

IOWA AND THE FIRST NOMINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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V.

CONDITIONS ATHWART THE PLANS OF WEED, GREELEY, AND THE BLAIRS.

If one inquires of Iowans who were contemporary observers of political events in 1860 as to the state of the public mind respecting the nomination of Abraham Lincoln, he receives various answers. One of Des Moines' leading citizens who was an influential Democrat in the capital city in 1860, declared orally to the writer: "Everybody 'round here was for Mr. Lincoln." "Before the Convention?" "That's my recollection." Professor Jesse Macy, of Iowa College at Grinnell, writes: "Lincoln before the Convention was unknown or he made little impression. . . . Lincoln struck us as a surprise." An attendant on the Convention, Mr. J. H. Merrill, of Ottumwa, says that many from Iowa were present at Chicago during the Convention week and they were "almost without exception in favor of Seward." Dr. William Salter of Burlington, whose intimate associations with the State's dominant men were exceptional and his interest in anti-slavery propaganda alert and active, states, "Both parties are in the fog now [February, 1907] as to who will get the nomination for the next presidential election; it was just so in 1859-60. Things were very much mixed and confused."¹ Doctor Salter but re-echoes the editorial expression of a keen observer in those days, Mr. Charles Aldrich, in *The Hamilton Freeman*, April 21, 1860: "It is proverbially the darkest just before day. . . . The great Conventions of the three parties are on the point of assembling and yet at no time during the past twelve months have the indications of their actions been more confused and indistinct. And it is

¹ Citations above, except first, from letters to the writer.

SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES AT LARGE.

CHICAGO CONVENTION, MAY 16-18, 1860.



JOHN W. RANKIN,
State Senator

M. E. McPHERSON,
State Senator

L. C. NOBLE,
Merchant

COKER F. CLARKSON,
State Senator

NICHOLAS J. RUSCH,
Lieutenant Governor

H. P. SCHOLTE,
Minister

JOHN JOHNS,
Minister

plain that the wise heads at Washington are fully as much in the dark about the prospects as the people in Aroostook."

Mr. Aldrich's observations were not only aptly put but accurate. In August, 1859, Congressman James M. Ashley, of Toledo, traveled in various States to ascertain the chances of Gov. Salmon P. Chase for securing the nomination, and he informed Charles A. Dana, then associate editor of *The New York Tribune*, that "the Northwest is quite as much for Chase as for Seward," but Dana wrote to J. S. Pike that he had "the best information to the contrary, particularly from Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Indiana, where the Germans who hold the balance of power, are hot Seward men."¹ *The New York Herald*, on March 7, 1860, in forecasting the result at Chicago gave Iowa's entire vote to Cameron, and on May 16th its columns contained two dispatches from Chicago, one dated May 11th, asserting that "Minnesota and Iowa are for Seward," and the other, May 15th, declaring that a majority of the delegates of Iowa would go to Lincoln. In Greeley's *Tribune*, May 15th, the day preceding the Convention, its Chicago advices were "Iowa is discordant and uncertain."

When Iowa was called on the first ballot for the nomination for President, Friday morning, May 18, 1860, the immense throng in the Wigwam was in a state of intense expectancy. William H. Seward, contrary to expectation, had received only 147½ votes, and Abraham Lincoln 100 votes, more than twice the number received by any of his competitors. The votes of the Hawkeyes, though few, were important, as their state was known to be within the sphere of doubtful territory, possession of which was essential to the party's success in the ensuing election. Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke, a lawyer and leader, of Iowa City, whose fame exceeded the borders of the State, arose as chairman to announce the vote of the delegation. He essayed to speak, but not a word was forthcoming. His effort was obvious but vain. The delegation sat by in astonishment and general wonderment began to be manifest. It was soon realized that Mr. Clarke was suffering from an impediment in his speech that was serious only when he was laboring under great excitement. Perceiving that utterance would be futile

¹ Pike's *First Blows of the Civil War*, p. 443.

or painful, a delegate came to his relief and announced that Iowa gave one vote each to Edward Bates of Missouri, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, Salmon P. Chase and John McLean, both of Ohio, two votes to Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, and two votes to William H. Seward, of New York.¹ Each of Iowa's votes represented the concurrent preferences of four delegates, as her delegation numbered thirty-two.

This division of her vote among six candidates was noteworthy. No other northern or free State parcelled out its vote so variously as did Iowa. Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island gave their votes to four candidates on the first roll call; all other States to three candidates or less. In three of the States mentioned the chances of victory for the Republicans in the Fall campaign were far from certain. It is interesting to note, and significant withal, that one southern or slave State, Kentucky, on the same ballot, gave her thirty-three votes to six candidates, favoring four that Iowa did, but voting for Wade and Sumner instead of Bates and Cameron. On the second ballot, Iowa gave her vote to four candidates, Chase, Lincoln, McLean and Seward; and on the third and decisive ballot, the delegation was still divided—Chase received $\frac{1}{2}$ vote, Lincoln $5\frac{1}{2}$, and Seward 2 votes.

Such marked and persistent division among Iowa's men must have reflected not only lack of harmony, due to stubborn personal preferences of the delegates, but sharp factional dissensions in the party's ranks in Iowa. Or that distribution of votes may be looked upon as evidence of the tactics of trading politicians, maneuvering for position so as to insure favor from the successful champion. However Iowa's action may be considered, we cannot realize its significance until we appreciate the people and the politics of the State whence the delegation hailed; for, even if trading was their primary concern, politicians seldom act in such a wise as to run seriously athwart the inclinations of their constituents, since Success is the deity they are wont to worship. This fact is usually overlooked by academic historians as well as by ordinary lay chroniclers.

¹ Interview with Mr. Charles C. Nourse, Atty. Gen. of Iowa, 1861-65, Des Moines, Iowa, April 26 and May 12, 1907.

Antecedent conditions as well as causes control results in politics; factions no less than factors; popular prejudices as much as persons. The action of Iowa's delegation at Chicago was an issue of the character, traditions and local interests of the people they represented. Iowa had been a State but fourteen years. Her corporate existence did not span a quarter of a century. Her population, consequently, was made up of pioneers. Public opinion among them consisted largely of the keen predilections or prejudices of their ancestral stocks, modified somewhat by the conditions of life in a frontier State. This complex of local prejudices and interests, together with the composition and strength of the political parties, must be understood if we are to appreciate correctly Iowa's action at Chicago. As neither the facts nor their significance has ever been directly pointed out, the conditions and various phases of the politics of Iowa in the formative days of the Republican party, prior to the pre-convention campaign of 1860, will be exhibited with considerable detail.

1. *Abolitionists Aggressive but not Dominant.*

The stand taken by Iowa, or rather by many of her men of "light and leading," against the aggressions of the Slavocrats between 1850 and 1860 has created the notion that abolitionism generally prevailed throughout the State. This belief is manifest in Major S. H. M. Byers' stirring account, *John Brown in Iowa*.¹ "His career during those Kansas days," we are told, "was watched in Iowa as no other State. . . . Iowa afforded him his first refuge place after contest. . . . It was across her prairies and past her loyal towns he wandered by day and by night carrying liberty for the oppressed. . . . He was so often and so closely connected with the State that people almost forgot that he was not an Iowa man."² Von Holst seems to give warrant for such an opinion when he says of the elections of 1854: "Iowa hitherto a veritable hot-bed of dough-faces now reinforced the little band of 'abolitionists' in the Senate by Harlan."³

¹ Byers' *Iowa in War Times*, ch. 1.

² *Ib.*, p. 18.

³ *History*, Vol. V, p. 78.

Sundry facts give color and substance to such a belief. Foremost, perhaps, has been the prominent roles played by New Englanders and New Yorkers in the development of the State. In politics there have been few more important factors than Fitz Henry Warren, James W. Grimes, John A. Kasson, Josiah B. Grinnell, Nathaniel B. Baker, Judges Asahel W. and Nathaniel M. Hubbard, John H. Gear, William Larrabee and Horace Boies. In the courts Charles Mason, Stephen Whicher and Francis Springer, Austin Adams and John F. Dillon, stand out. In railway construction Grenville M. Dodge and Peter A. Dey are pre-eminent. In journalism Charles Aldrich, Coker F. Clarkson, Clark Dunham, A. B. F. Hildreth, Frank W. Palmer, and Jacob Rich have been conspicuous; and in education and religious life Father Asa Turner and the "Iowa Band," George F. Magoun, Samuel A. Howe, Josiah L. Pickard, A. S. Welch and Henry Sabin loom up. Not all who came out of Yankeedom were abolitionists by any means, but abolitionism flourished most vigorously in New England and in the other States westward, peopled largely by her emigrant citizens. Furthermore, if not abolitionists in the strict sense of the term, they were almost certain to be stout opponents of the extension of slavery northward beyond the bounds set by the Ordinance of 1787 and the Compromise of 1820.

In the first decision rendered in 1839 by the territorial supreme court of Iowa, Chief Justice Charles Mason, speaking for the court, declared that the great Ordinance and the Compromise worked a forfeiture of rights *in rem* in human kind within the State of Iowa—and squarely announced that "when the slave owner illegally restrains a human being of his liberty, it is proper that the laws . . . should exert its remedial interposition."¹ The Court realized the vital import of their holding—especially as they observe that its consideration was "not strictly regular"—but as the case involved "an important question which may ere long, if unsettled, become an exciting one," they so decreed. In 1859 Judge Taney reversed Judge Mason in the case of *Dred Scott*.

¹ *Iowa Reports*, Vol. I, pp. 6-10.

There were soon numerous underground railway routes through Iowa—main lines, branches and spurs. Southern officers and slave catchers found their rights under the Fugitive Slave Law nullified by Iowa's "law breakers." Governor Grimes himself wrote Mrs. Grimes concerning the first case in Burlington, namely the seizure and trial of the slave "Dick," June 23, 1855: "I am sorry I am Governor of the State, for, although I can and shall prevent the State authorities and officers from interfering in aid of the Marshal, yet if not in office, I am inclined to think I should be a law breaker. . . . Judge [later Governor] Lowe was brought from Keokuk Monday in the night, and a writ of *habeas corpus* was ready to be served if the decision went against us."¹ Fitz Henry Warren exhibited a willingness to take the law into his own hands in that affair.² The exaltation of such leaders as Grimes and Harlan, the practical support of John Brown and his men,³ Governor Kirkwood's ringing message on the Barclay Coppoc affair, the extraordinary enlistments of Iowa's sons in the Union army—all these facts seem to indicate that abolitionism was rampant in Iowa in those troublesome times.

The careers of some of Iowa's delegates to Chicago in 1860 confirm the notion that abolitionism was prevalent. The chairman of the delegation—Mr. William Penn Clarke—early acquired fame or infamy as a "nigger worshipper."⁴ In 1850 he received 575 votes from the Abolitionists for Governor. He was a conductor on the Underground Railway. During the warfare in Kansas he openly and effectively assisted Eli Thayer and Col. T. W. Higginson in transporting "Liberty" men and Sharpe's rifles to Tabor to protect the

¹ Salter's *Grimes*, pp. 72-73.

² *Ib.*, p. 73. Mr. George Frazee, Commissioner of the Court to hear the case, practically asserts that both Governor Grimes and Colonel Warren were "principal movers" in gathering "the crowd of sympathizers with the unfortunate fugitive." The abolitionist who was aiding "Dick" to escape was a New Englander, the celebrated botanist and historian of the Long Expedition, Dr. Edwin James, then living a few miles west of Burlington. See Frazee's article, "The Iowa Fugitive Slave Case," *Annals*, Vol. IV, 118-137.

³ Brown's company for Harper's Ferry was organized and drilled at Springdale, Iowa. Iowa furnished more men than any other State. See Gue's *History of Iowa*, Vol. II, p. 2.

⁴ Upon the occasion of Mr. Clarke's failure to make his appointment to speak in the campaign of 1848 *The Gate City* observes: "Wm. Penn Clarke, candidate on the 'codfish and cabbage ticket,' concluded to skip our city in his tour of love for the darkies." (October 26, 1848.)

freedom of the New England emigrants beyond the Missouri. In the Constitutional Convention of 1857 the irrepressible champion of the proposal to strike "white" from the supreme statute of Iowa and grant the electoral franchise to negroes was a doughty New Englander, R. L. B. Clarke of Mt. Pleasant, Senator Harlan's home town. On the hustings another valiant champion of that measure was a dashing, brilliant son of Erin, Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, "the best Republican stump speaker in the State."¹ Mr. Jacob Butler, likewise of Muscatine, was another "Abolitionist" whose flag was up and his work on the Underground Railway known;² like his law partner, O'Connor, he, too, was regarded as one of "the ablest and most popular speakers in the state."³ Another Abolitionist in the delegation was the Rev. John Johns of Border Plains, Webster county, of whom more later. All five of those men "died in the ditch" at Chicago, voting for Wm. H. Seward for President.

The delegation contained at least three other "Black" Republicans of the notorious species, all of them trainmen on the Underground Railway: a State Senator, M. L. McPherson, then of Winterset,⁴ Mr. H. M. Hoxie of Des Moines, who had been an expert as to the best time and route for shipping "fleeces of wool"⁵ and was then secretary of the Republican State Central Committee; and Mr. J. B. Grinnell, whose home in Grinnell was a way-station where "old Brown's" chattels were rebilled and trans-shipped.⁶ John Brown wrote a part of his Harper's Ferry proclamation to the Virginians while at Mr. Grinnell's home.⁷

The forwardness of New Englanders in radical anti-slavery propaganda was shown at the annual session of the State Congregational Association in 1859. A resolution was passed June 2d expressing sympathy with brethren under arrest

¹ Dubuque *Express and Herald*, September 3, 1858: See also editorial in *The Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, October 7, 1858, under caption "Henry O'Connor is in Favor of Negro Suffrage."

² Byers' *Iowa in War Times*, p. 20.

³ *The Hamilton Freeman*, September 24, 1858.

⁴ *History of Madison county*, p. 353.

⁵ J. B. Grinnell's *Men and Events of Forty Years*, p. 217.

⁶ *Ib.*, pp. 210-220.

⁷ Byers, *Ib.*, p. 24; also Grinnell, *Ib.*, p. 214.

in Ohio on account of their resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law, "an unchristian enactment"; bidding them "be courageous in enduring wrong," as their martyrdom would "call out and increase the humane and Christian opposition . . . to the whole system of American Slavery, with all its attendant evils, whether established by the General Government, sanctioned by the Supreme Court, or enforced by Federal Officers."¹ It further called for the raising of funds to aid the martyrs. The resolution was deftly worded, so as to avoid explicit encouragement of law breaking but the Association was sharply criticized; the *Dubuque Express and Herald* pertinently asking, "How can such a body of men find fault with any other body, whether composed of religionists or not, who may urge resistance to a law which they dislike."²

The most vigorous type of abolitionism within the regular Republican party organization developed or "broke out" in Muscatine county—a county that has produced many lusty radicals in the course of its history. In the mass convention in Muscatine, January 7, 1860, to select their delegation to the Republican State Convention, in Des Moines, to choose the delegates to Chicago, the committee on resolutions "recommended" Helper's *Impending Crisis* as a book "eminently worthy of an extensive circulation in this county." Coming close on the heels of the executions at Harper's Ferry in which Iowa was but too closely involved, the Convention could have exceeded its display of belligerent radicalism only by commending Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for the burden of Helpers' book was "Slavery Must be Abolished."³ Such an action, as may be imagined, did not pass without comment. The attitude of Iowa in the great political contest then approaching was a matter of national interest for her political complexion was by no means clear or dependable. A correspondent of the *New York Herald* visited the State to determine the drifts of sentiment, his visit coinciding with the discussion pursuant to the Muscatine Resolutions. Writing from Iowa City, January 27th, he says:

¹ See Proceedings in Muscatine *Journal*, June 6, 1859.

² *Dubuque Express and Herald*, June 10, 1859.

³ "As much was now said [1859] and written about Helper's 'Impending Crisis' as formerly about 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'; as much but in a different way," etc. Von Holst, VII, p. 8.

Next to Michigan, Iowa is the most completely and thoroughly abolitionized State in the Northwest; it is therefore not surprising that Brown here found practical exponents of Sewardism, or that Helper finds champions in the deliberative councils of the rulers of the State. Whatever dodges the Republican party elsewhere may resort to to cover their participation directly or indirectly with Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry or shield themselves from complicity with the circulation of Helper's book, the Republicans of Iowa feel themselves strong enough to throw off the mask and boldly avow their sympathy with the one and their approval of the other. . . . This [action at Muscatine] is the first public endorsement of the book I have yet heard of; but I have yet to meet with the first Republican here or elsewhere who has read the book who does not endorse it and recommend its circulation.¹

That the foregoing was a veracious report of impressions received we need not doubt, but the correspondent's conclusions as to the prevalence and potency of abolitionism in Iowa or among Iowa's Republicans in 1860 are not to be accepted. The Abolitionists made up a very considerable company in respect of ability, character and courage, but they did not preponderate, even in the Republican party, let alone in the State. They were, in the language of our military experts, outflankers and skirmishers, or better, a flying squadron of remarkable efficiency, but they were not the main body of troops. The mass of the Republicans were strongly anti-slavery in sentiment and theory, but hostile only to the extension of slavery north of Mason and Dixon's line, the Ohio river and 36° 30'. They were not clamorous for abolition in States where slavery was fixed or formal.² There was no favorable echo of the resolution of the Muscatine Republicans so far as the writer can discover, either in the press or in party conventions.

But while Abolitionists, as we shall see, did not prevail in the State at large or predominate in the Republican party, their affiliation with the Republicans and their activity in propaganda put on the party the onus and odium thence resulting. The Democratic press of Iowa teems with screaming

¹ New York *Herald*, February 19, 1860.

² In the debate, February 23, 1857, on the proposal to strike "White" from the State constitution, Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke in repelling the charge that his party was fathering abolitionism, said: "I understand the doctrine of the republican party to be opposition to the extension of slavery." *Debates of the Constitutional Convention*, vol. II, p. 675.

epithets: "Abolitionist," "Amalgamationists," "Miscegenationists," "Black Republicans," "Freedom Shriekers," "Nigger Thieves," "Nigger Worshipers," "Woolies," hurtle through their pages *ad nauseam*. Their editors see frightful visions of "white and negro equality."¹ The organ of Buchanan's administration, The Washington (D. C.) *Union*, pronounced Senator Harlan's sober presentation of the north's objections to the aggressions of the southern leaders in the Senate, March 27, 1856, "an elaborate defence of abolitionism" and declared the "one great object" in his speech to be to establish "equality between the two races."² The Republican leaders of Iowa were more or less indifferent to such flouts and taunts. Nevertheless one perceives an extreme sensitiveness to such accusations—the rank and file and most of the leaders constantly declare their hostility to abolitionism. Not only were they sensitive concerning the charge of abolitionism but the dominant men of the party realized that the potent fact chiefly determining the continuance or cessation of Republican supremacy in Iowa was no less dread of abolitionism than dread of slavery. This was a basic condition and assiduous attention thereto was imperative. The reason therefor, arose out of the ancestry of Iowa's population which we must understand if we are to realize the significance of the conduct of Iowa in the great Council in the Wigwam.

2. *Southern Stocks and Prejudices Predominant.*

The immigration prior to 1850 came chiefly from south of Mason and Dixon's line and the Ohio river. Between 1850 and 1860 the settlers hailed mostly from southern portions of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, the major number of which were either natives of, or descendants of pioneer emigrants from slave States who in their northern habitats were by trade closely affiliated with the southern peoples. There was at the same time a strong infusion of energetic northern stocks from New England and New York, and of their westernized descendants from northern portions of Pennsylvania and Ohio, and from Michigan and Wisconsin. The influx of the northerners reached high tide between 1855 and

¹ See editorial in *Express and Herald*, Dubuque, September 3, 1858.

² Quoted in *Iowa Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, April 10, 1856.

1860. It is the popular notion that the latter elements predominated in Iowa prior to 1860; and, it is true, they were the energizing forces and aggressive factors in public discussion and in the "forward" or progressive movements of those days, both in industry and politics. But they did not constitute the preponderant political population.¹

Coincident with the incoming of the native Americans was a heavy immigration into Iowa of foreign born peoples, mostly Germans and Irish. In 1850 the native born inhabitants constituted 89 per cent. of the aggregate population and in 1860 they had declined to 84.2 per cent. Of the 21,232 foreign born in 1850, the Germans made up 7,152 and the Irish 4,885, both together constituting 56 per cent. of the total. In 1860 the Irish numbered 28,072 and the Germans 38,555, making 63 per cent. of the 106,081 foreign born citizens. The total population of Iowa in 1860 numbered only 674,913. It is manifest that if the political party in power in Iowa had a narrow margin of popular support the foreign immigrants could easily control the fate of the predominant party if, for any reason, the foreign born citizens were clannish and were aggravated into political concert by threatened partizan action adverse to their welfare.

The geographical and industrial distribution of the population was a potent factor in the politics of the *ante bellum* period. Speaking generally, the settlers of southern antecedents, although scattered thickly in the northern counties, prevailed in the southern half of the State and in the interior and western counties. For the most part they were farmers, much given to hunting and trapping and but comparatively little to commercial or manufacturing pursuits. They lived along the streams and in the wooded lands and pursued farming in an easy-going fashion. The Yankees, on the other hand, were found mainly in the northern and eastern counties, inhabiting the cities and towns, pre-eminent in the advancement of education, especially in promoting schools and colleges, following commercial and industrial pursuits, or farming the uplands or

¹ In *The Annals*, Vol. VII, pp. 367-379, 446-465, April and July, 1906, the writer has set forth some facts in justification of the assertions above—reprinted with additions under caption *Did Emigrants from New England First Settle Iowa*.

prairies with the latest devices in agricultural machinery. The foreign born population for the most part inhabited the counties bordering on the Mississippi. They were more numerous relatively in the northern counties than in the southern. Thus in 1850 the foreigners in Dubuque county constituted 40 and in 1860 42 per cent. of the population, whereas in Des Moines county (containing Burlington) they were only 15 and 21 per cent. for the respective decennial censuses. In Davis and in Dallas counties the foreign born amounted in each county to but 3 per cent. Even in Polk county, with the capital city, the native born made up 90 per cent. of the population.¹

The political, religious and social animosities and prejudices of such a mixed population under the conditions of intercommunication of those days were in the nature of things lively and various, and usually stubborn if not violent. The primary prejudices of the native stocks related to slavery. Their secondary prejudices pertained to the foreign immigrant.

The people of southern antecedents had left the south mainly for two reasons. Either economic pressure or hostility to slavery, or both, had induced them to emigrate. The major number had come north to better their economic condition. Many would have brought slaves with them had their ownership and control been feasible. A large proportion were not

¹ Below are given the returns of nativity for six counties on the Mississippi and for six counties bordering on the Des Moines river for 1850 and 1860:

Counties	1850			1860		
	*Native	Foreign	Per cent. foreign	Native	Foreign	Per cent. foreign
Allamakee -----	637	140	18	8,295	3,942	33
Dubuque -----	6,512	4,301	40	18,206	12,958	42
Clinton -----	2,077	525	19	13,565	5,373	28
Scott -----	4,452	1,520	25	16,706	9,253	36
Des Moines -----	11,008	1,955	15	15,536	4,075	21
Lee -----	16,514	2,287	12	22,747	6,485	22
Davis -----	7,186	71	1	13,296	468	3
Mahaska -----	5,885	103	2	14,109	707	5
Jasper -----	1,255	25	2	9,437	445	4.5
Polk -----	4,399	114	2.5	10,498	1,127	10
Dallas -----	842	12	1	5,082	162	3
Boone -----	667	68	9	3,999	233	5.5

* Includes some unknown.

particularly concerned about the matter, but were strongly pro-slavery in their sympathies. The more influential and industrious immigrants from the south, however, were decidedly hostile to the extension of slavery, because their adversity in their ancestral States was due to the pressure of slavery and the severe and relentless social discrimination against white labor. Small farming was almost impossible in the south and decent and independent social existence otherwise was so difficult as to be virtually impossible.¹ The agitation for the extension of slavery and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused the intense antagonism of such emigrants in Iowa. It was this element among the southern stocks that joined forces with the New England folk and elected James W. Grimes Governor in 1854, to the utter astonishment of the country at large.

Those who emigrated from the south because of personal hostility to slavery, were usually out-and-out Abolitionists. Such notably were the Friends or Quakers who for the most part came into Iowa in considerable numbers direct from Maryland and North Carolina or roundabout via Ohio and Indiana. The Friends church at Salem in Henry county was known far and wide as the "Abolition Meeting House"² and their settlement at Springdale, as already noted, was John Brown's rendezvous, previous to his attack on Harper's Ferry. There was at least one representative of the Quakers on the delegation to Chicago, Senator M. L. McPherson of Winterset. He was a North Carolinian and an Abolitionist. One of the most interesting men among Iowa's delegates at Chicago was Rev.

¹ The following extracts from an able speech of John Edwards of Charlton in the Constitutional Convention of 1857 illustrate the paragraph above:

"I am glad that I have an opportunity here of speaking upon this slavery question. Born in a slave State [Virginia], educated with all the prejudices of a slaveholder, I have been contending for twenty years with the institution of slavery. It was slavery that drove me from my native State." *Debates*, vol. II, p. 681.

"There were Democrats in my section of the State who took the ground that slavery was right; that it was a great moral and political blessing and that it ought to be extended throughout the Union." p. 683.

"... slavery is a foul political curse upon the institutions of our country; it is a curse upon the soil of the country, and worse than that it is a curse upon the poor, free laboring white man. . . . they have been driven away [from Virginia] in consequence of the degradation attached to labor as the result of this system of slavery. That is the reason that Virginia is becoming depopulated. . . ." p. 682.

See also speech of George Ellis of Davenport, March 2, p. 907.

² See testimony and arguments of attorneys in "An Iowa Fugitive Slave Case" *Annals*, VI, pp. 16, 27, 30-31.

John Johns of Border Plains, Webster county. He was a native of Kentucky, an old line Whig, a Free Will Baptist preacher and an Abolitionist. From his youth he had steadfastly promulgated his views, at camp-meetings and on the hustings, alike, in Ohio and Indiana before coming to Iowa in 1848.

But Abolitionists were extremists and did not dominate in Iowa's southern stock. The preponderant number was hostile alike to the extension of slavery and to its abolition and the resulting Negro Equality involved or dreaded. "We hated an abolitionist as we hated a nigger," wrote a pioneer preacher of Iowa to the writer a short time since.¹ Grimes was keenly alive to this stubborn prejudice in 1854 when he sought the suffrages of the people in his candidacy for Governor. He took pains to guard against the imputations of his opponents to the effect that he would echo "the mad-dog cry of abolitionism."² The heated debates in the Constitutional Convention of 1857, over the admissibility of the testimony of negroes in courts, their rights to property, their admission to the State and the Franchise, show us how deeply rooted and potent were the prejudices of the southerners in Iowa's public opinion. The proposal to strike "white" from the Constitution and thus admit the negro to the Franchise was overwhelmingly defeated at the polls. It obtained a majority in but two thinly settled counties, Humboldt and Mitchell, the former near and the latter on the border of Minnesota and the latter over fifty miles back from the river; receiving approximately, in the State at large only 14,000 votes out of 64,000 cast.³

The numbers and political significance of the southern stocks is indicated forcefully in the following observations of Daniel F. Miller a Marylander, who played a conspicuous part in the pioneer politics of Iowa from 1839 to 1860, being the first

¹ The correspondent quoted above, was born in Newark, Ohio, near the center of the State. His parents were Virginians. He told the writer once that he had almost attained his majority before he began to realize that people were or could be born elsewhere than in Virginia, if not in Ohio.

² Salter's *Grimes*, p. 49.

³ The exact figures cannot be given as the returns from some of the counties seem to be incomplete. See "Record of Elections" on file in the office of the Sec. of State.

Whig Congressman from southern Iowa,¹ one of the organizers of the Republican party and the party's first Presidential elector in the Fremont campaign. His communication was indited near the close of the Fremont campaign in 1856:

When you are informed, sir, that full one-third of all the voters in this (Hall's²) district were born in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and other slave holding States, and that in fact, a very large majority of this portion of our voters are the most ardent and active Republicans, and fought best for the defeat of Hall, you will be able to properly appreciate how much of the non-slaveholding portion of the South hate the extension of slavery, and will speak out their sentiments on the subject where they can do it with safety. Having come to Iowa to enjoy the blessings of free labor and progressive industry and by experience learned how superior are Free Institutions to those of Slavery, we never can nor will consent, but oppose to the bitter end, every effort of the Slave Oligarchy to extend Slavery over our Sister Kansas. The Missouri Compromise was the common charter of Freedom for both Iowa and Kansas, and, though the letter of it has been violated as to Kansas, you may rest assured we will maintain the equity and spirit of it at all hazards.³

Three instances of the potency of southern prejudices in Iowa's politics in *ante bellum* days may be cited because they exhibit in an interesting fashion the practical consideration given them by some of the men who played prominent roles not only in the struggles between 1856 and 1860 but at Chicago. Mr. Charles C. Nourse, a Marylander by birth, was one of the original advocates of Abraham Lincoln's nomination among the Iowa Delegation, and he ascribes the original impetus to his career in State politics to the adverse prejudices of the southern stock in Iowa. In an interview with the writer, he says: "In 1852 I was elected county prosecutor of Van Buren county as a Whig. In 1854 I was renominated. The Free Soilers were numerous enough in the north half of the county to cause the Convention to put a Free Soiler by the name of French on the ticket. For several reasons I was strong enough to win on my own strength, but my friends soon told me that I could not carry the Free Soiler along with me.

¹ Wm. H. Thompson, Democrat, was first seated, the canvassing board having excluded the Mormon vote of Kaneshville, which Fitz Henry Warren had secured for the Whigs; Miller contested, the election was voided, and at a special election Miller regained his seat.

² Augustus Hall.

³ *The St. Charles Intelligencer*, October 2, 1856.

You see a great number of the people of Davis and Van Buren counties had moved to Iowa when they supposed that region was a part of Missouri. In the contest over the boundary, the decision was largely in our favor. The fact that those southerners were in Iowa, did not, however, reconstruct their notions or ways of thinking. A Free Soiler to them was an abolitionist—an equal suffragist who proposed to force on us negro equality, both political and social. I worked manfully on behalf of French but I could not disabuse their minds and I was beaten. It was my defeat that induced my friends to make me Clerk of the House of Representatives in 1854 as a sort of compensation or consolation prize.”¹

Mr. John A. Kasson, although a New Englander, had spent six years in law practice in St. Louis, 1851-57, before coming to Iowa (hence his prior preference for Judge Bates for President in 1860). His political sagacity and capacity for generalship were so soon exhibited that in 1858, he was made chairman of the Republican State Central Committee. In the gubernatorial canvass of 1859 he planned an extended itinerary for Kirkwood in the counties of southern Iowa and writing him July 18th, about the pitfalls to be avoided and local prejudices to be dealt with, he advised: “You are doubtless informed that the population of the southern tier [of counties] generally, commencing with Davis and Wapello and west, embrace people from southern Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, some from Kentucky and Maryland, a few from Tennessee. . . . Those people are generally scared at the idea of abolitionism, particularly in Davis, Appanoose, Decatur and Wayne. It will be well for you to run your Maryland birth a little down there and to pitch into Democracy, the real agitators of the slavery question who have thrust it upon the country perpetually since 1844, and have refused to leave it quiet in any part of the country not even north of 36:30.”²

Six months later the correspondent of Horace Greeley's *Tribune* writing from Des Moines (Jan. 9, 1860) concerning

¹ Interview with Mr. Nourse, *Ibid.*

² The citations above and others subsequently given unless otherwise stated are to be found chiefly in MSS., correspondence, memoranda and newspaper files in the Aldrich Collections of the State Historical Department at Des Moines.

Governor Kirkwood's Inaugural Address, a copy of which he had secured in advance of the delivery, observes: "His remarks on the John Brown matter are satisfactory and are all that could be expected from a Marylander by birth; a Democrat by association up to 1854, and a successful canvasser before the people. . . . His sentiments, I think, are reflective of the tone of feeling in the northwest in the Republican party."

4. *Smouldering Fires in 1857-1858.*

In the Constitutional Convention of 1857, the irritation and suspicions incident to Know-Nothingism, smouldered and on occasion blazed out. Members charged each other with adherence to its creed and with being beneficiaries of its propaganda. It is clear from the debates that the local groups or lodges were then inclined to affiliate or fuse as readily with the Democrats as with the Republicans, depending upon local conditions. When the Committee reported Article 3 on "Right of Suffrage," recommending almost no change in the preliminary residence required, Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke urged that the time be increased from six months to one year in the State and from twenty days to six months in the county. In his speech, we find a distinct echo of Senator Harlan's well known views. "Within the next ten years," he said, "it is more than probable that we shall have an influx of population into our State of those who have no interest with our people, and who will leave us when the public works [R. R.'s] are completed, which induced them to come here. If the members of this Convention desire to place the people of this State at the mercy of this class of population, well and good; they can do so. But I do not mean that it shall be done with my consent."¹ The first proposal was rejected; the vote, however, was not recorded; the second was lost by a close vote of 11 to 12.²

In the campaign of 1857, the Republicans, either because they deemed it safe and harmless, or were forced to screw their courage up to the sticking-point, squinted at the demands of the foreign citizens. Their platform contained some masterly generalities to the effect that "the spirit of our institutions as well as the constitution of our Country

¹ *Debates*, vol. II, p. 864.

² *Ibid.*, p. 868.

guarantee liberty of conscience and equality of rights," and they explicitly declare their opposition to "all legislation impairing their security."¹ In a practical way, they exhibited their solicitude by nominating Mr. Oran Faville as their candidate for first lieutenant-governor under the new Constitution, as a "compliment" due the many estimable foreign citizens in the party in the State. But despite their anxious care, the thing would not down. In Burlington, the election went "disastrously" for the Republicans. No less a notable than the brilliant Fitz Henry Warren was defeated in his candidacy for the legislature, because Judge Stockton wrote Clarke, "The Americans generally voted the Democratic ticket. This was caused in part by having a German on the ticket and by a great lukewarmness on the part of our friends."

In his last message to the General Assembly, in January, 1858, Governor Grimes urged the passage of a law for the registration of voters to protect the ballot box and to preserve the "elective franchise in its purity." He closed his recommendation with these significant observations: "With such a law, and with the strict and honest enforcement of the naturalization laws, we shall cease to see parties arrayed against each other on account of the birthplace of those who compose them, and every *bona fide* citizen will be secure in his just weight in the affairs of state. Without such a law, judging from recent events, it is feared that popular elections will become a reproach." The effort to secure a registration law was fruitless. The measure introduced was apparently very mild; "the odious section" (No. 13) merely required the naturalized citizen when challenged, to exhibit his papers to the Judges of Election. Its effect, however, would have been unequal. The opposition was intense. The passage of the bill was defeated under the leadership of D. A. Mahoney of Dubuque, who resorted to the desperate procedure of having the opponents leave the House of Representatives in a body, thus breaking a quorum.² In their platform that year, the Republicans were discreet—that is, silent. They denounced

¹ Fairall, *Ib.*, p. 44.

² See account of *The Herald* of Dubuque, September 21, 1859.

the Buchanan administration, the "infamous Lecompton Constitution" and with perfect abandon, insisted upon economy in the State administration and liberal appropriations for internal improvements.¹

The smouldering fires of discontent and suspicion, however, did not subside. Smoke was everywhere and flashes and spurts of flame were seen. Far inland, among the towns and settlements along the Cedar, Iowa, Skunk, Des Moines and Raccoon rivers, Know-Nothingism or antipathy to the foreign born was the animus of much discussion. The open advocacy of exclusion or of severe restrictions upon their political privileges was manifest although the expediency of avowing the purpose was felt to be doubtful. The two parties tacked and veered, each charging the other with subterranean alliances and fell designs. In Boone, Hamilton and Webster counties, the air was split with exploding charges and counter charges thrown by the highly suspicious patriots. The press bristled with such gracious references as "bog trotters," and "whiskey bruisers," "wooden shoes," and "beer guzzlers." "Freedom to the Nigger," and "Begone you dog!" to the foreigner were twin phrases that the Democratic press rang the changes on with great gusto.² "It is the same sentiment," continues the address to our "Adopted Citizen" that "gives a negro a vote in Connecticut and tramples your brethren in the dust for twenty-one years. For shame!"³

¹ Fairall, *Ib.*, pp. 46-47.

² *Ft. Dodge Sentinel*, September, 4, 1858.

³ *Ft. Dodge Sentinel*, September 4, 1858. The following, purporting to be a letter signed, "A Foreigner," is reproduced from the *Sentinel* of October 9th. It illustrates not a little of the method and substance of political discussion in the inland counties in 1858. The editor was the late John F. Duncombe:

IRISHMEN! GERMANS!
FOREIGNERS OF WHATEVER NAME
OR NATION!
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE FOLLOWING
INSULT TO YOU?

The Boonesboro *News*, the ablest Republican paper published in this Judicial District, in commenting upon the speech of Mr. Elwood, our Democratic Candidate for Attorney General, uses the following language: "Is not the Negro Race as capable of exercising the right of suffrage as the hordes of Foreigners, which yearly land upon our shores; and is not their right as good . . . Where can a more ignorant degraded set of beings be found than nine-tenths of our foreign population, and yet they are placed upon the scale of equality with the native citizen, both politically and socially."

We ask *any foreigner* after being called "Bog Trotters and Whiskey Bruisers" by the *Hamilton Freeman* which was fully endorsed by the late

This backfiring and bushwhacking took place in the western parts of the northern, or second Congressional District, comprehending nearly two-thirds of the State. That year the Republican congressional candidate was Wm. Vandever of Dubuque, who from 1856 to 1859 was pelted with the charge that he had joined a Know-Nothing Lodge in Dubuque, in 1856, becoming an officer thereof.¹ Evidently he suffered a change of heart, due either to deliberation or discretion or discipline, for French, Germans, Irish and Swiss swarmed in Dubuque. The suspicions of the Germans of Davenport, however, were not wholly allayed by his discreet and favorable utterances, for one of their most distinguished representatives, Hans Reimer Claussen, a one-time member of the German Parliament, demanded a more specific statement from Mr. Vandever. On September 8, 1858, he submitted and asked replies to the following questions:

“1. Are you willing, when a member of Congress, vigorously and with all your power to oppose any attempt to change the laws of Naturalization so as to extend the time of probation?”

“2. As any legislative measures which prevent a naturalized citizen, after his naturalization for a certain length of time from voting, are equivalent to the extension of the time of probation, are you willing to act for or against such measures?”

Mr. Vandever forthwith replied (September 11th) explicitly: “In reply I have to say that I am content with the period now prescribed by law for the naturalization of persons of foreign birth, and were I a member of Congress, I should not hesitate to oppose any effort that might be made to extend the time.

County Convention in a resolution which was offered by the Hon. C. C. Carpenter. . . . Can you do it *Irishmen*? Can you do it *Germans*? Can you do it *Norwegians*? Can you do it *Swedes*? Will you lick the dust from the feet of your Tyrants? . . . Arouse! Awake! & &

(Signed) A Foreigner.

An examination of the files of *The Freeman* does not disclose any such statement as *The Sentinel* refers to. Mr. Aldrich informs the writer that it was not uncommon for his partizan critics in those days to suffer from delusions that induced them to assume that he must have said or probably would say sundry things alleged against him.

¹ *The Herald* of Dubuque, September 18, 1859, and the *Mississippi Valley Register*, of Guttenberg, May 26, 1859.

“In reply to the other inquiry, I have to say that I deem it peculiarly a subject for state legislation, but I am free to confess that when admitted to citizenship, I know of no reason why a man should be subjected to further probation as a qualification for voting. I certainly would not discriminate in this particular, between citizens of native and citizens of foreign birth.”¹

5. *The Blaze over the Massachusetts Law.*

The inattention of the Republicans in 1858 respecting the status of foreign born citizens was not permitted in 1859. The subject loomed up so suddenly and hugely that neither leaders nor party managers were allowed to dodge or hedge or take to the woods. The Republicans of Massachusetts had by legislative act, proposed to increase the limitations upon electoral privileges of foreigners by adding two years to the probationary period. The prominence of Massachusetts in the Nation's affairs immediately made the measure a matter of keen national interest. Iowa was then or later fondly called “The Massachusetts of the West,” because of the prominence of New Englanders and Puritanic principles in the State.

The Republican press of the middle and western States seems at first to have maintained silence as regards the enactment. In March a German, “An Iowa Farmer and True Republican,” having looked “in vain” for “disapprovement of such a breach of plighted faith,” and fearful that such silence meant approval wrote Greeley's *Tribune* protesting against the “unjust illiberal and offending conduct of the party in New England.” He was not unmindful of the evils in elections and favored a “good registry law” based upon “strict equality” of treatment of foreign born. He urged that the naturalization period be reduced to three years but that the right to vote be withheld for two years. He did not blame the party for what was done in one State, but New Jersey was then apparently about to follow Massachusetts and “we have cause for suspicion” that the Republican party

¹ For the letters of Messrs. Claussen and Vandever quoted above the writer is indebted to Dr. August P. Richter, now and for many years past editor of *Der Demokrat* of Davenport. Dr. Richter's kindness and painstaking in the recovery of data in response to inquiries are but scantily acknowledged in this brief note.

“everywhere might attempt to treat us in the same manner as long as we hear not a single voice in our defense.” He declares that “Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, New York and perhaps Pennsylvania can be counted Republican through the strength of the German Republican vote.” If the Republicans think that they can ignore the just claims of the Germans “I will only remind them of the fact that Caesar’s legions were smashed in the woods of Germany.” His vigorous letter drew an editorial on “Naturalization and Voting” from Greeley who denied that the law of Massachusetts was arbitrary in purpose: it was “based on a sound principle but wrong in going further than the principle requires.” The *Tribune* concurred in the writer’s suggestion of naturalization after three and electoral privileges after five years.¹

Meantime the Germans of Iowa all along the Mississippi were aroused and became belligerent. They proceeded aggressively to discover and to expose the attitude of the Republicans towards the policy of the party in Massachusetts. They exhibited alike, good tactics and good strategy. Their reconnaissance in April took the form of a letter to the Congressional leaders. Three interrogatories were addressed to them which in substance were (1) Were they in favor of the laws of Naturalization then in force and opposed to all extension of the probation time; (2) Was it the duty of Republicans to “war upon each and every discrimination that may be attempted between the native born and adopted citizens, as to right of suffrage; and (3) Did they condemn the late action of the Republicans in the Massachusetts Legislature?² The prominent signers were Mr. John Bittman and Dr. Carl Hillguertner of Dubuque, Messrs. Theodore Alshausen, Theodore Guelich and Henry Lischer, of Davenport, and others of Burlington, Ft. Madison and Keokuk.

Senator Grimes first responded (April 30th) declaring concisely, the measure of Massachusetts “false and dangerous

¹ *N. Y. Tribune* (w.), April 16, 1859. For the citations given in the paragraph the writer is indebted to Mr. John F. Schee of Indianola, who courteously granted him permission to examine his file of the weekly *Tribune*.

² See Salter’s *Grimes*, pp. 119-120.

in principle" and condemning it "without equivocation or reserve." Senator Harlan's reply (May 2nd) was an extended discussion of the matter in issue.¹ His letter was reprinted in broadside for general distribution, the author mindful, no doubt, that his re-election to the Senate would be a matter of lively public interest in January, 1860. Colonel S. R. Curtis of Keokuk responded (May 13th) at considerable length, but plumply saying "as to two years additional probation, I am utterly opposed to it." Mr. Vandever, answering (May 21st) was no less explicit, being opposed to any action adverse to the rights of adopted citizens under the laws then in force, and deploring the action of Massachusetts. He called attention to his letter to Mr. H. R. Claussen, written in 1858. It is not insignificant here that Abraham Lincoln's letter¹ (May 17th) to Theodore Canisius of Illinois was reprinted in *Der Demokrat* of Davenport, in which he expressed himself in clear, strong terms upon this issue, saying, "as I understand the Massachusetts provision, I am against its adoption in Illinois or in any other place where I have a right to oppose it."²

Meantime, Mr. John A. Kasson, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, who always could quickly distinguish a hawk from a handsaw realized the danger to Republican supremacy in Iowa imminent in the intense, belligerent feelings of the Germans and had acted. He and his confreres of the committee made public a resolution adopted by them April 18th, refusing all countenance to the Massachusetts law and repudiating the principles thereby exemplified.³ Among the co-signers with Mr. Kasson, were Mr. Nicholas J. Rusch, a prominent German of Davenport, and Mr. Thomas Seeley of Guthrie county, already referred to, all three being members of Iowa's Republican Delegation at Chicago the following year.

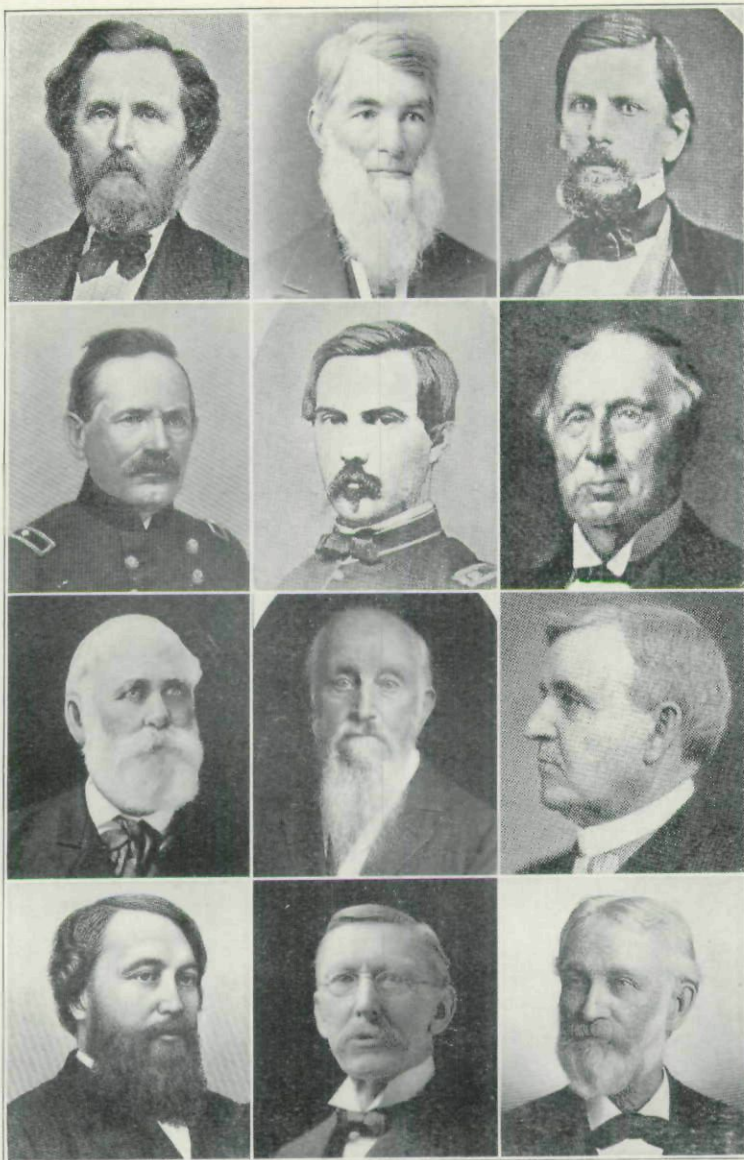
This unanimity of opposition among the foremost Republicans to the movement in Massachusetts, did not allay the suspicions of all Germans nor did it meet with uniform endorse-

¹ *Burlington Hawk-eye*, May 11, 1859.

² *Der Demokrat*, May 25, 1859; all of the letters referred to in the paragraph above were published therein on the same or previous dates.

³ *The Guardian*, Independence, May 5, 1859.

INFLUENTIAL REPUBLICAN EDITORS OF IOWA 1856-1860.



JAMES B. HOWELL*
THE GATE CITY, Keokuk

JOHN TEESDALE*
IOWA STATE REGISTER,
Des Moines

CLARK DUNHAM*
THE HAWK-EYE, Burlington

JOHN EDWARDS*
THE PATRIOT, Chariton

THOMAS DRUMMOND*
THE EAGLE, Vinton

A. B. F. HILDRETH
THE INTELLIGENCER, St.
Charles

WM. W. JUNKIN*
THE LEDGER, Fairfield

ADDISON H. SAUNDERS
DAILY GAZETTE, Daven-
port

JOHN MAHIN
THE JOURNAL, Muscatine

FRANK W. PALMER
THE TIMES, Dubuque

JACOB RICH
THE GUARDIAN, Independ-
ence

CHARLES ALDRICH
THE HAMILTON FREEMAN,
Webster City

* Deceased.

ment among the Republicans. A bitter not to say virulent discussion was precipitated, that did not end until the close of the campaign in the Fall. In the first place, as the Democratic press was alert and prompt to point out, the action of the State Central Committee was adversely regarded by many Republican editors, *The Oskaloosa Herald* declaring that "the Committee have usurped its authority, and by its late pronouncement, compromises the Republican party of Iowa."¹ Simultaneously with the disapproval of the action of Massachusetts, such influential papers as *The Hamilton Freeman*, *The Muscatine Journal*, *The Vinton Eagle*² and *The Independence Guardian*, were advocating a Registration law which the foreign born citizens knew was aimed chiefly at them. In addition to these irritating causes, Senator Harlan's letter contained not a little that aroused criticism and recrimination. Instead of replying briefly to Messrs. Hillguertner, Alshausen *et al*, Senator Harlan discussed at length the general considerations involved, the evils of unrestricted immigration and the grave dangers possible in the future. More than this, he dealt with the problem of negro slavery as well as with the problem of naturalization and electoral privileges. One can find little or nothing in his discussion of the subject against which objection will lie on abstract or philosophical grounds. He was lucid, forceful and conservative and considerate of pros and cons, both as to the future and the present. There were evils and Congress and the States must some time deal with them. Nevertheless, he concluded by rejection of the action of Massachusetts. Still his letter brought upon him sharp rejoinders. The immediate cause, doubtless, was the fact that he was Iowa's senior Senator, whose term of office was about to expire, and he had already achieved fame at Washington. Further he was prominent in the Methodist church, a factor of no mean power in politics. The immediate causes of the debate his letter produced were the adverse inferences his critics could easily draw from his philosophical generalities. All persons "who possessed requisite virtue and intelligence" should be permitted to vote; but it was "very

¹ Quoted in *The Express and Herald*, Dubuque, May 8, 1859.

² *The Express and Herald*, May 1, 1859.

difficult to establish a standard": "yet the latter object can be partially attained by indirection." He refers to "the mass of foreigners" and "mendicants, vagrants and criminals" that come with them. The rules of "restriction should be general" but "the length of the probationary residence must ever remain an open question"; for his mind's eye foresaw a time when "our relations with the hordes of Asia" might result in an immigration of a "crude population of millions," sufficient, if admitted to citizenship, to inundate our cities, and eastern and western States.¹

The criticisms of Mr. J. B. Dorr, editor of *The Herald* of Dubuque, were perhaps typical of those in the Democratic press. He commented caustically upon the generalities of Mr. Harlan's argument. If the matter should be treated as an "open question" and the best results were to be obtained by "indirection" he necessarily squinted favorably upon the measures of Know-Nothingism. "They [the Republicans] endeavor first by the false cry of 'nigger, nigger' to enlist against the Democracy the free white sons of Europe and when the Democratic party is put down they then turn round and call their allies 'mendicants, vagabonds and criminals' as Senator Harlan does. Nor is this all, but they proscribe them and place above them in political rights the greasy runaway negroes from southern plantations as Republican Massachusetts does."²

Perhaps the most telling arraignment of the Republicans against the Massachusetts law was put forth in a letter of Col. Louis Schade of Burlington and widely published.³ He pointed out that the American party in the south and the Republican party in the north had the same warp and woof in their makeup, that the *N. Y. Tribune* had then but recently said that it would "heartily and zealously support" for president "one like John Bell, Edward Bates, or John M. Botts," well-known "chiefs of Know-Nothingism," that the Repub-

¹ The writer is indebted to Dr. G. E. Thode of Burlington for a copy of Senator Harlan's letter as it appeared in *The Hawk-eye*, May 11, 1859.

² *The Herald*, Dubuque, May 13, 1859.

³ *The Weekly Iowa State Reporter*, Iowa City, June 8, 1859, and *The Herald*, Dubuque, May 31st; some portions are omitted in the latter. Colonel Schade was later for nearly thirty years editor of the Washington (D. C.) *Sentinel*.

licans and Americans or Know-Nothings of New Jersey and New York in 1858 had made agreements to extend the probationary period and he cites Horace Greeley's approval. He then pays his respects to the letter of Mr. Harlan "Republican Senator, Bishop of the Methodist church *in spe*, some years ago a good Know-Nothing¹ and also a Negro Equality Apostle" whose references to the "mass" of foreigners, "mendicants," etc., and "Asiatics" arouse his ire. The Yankee and his blue laws, his Puritanism and Pharasaism receive his finest scorn. The "Maine law" he observes "like everything intolerant and despotic originated in New England. . . . The Republican party was started in New England, the brains, shoulders and head of the party are in New England. What New England commands the Republicans of other States obey."² He says pointedly that an ignorant negro after one year's residence in Massachusetts could cast his ballot, but a residence of seven years would be required of a Carl Schurz.

These arguments of *The Herald* and Colonel Schade were given added pith and point by the spread of a substantial rumor in May that plans were under way in some of the northern States to people the unsettled counties of northwestern Iowa with negroes, emigrants and refugees from the south. Fat was added to the flames when a Republican alderman of Keokuk flippantly asserted that "he would rather see Iowa colonized by negroes than by . . . Dutch and Irish."³

The alignment and morale of the Democrats were thrown into confusion, however, by a heavy rear fire from their own ranks and from the national citadel itself. Lewis Cass, Secretary of State, on May 17th, had written Felix Le Clerc of Tennessee, that naturalization in this country would not "exempt" him from claims of France for unfulfilled military service avoided by his emigration should he return to his

¹ Colonel Schade refers to a common charge that in 1856 at Dubuque Senator Harlan was initiated in a Know-Nothing lodge along with Wm. Vandever. See *The Herald*, Dubuque, on editorial page, May 26, 1856. Reasserted September 18th, in editorial on "German Republicans of Iowa and Wisconsin." The writer has seen neither denial nor proof of the charge.

² "What Massachusetts does is felt from the Atlantic to the Pacific," Carl Schurz on *True and False Americanism*, an address delivered in Faneuil Hall, Boston, April 18, 1859. See *N. Y. Tribune* (w.), April 30th.

³ *The Herald*, May 26, 1859, following of *The Keokuk Journal*.

native land.¹ The dismay and fury of the anti-administration Democrats was great indeed, for *The Herald* exclaimed that the "worst Know-Nothing in the country never conceived of a depth of humiliation for the naturalized citizen equal to that proposed by Gen. Cass as the organ of the Administration," and in most peremptory terms Mr. Dorr demanded the summary dismissal of Cass from the cabinet. With this protest, a call for a county Democratic convention was issued and the anti-administration forces asked to convene with a view to prevent an endorsement of Buchanan's administration at the approaching State Democratic Convention. The Le Clerc letter aroused the Germans as well as the French. Secretary Cass was bombarded with inquiries and protests. His letter of June 14th, to Mr. A. V. Hofer of Cincinnati, and his instructions to Minister Wright at Berlin (July 8th), in which he said the American government would protect naturalized citizens against all adverse claims arising subsequent to emigration were eagerly declared by the Democrats to be a "back down" on the part of the administration.² A close scrutiny of the two letters, however, shows that there was no inconsistency and no modification of Secretary Cass' first announcement—a view which was originally set forth by Wheaton and incorporated in the Bancroft treaty of 1868 with Germany, and to-day governs the diplomacy and foreign relations of the United States.³

In the midst of the discussion the people were afforded an illustration of the practical significance to Iowa's foreign born citizens, of Secretary Cass' declaration of national policy. There was published a summons received by Mr. Frederick A. Gniffke, then as now editor of *Der National Demokrat* of Dubuque issued by the royal court of his native city of Dantzic citing him to appear in person before said tribunal for trial on the charge of avoiding military service, the summons further declaring that in case of non-appearance the investi-

¹ Ibid, June 16, 1859.

² Ibid, and *N. Y. Tribune* (w.), July 30th. The American Minister at Berlin was Joseph Wright, brother of Geo. G. Wright, then Chief Justice of Iowa.

³ Moore's *Digest of International Law*, Vol. III, contains the Le Clerc letter, p. 588, and the Hofer letter, pp. 572-573.

gation and decision would be "proceeded with *in contumacium*."¹

6. *The Campaign of 1859.*

Notwithstanding the gross faults, misconduct and internal discord of the Democratic party with respect to its national administration the Republicans of Iowa prepared with anxiety for the campaign of 1859. There were grave reasons for alarm. The administration of Governor Lowe, or rather the general developments just preceding and during his term, were not satisfactory. It began with commotion over a serious scandal in the location of the capitol site in Des Moines. There had been scandalous mismanagement and perversion of the school funds in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Multitudinous grief prevailed in the affairs of the Des Moines Navigation Company that aroused fierce animosities among the land claimants along the river. The air was split with charges of corruption in the location and construction of the Insane Hospital at Mt. Pleasant. The reformers of the party under the pressure of "progressive" ideas had augmented appropriations beyond income and a deficit or debt above the constitutional limit loomed up. So obviously haphazard and expensive was the State's financial administration that the Republicans confessed judgment. The legislature provided for a Commission of three to investigate and report upon the condition of affairs and recommend beneficial reforms. Of the three appointed by Governor Lowe, Messrs. John A. Kasson and Thomas Seeley were the party's members, the former being chairman. The dissatisfaction arising from the party's financial administration was intensified by the general industrial distress then prevalent as a result of the excessive speculation in private and public local improvements that collapsed with the panic of 1857.

Plus their financial worries the Republicans were anxious over "moral issues." The Germans were aroused by the action of Massachusetts and irritated by the restrictions of the enfeebled "Maine law." The Democrats in their State platform flatly declared the prohibitory law "unjust and burdensome in its operation and wholly useless in the sup-

¹ *The Express and Herald*, Dubuque, June 16, 1859.

pression of intemperance," and demanded its repeal. But the Republican party leaders knew that they dare not capitulate to such demands for they had already aroused the disgust of the extreme advocates of prohibition and further retrocession would cause a revolt among the militant Baptists, Christians, Congregationalists, Methodists and Quakers such as nearly defeated John H. Gear in 1877 in his first race for governor. Finally on the subject of slavery the party confronted many pitfalls. Although the outrages in Nebraska and Kansas had served their purposes well, from 1854 to 1858 there was a lull in the public indignation. There were many signs of reaction. Commercial interests were crying out against further agitation. The southerners in Iowa were as certain to balk at abolitionism as at the extension of slavery and they wanted to believe and for the most part inclined to make themselves believe that the matter could be dealt with as Stephen A. Douglas contended. Perhaps a sign of this feeling was the defeat of Mr. J. B. Grinnell in his contest for renomination to the State Senate in 1859. He had drafted the original address of the Republicans to the voters of Iowa in 1856. He was conspicuous as an abolitionist. The Democrats conceded that he was a man of "decided talents and energy." His defeat was therefore pronounced by them a rebuke to abolitionism.¹ It is clear that turn which way they would the Republicans were between Scylla and Charybdis.

The Democrats still felt that Iowa was normally within their own domain and its reconquest was a matter of more than local interest. Buchanan's administration at Washington and Douglas, no less, were earnestly desirous of regaining the State for their gubernatorial candidate. Plans were carefully laid. The strongest man was picked—Augustus C. Dodge of Burlington. He had represented Iowa in Congress for eighteen years, twelve of which were in the Senate. The movement to make him the Democratic candidate was coincident with the termination of his residence at the court of Madrid as our Minister to Spain. Knowing the intimate relations of the Dodges with chiefs of Buchanan's administra-

¹ See *The Herald*, Dubuque, August 5, 1859.

tion we may well suspect concert and pre-arrangement at Washington. The earnest, set purpose of the Democrats may be inferred from the charge commonly made and believed by the Republican leaders that a sum approximating \$30,000 had been raised chiefly in Washington and in Wall street, wherewith to carry the Democratic ticket in Iowa in 1859.

The Republicans realized the seriousness of the situation and they went about vigorously to deal with it. Governor R. P. Lowe desired a second term and normally would have had a second nomination accorded him, but the leaders knew that the struggle was to tax their party strength to the utmost. They therefore set him aside and chose Samuel J. Kirkwood, who had lived in Iowa but four years. Although at the time an unpretentious farmer and miller near Iowa City, and incidentally a State Senator, he had been a leader in central Ohio a few years before and here immediately demonstrated that he was a man of extraordinary mental and moral potency in public affairs, an adroit canvasser and a profound and straightforward reasoner. Governor Grimes regarded Kirkwood as the strongest all-round man in point of mental ability moral courage and physical endurance, in meeting the rigorous exigencies of campaigning in Iowa. The Convention "cordially" approved the action of the State Central Committee relative to the Massachusetts law and made a similar declaration. As an earnest of their sincerity Senator Nicholas J. Rusch of Davenport, who had worked in the legislature for the modification of the Maine law was nominated for lieutenant-governor. At that time he spoke English with marked difficulty and the critical partizan press had much sport over the fact. A paper in central Iowa with American notions which, in the main, supported the "plow handle" ticket¹ but could not stomach his candidacy, declared that Mr. Rusch "would not have received a nomination if it had not been for the course recently taken by Massachusetts in relation to the naturalization of foreigners. His nomination was made the salve to heal the wounded feelings

¹ Messrs. Kirkwood and Rusch were farmers and much was made of the fact at the barbecues and rallies.

of his countrymen in this State. His nomination was demanded as a condition of their future fidelity."¹

The debates of the ensuing campaign were sharp and strenuous. The Republicans were buffeted with charges of Abolitionism and Know-Nothingism, corruption and paternalism and recreancy to temperance. Kirkwood was charged with being a "renegade from the dark lantern fraternity" still tainted with the vices of Know-Nothingism.² The discussion of the temperance question became positively vicious in its virulence; not even the State's representatives in the United States senate were exempt from gross attack. The junior Senator was openly charged with being the owner of a beer garden in Burlington³ and the senior Senator was flouted as "the mighty Ajax of the Maine law" with the assertion made on the stump that he was found imbibing in a saloon in Des Moines at the Republican State Convention.⁴ An instructive illustration of the ticklish conditions that exasperated and taxed the wits of party leaders may be given. The incident occurred at the opening of the campaign. A Reverend Mr. Jocelyn, a Methodist minister, had been engaged to deliver a series of lectures, sermons or speeches upon temperance before the congregations of churches or members of temperance organizations in central Iowa roundabout Des Moines. He evidently viewed the prospects with a gloomy eye, and with reason. The reaction which follows drastic sumptuary legislation such as the Maine law had set in strong. The open as well as the surreptitious violation of the statute was increasing. Public sentiment in its favor was waning and its opponents were gaining ground. Vigorous defensive measures were clearly imperative as Mr. Jocelyn regarded the situation, and he spoke out with vigor, carrying the war into Africa. He attacked the candidacy of Nicholas J. Rusch, who being a German, was a representative of the population that especially protested against the prohibitory law. Mr. Jocelyn was quoted as saying that he "would

¹ *Weekly Iowa Visitor*, Indianola, July 7, 1859. For this citation the writer is indebted to Mr. Jas. M. Knox, of Des Moines.

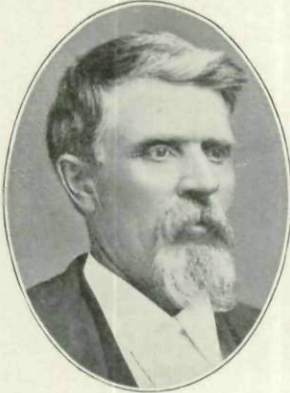
² *The Herald*, Dubuque, July 21, 1859.

³ *Iowa Weekly State Reporter*, June 8, 1859.

⁴ *The Herald*, Dubuque, September 14, 1859.

SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES.

CHICAGO CONVENTION, MAY 16-18, 1860



J. F. BROWN, Lawyer
JOHN W. THOMPSON, State Senator
MICAJAH BAKER, Lawyer

W. A. WARREN, Merchant
BENJAMIN RECTOR, Lawyer
E. G. BOWDOIN, Lawyer

rather vote for the most ultra-slavery propagandist than to vote for Rusch." His hard hitting had immediate effect. The Republican leaders both local and State became alarmed for grumbling and threats were heard among the faithful. The queries and rejoinders were: "Are Methodists to cut the ticket? We will make it *cut both ways*. If you cut Rusch we cut *Methodist*." The latter meant Senator Harlan. His friends were informed that if Mr. Jocelyn was not stopped the friends of the ticket supporting Mr. Rusch would fight Senator Harlan's re-election the following January.

The Republicans in all their party history in Iowa have probably waged no more vigorous campaign than they conducted in 1859. They had a phalanx of effective speakers, energetic workers and shrewd managers, many of whom afterwards gained interstate and national fame and some international distinction.¹ Their work was aggressive and well organized. They had a cause that was worthy of their enthusiasm. The aggressions of the Slavocrats both in and out of Congress "the unparalleled profligacy of the [national] administration, the enormous increase of expenditures from forty odd to over eighty million per annum and the consequent hard times"² under which the people were laboring made Buchanan's regime odious in the north, and discord sundered the strength of the Democrats in the State. Despite all these favoring conditions Kirkwood's majority was less than 3,000 in an aggregate vote of 110,048. Grimes' majority of 1,823 in 1854 represented a margin of advantage of 4.1 per cent. of the total vote, while Kirkwood's majority of 2,964 gave him a surplus of only 2.6 per cent. of the aggregate vote cast.

¹ Among the leaders earnestly supporting Kirkwood were Senators Harlan and Grimes, Messrs. Fitz Henry Warren, Samuel F. Miller, Timothy Davis and James Thorington, Francis Springer and Hiram Price, James B. Howell, Clark Dunham, John Teesdale and John Mahin, Addison H. Saunders, F. W. Palmer, Charles Aldrich, Jacob Rich and A. B. F. Hildreth, Col. Alvin Saunders, Wm. H. Seevers and James F. Wilson, Josiah B. Grinnell, Judge Wm. Smyth, Eliphalet Price and Reuben Noble, Samuel R. Curtis, Wm. Vandever, Charles C. Nourse and John A. Kasson, Grenville M. Dodge, Caleb Baldwin, Ed Wright and C. C. Carpenter, Henry O'Conner and Jacob Butler, Joseph M. Beck, John W. Noble and John W. Rankin, Henry Strong, George W. McCrary and Hawkins Taylor, Moses M. Coid, R. L. B. Clarke and James W. McDill, George G. Wright, Henry P. Scholte and James B. Weaver, N. D. Carpenter and N. M. Hubbard, John Edwards, S. A. Rice, W. P. Hepburn and William Loughridge, A. W. Hubbard and H. Clay Caldwell, William Penn Clarke and Coker F. Clarkson, John H. Gear and William B. Allison.

² Senator Harlan's letter last cited.

7. *The Conditions of Republican Success for 1860.*

In the immediate clinch and tug of politics it is not necessarily the merits of one's case or the justice of his cause that is decisive in securing the immediate favor of political leaders and party managers but rather the amount of trouble one can make or seem to threaten. Their power for immediate good or ill depends upon the ratios of two conditions: first the degree of balance or equipollence between the major parties, and second, the degree of co-ordination or unity found within each party's separate alignment. In 1855 the Democratic platform observed that the Republican party of Iowa was made up of "discordant elements." The assertion as we have seen was true when made and it was largely true in 1859-60. Holding their supremacy by a narrow margin of excess popular support Iowa's delegates at Chicago knew full well that Abolitionism, Know-Nothingism and Prohibitionism were subjects of very high potential, to be let alone so far as practicable if their party was to win a victory in the State in the ensuing campaign. Moreover they were like surly dogs not less dangerous because asleep or drowsy-eyed.

Before 1860 Know-Nothingism was an exploded fallacy and its methods or tactics but little approved or followed. The American party was also a moribund body made up chiefly of "dry hearts and dead weights" as the late Carl Schurz hit them off. Nevertheless, in January, 1860, native anti-foreign prejudices were still so pronounced in Iowa or the memories of the old controversies and old suspicions so much in mind that the Republican Convention of Scott county in selecting their delegates to the State Convention in Des Moines that was to pick the delegates to Chicago paid careful attention to racial animosities and considerations. In the description of the county delegation five were reported as Germans, including Lieutenant-Governor Rusch; five were listed as Americans of which Mr. John W. Thompson was one; and three were given as Irish.¹ In the Convention at Des Moines we shall find that marked consideration was given to those important factional potentialities. It was well, too. In Feb-

¹ *Davenport Gazette*, quoted in the *Daily Journal* of Muscatine, January 6, 1861.

ruary the remnants of the party sent Mr. William L. Toole, of Mt. Pleasant, an influential pioneer citizen of Iowa as a delegate to Washington where the Americans formulated the manifesto that constituted the ground work whereon was built the Constitutional Union party which nominated Bell and Everett in May following,¹—a ticket that perplexed the party leaders in Iowa in the ensuing campaign. Later in March, it was in Scott county that originated the movement that had some part, and there is reason to suspect a major part, in thwarting the well laid plans of Horace Greeley of *The Tribune* and the Blairs of Maryland and Missouri.

The political conditions in Iowa on the eve of the great contest of 1860 have been described with what may seem undue detail with a view to demonstrating four facts:

First, The political conditions in Iowa in 1860 were like those obtaining in what were called the "battle ground States," viz.: New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Illinois.

Second, Neither Horace Greeley's assertion (February 8, 1860) that like Ohio, Michigan and Minnesota, Iowa was "Republican anyhow," nor Senator Harlan's declaration at Washington (February 12th) that Iowa was "strong enough to carry *any good man*," was warranted; but on the contrary the statement of *The New York Herald* (March 7th) that "The States which the Republicans consider doubtful in the ensuing campaign are Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana and New Jersey. The delegates, then, from these States hold a balance of power . . ."—was more nearly the correct forecast.

Third, In view of the narrow majority by which the Republicans of Iowa held control of the State and the pronounced inability of the party by reason of the bitter animosities of abolitionists and negro-phobists, the sharp antagonisms of foreigners and natives, the antipathies of Catholics and Protestants, and the contentiousness of the advocates and opponents of radical temperance legislation, the nomination of a candidate for President whose character or career would irritate or inflame those prejudices—prejudices in some cases

¹ See *N. Y. Herald*, February 21, 1860.

so deep set that as Kirkwood put it in February, 1860, "fire would not burn" them out—such a nomination would have been unwise in the extreme.

Fourth, If the foregoing conclusions are well-founded then Grimes' advice to Wm. Penn Clarke in 1856, viz.: "We cannot elect Mr. Seward or any other old politician against whom there are old chronic prejudices which you know are hard to be conquered. To build up and consolidate a new party we must have men who have not been before the people as politicians"—was equally sound on May 18, 1860.

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA,
ADMIRAL OF NEW ENGLAND.

BY REV. WILLIAM SALTER, D. D.

Upon the discovery of America, the new world was divided by the Pope between Portugal and Spain. The first attempt to make a European settlement on the continent was by Portugal in Brazil; the next, by Spain in Cuba, Mexico, and Peru; later, the French came into Canada; afterwards, England attempted to plant colonies on the North Atlantic coast.

In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh, one of the noblest men in British history, fitted out an expedition to the Carolina coast, but, after disastrous chances from Indian hostilities and from famine, the effort to plant a colony there was abandoned. The first permanent English settlement in America was made at Jamestown in 1607. An abortive attempt was made the same year at the mouth of the Kennebec river in Maine.

The hero of the Jamestown colony was Captain John Smith. He had the daring and adventurous spirit of Columbus. What the discoverer of America did for the whole continent at the close of the 15th century, Captain John Smith did for the North Atlantic coast, for Virginia and New England, at the beginning of the 17th century; he opened the way for their settlement by others.

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