[1] The writer is indebted to Rev. A. B. Elliott of Vinton for the above excerpt and other data from *The Eagle*.

[2] Later *The Independence Guardian*.

it is the fact that the editors of the first and third papers last mentioned, Messrs. Aldrich and Rich, both fine types of the efficient Yankee character, gave their columns to recital of the details of the Morrissey-Heenan Prize Fight in Canada while virtually ignoring the momentous encounter of principles and wits near their own doors,—a fight of the fates in very fact.[1]

But were the Iowans different from their compatriots in the older States to the east? Not appreciably. The *New York Herald* mentions the debate infrequently and always refers both to it and the disputants with scorn and contempt. It is a "Senatorial Prize Fight." Douglas' recreancy and disastrous course constitute the burden of its references. The seismic effect of his answer to the Freeport questions is realized; but Lincoln is ignored. The files of Greeley's *Daily Tribune* have not been available but the columns of the semi-weekly are perhaps not less instructive. The speeches of Lincoln and Douglas in June and July are reprinted, but the speeches delivered at the first debate at Ottawa are alone reproduced. Three editorials (Aug. 27, Sept. 24, Nov. 9) discussed the struggle in Illinois but Douglas is the man chiefly, almost wholly in mind; the last deals with his "signal triumph," Lincoln being ignored. There is no comment on the Freeport questions and answers. On October 22d the entire front page (six broad columns) of Mr. Greeley's great journal was given over to a minute description of the Morrissey-Heenan Prize Fight and at the bottom we read "(See Eighth Page)" As much news space, lacking two columns, was given over to the fistic bout of those two bruisers as to the now famous combat of statesmen pronounced by *The Tribune* itself to be "two eminent masters of the art of intellectual attack and defense."[2] The many thousands of Greeley's readers in Iowa received either the semi-weekly or the weekly issue. Wm. Lloyd Garrison's paper, *The Liber-*

[1] *Hamilton Freeman*, Nov. 12 and *The Guardian*, Nov. 11, 1858. Not long before his death, in response to the writer's inquiry concerning the matter, Mr. Aldrich said, with the glint of a smile in his eyes: "Well, sir, the fact is that in some respects we editors in those days were not much better than they are now-a-days."

[2] *N. Y. Tribune*, (S. W.), Aug. 27, 1858.

ator, does not notice the debates except to quote Douglas' reply to Lincoln respecting the Dred Scott decision.[1] New York's "Journal of Civilization" *Harper's Weekly,* makes no mention of the debates during their occurrence but it does give us an extended account of the pugilistic bout (three columns or more), and its first and leading editorial discusses "The Great Prize Fight." Its columns on "Domestic Intelligence" during all of those months were filled with such items of news as we found in the press of Iowa, such as the doings of the Mormans, Gold discoveries, etc.[2]

The fact is our chroniclers and eulogists are likely to suffer from *ex post facto* obviousness in dealing with the career of Abraham Lincoln. A people, like persons, seldom realize the significance or anticipate the consequences of current events. They appreciate their sensations but not their sense and sequences. The people generally in 1858 only realized that an interesting spectacle was taking place in Illinois at the end of which one or the other contestant would be a national senator and in the case of one increased prestige would enhance his strength as a Presidential aspirant. There were but few discerning ones who saw that it would split assunder a great national party and bring about new alignments and a new national leader. These results gradually dawned upon the public consciousness.

Neither the Republicans nor the people of Iowa were oblivious of the pith and point of the discussions in Illinois. The

[1] *The Liberator,* Oct. 15, 1858.

[2] *Harper's Weekly,* Oct. 30, 1858. It is but fair to state that *Harper's Weekly,* prior to the debates, did recognize the great importance of the contest in Illinois, although it signified no interest whatever in the developments and results of the debates. On July 31 in an editorial written before they were under way, entitled "The Canvass in Illinois" the writer asserts: "There can be no question but the pending canvass in Illinois is one of the most memorable contests which ever took place in the political history of the United States." After succinctly outlining the positions of the three parties in interest he closes with the words: "As such, the canvass is worthy of the closest attention."

It is a curious commentary upon the foregoing that the only signs whereby the editors manifest their interest in that memorable canvass are by two meagre items relative to Douglas, namely: one, Oct. 16, an excerpt from Douglas' account of his birth "away down in Yankee land"; and the other, Nov. 6, Vice President Breckenridge's letter favoring his re-election to the Senate. From neither, however, could one infer that an epoch making discussion had created new political conditions in our national party strife.

large crowds that went from Iowa to attend the debates at Freeport, Galesburg and Quincy, to hear Douglas at Galena and Rock Island and Lincoln at Augusta and Carthage, not a few going from towns 20 and 40 miles west of the river as Fairfield, Mt. Pleasant and Keosauqua, indicate a keen popular interest. Some of the Republican politicians speedily discerned the practical usefulness of the points scored in Illinois and pressed them home upon their opponents in their bouts on the hustings. Thus at Vinton, Aug. 9, the editor of *The Eagle,* Mr. Thomas Drummond, harried Judge W. E. Leffingwell, the Democratic candidate for Congress, with "a series of questions which had been first propounded to Judge Douglas at Bloomington to which Mr. Drummond added several of his own."[1]

The effect of the debates upon opinion regarding the Presidential succession, while ultimately very important, was but vaguely apparent during their progress and immediately following. General Cyrus Bussey, a Marylander by stock, was then a resident of Bloomfield in Davis county. He was an admirer and staunch supporter of Stephen A. Douglas and followed the debates in Illinois with lively interest. He informs me that generally throughout southeastern Iowa the Democrats, while they scoffed at Lincoln for his temerity in venturing to break lances with the "Little Giant," and tried to make themselves believe that he was some sort of a cross between a buffoon and a monster, "half-horse-and-half-alligator" who advocated Amalgamation and "Equality with the nigger" nevertheless felt "in their bones" that the Sangamon lawyer got the better of their doughty champion. They felt, too, that notwithstanding Douglas' nominal success his opponent emerged from the contest the larger man, both intellectually and morally and they were conscious of the fact that if Douglas was of Presidential size then Lincoln must be likewise and the later suggestion of Lincoln for the Presidency did not seem illogical or strange, although as a matter of

[1] *Dubuque Express and Herald,* Aug. 17, 1858—Editorial Correspondence from Vinton. Mr. Drummond's interrogatories are set out at length in *The Eagle,* Aug. 7, 1858.

political form they "hooted" at the Rail-Splitter as a fit man for the highest office in the land.[1]

Two of Iowa's leading lawyers heard the two champions in debate and were so much impressed by the intellectual prowess of Lincoln that they instinctively felt that he was a man of Presidential proportions and so expressed themselves at the time. Mr. Austin Adams of Dubuque, later Chief Justice of Iowa, attended the debate at Freeport and he is quoted as saying: "I have just heard the greatest man I ever listened to; he ought to be President."[2] Mr. Henry Strong, then one of the rising young lawyers of Keokuk,[3] heard the debaters in September. He wrote his college classmate, Manton Marble, then associate editor of *The Boston Journal:* "I have just heard the next President of the United States—mark my prediction, Manton." He writes me that the substance of his letter was published by his friend.[4]

The discussion of Presidential possibilities came on apace in the latter months of 1858. The effect of the debates in Illinois and of the "mighty clap of thunder" resulting from Seward's speech at Rochester are manifest. As was the case two years before *The New York Herald* lead off; but a new name was on its pennant. Douglas' answers at Freeport produced an upset; on September 15 it averred that by them he had "proclaimed himself an advocate of the higher law doctrine." On the 23d it declared the nomination of Winfield Scott, "a necessity for the Opposition." A week later it appeals to the Opposition not to imitate the Democrats and "go off in petty squads under the lead of Seward, Crittenden, Banks and fifty others . . . Scott or annihilation is their only choice." Its insistence upon the hero of Lundy Lane was earnest indeed.[5] Seward's Rochester speech, however, produced such a violent shock to the *Herald's* sensibilities

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[1] Interview with the writer, October 8, 1907.

[2] Gue, *History of Iowa*, Vol. IV, p. 2. Mr. Gue, or the author of the biographical sketch from which the above is taken, states that Mr. Adams heard Lincoln and Douglas at Galena; Freeport must have been intended.

[3] Mr. Strong's law partner in those days was Mr. John W. Noble, afterward Secretary of the Interior in President Harrison's cabinet.

[4] Letter (MSS.) to the writer, June 4, 1907.

[5] *N. Y. Herald*, Oct. 11, 13, 15, 19, 1858.

that it entirely forgot General Scott and thenceforth devoted itself to denunciation of what for nearly two years it branded as Seward's "brutal and bloody" programme.[1]

Meanwhile the Republican press of Iowa was exceedingly unconcerned. I have not discovered a single reference to the *Herald's* advocacy of Scott for the Presidency. Seward's speech is "eloquent and truthful," according to Mr. Mahin:[2] in Mr. Aldrich's judgment "it is a great speech" and he reprints it in seven and a half solid columns.[3] None of the Republicans view the sentiments of Seward with alarm. The doctrine he enunciated apparently did not seem revolutionary.

There are but few signs of direct interest in the prospective Presidential nomination. On Nov. 11th Mr. Mahin has a three line editorial note, stating, "*The New York Courier and Enquirer* proposes Mr. Seward for the Republican candidate for the Presidency of 1860." He makes no comment, however. A week later he notices the zealous contention of the *New York Herald,* that "so far as the results of the late election from having improved the chances of either Seward or Douglas for the Presidency, that the great Agitator and the 'Little Giant' have thus been farther removed from the goal of their ambition than ever they were before." The design of the editor in such notes and comments, if other than recording items of passing interest, is not manifest.

Both desire and opinion respecting the Presidency among the Republicans of Iowa at the close of 1858, it is clear, were incoherent, indefinite, vague. The consideration of candidates was not deemed urgent or wise because premature. The situation had become more definite, however. A figure was looming large in the political horizon. The entire country was becoming conscious of his remarkable strength and proportions and commanding influence. The political leaders for some time had had to reckon with Abraham Lincoln. The papers of the east no less than those of the west had ex-

[1] Ib. Oct. 30.
[2] *The Muscatine Journal*, Nov. 4, 1858.
[3] *The Hamilton Freeman*, Nov. 12, 1858.

tensively reported his speeches and quoted his pithy sayings. The votes he had received in 1856 for the nomination for the Vice-Presidency signified a much wider and more decided political acquaintance with Lincoln than most of our chroniclers have realized. Speaking at Litchfield, Maine, Mr. James G. Blaine, on June 28, 1856, referred to Lincoln's "reputation beyond the lines of his own state" gained by his acute discussions of Douglas' course in securing the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.[1] Before the celebrated debates were arranged for Greeley said of the Springfield speech, which he printed entire in the *Tribune* (June 24); "We need not ask attention to this concise and admirable statement. Mr. Lincoln never fails to make a good speech if he makes any and this is one of his best efforts." Such language is not used of "an unknown." In July that year the Chicago editors were surprised to find the eastern press discussing and quoting his speeches.[2] One finds that the editors of Iowa were likewise alive to the marked attention paid to Lincoln in the press of the eastern States. *The Gate City* (Aug. 30) cites the *Louisville Journal,* "the leading American paper of the country" which expresses admiration of Lincoln's "superior talents and noble nature" and bespeaks for him success; and also the St. Louis *Evening News,* "the leading American organ of Missouri" that endorses the sentiments of the *Journal. The Hawk-eye* (Oct. 8) reprints a letter written from Illinois to the Rochester (N. Y.) *Democrat,* recounting the striking differences in the speeches of Lincoln and Douglas to the advantage of the former. After the result of the election in Illinois was known and it was realized that by reason of an unfair apportionment Lincoln fell short of official success but won popular success one encounters frequent laudatory references to Douglas' opponent. Thus *The Gate City* quotes (Nov. 22) the Rochester *Democrat:* "Mr. Lincoln has won a reputation as a statesman and orator which eclipses that of Douglas as the sun does the twinklers of the sky. The speeches made during the Illinois campaign have

[1] Blaine, *Political Discussions,* p. 4.
[2] Nicolay & Hay—*Abraham Lincoln,* Vol. II, p. 176.

been read with great interest throughout the country . . . ''
On Nov. 30 Mr. Howell gives his readers the great Greeley's opinion of Lincoln's speeches: ''. . . they were of a very high order—they were pungent without bitterness, powerful without harshness. The address at Springfield in which he opened the canvass is a model of compactness, lucidity and logic. As a condensed statement of the issues which divide the Republicans from the Democrats of our day, it has rarely, or never been exceeded.'' This high praise, it must be remembered, came from no willing witness—Greeley had strongly opposed the Republican opposition to Douglas.

In the south meantime expressions much more significant were being made. The southern press and leaders were outspoken in their sentiments hostile to Douglas whose position at Freeport had shown the fatal weakness of their much prized doctrine of Popular Sovereignty. The intellectual acumen of his antagonist who had so succesfully forced its doughty champion to make his fatal admission was of necessity felt if not always formally recognized. Such recognition was constantly manifested by their joint condemnation, and the Iowa press was not unmindful of its significance. Thus Mr. Howell quotes (Nov. 27) from Jefferson Davis' speech to his constituents in Mississippi, when he said that he ''considered Mr. Douglas' opinions as objectionable as those of his adversary, Mr. Lincoln.''[1] Douglas himself continued to force the public to recognize the pre-eminent abilities of his great antagonist. He started upon his southern tour which he planned with a view to placating the hostile friends of the Administration in the south. His speeches at Memphis and New Orleans were little less than earnest pleas in mitigation of the Freeport answers and Lincoln was referred to directly by

[1] See *The Gate City*, Nov. 29, 1858—Editorial on *Senator Douglas in the South*

The Muscatine Journal on June 4 quoted the following from the *Montgomery* (Ala.) *Mail* of May 21 relative to the reception of Douglas in that city:

''The Squatter Giant—S. A. Douglas, the great advocate of Squatter Sovereignty, arrived here yesterday, in the eastern train, and went down in the steamer in the afternoon. A few persons hunted him up to take a look at him as they would a grizzly bear, but there was no welcome. Why should there be, of the great assassin of the South?''

him in those discourses. But a more decided, not to say dramatic, appreciation of the tremendous damage done the Democratic party and the Slavocracy by the Illinois lawyer was the summary deposition at the opening of Congress of Stephen A. Douglas from the chairmanship of the Senate committee on Territories, a position he had held for eleven years and which he had made famous or infamous in their service in connection with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. All these things were noted in Iowa as elsewhere and the people no less than the politicians were becoming aware that Illinois had a dominating man—dominant because he possessed not only a profound, far-seeing mind, but wonderful powers of compelling speech. King makers could ask for no more favorable conditions than those which confronted the friends and admirers of Abraham Lincoln at the close of 1858.

Do We Need a Railroad?—This question is asked by a correspondent of *The Citizen*. Every man, woman and child in Central Iowa will promptly answer yes. We not only *need* a railroad, but should have one as soon as possible. It is true that the late commercial revulsion has operated disastrously upon railroads, but still there are means at our command and advantages possessed, which if properly and promptly applied would in a short time have thousands of laborers at work in building a railroad through Central Iowa. This will not be done, however, until the *people* move in the matter. Action, talk and agitation is needed. Let us have another excitement—let the subject of Railroads be agitated in every county, city and town—let meetings be held, the people aroused and their attention called to the vital importance of a Railroad.—*Tri-Weekly Iowa State Journal*, March 1, 1858.