



Chairmen of Republican State Convention, Des Moines, Iowa, Jan. 18, 1860.

ED. WRIGHT,
Temporary Chairman.

W. W. HAMILTON,
Permanent Chairman.

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THE REPUBLICAN STATE CONVENTION

DES MOINES, JANUARY 18, 1860.

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At two o'clock, Wednesday afternoon, January 18, 1860, the delegates to the Republican state convention assembled at Sherman's Hall, Third Street and Court Avenue, Des Moines. All contemporary accounts of the convention concur in declaring it the largest in point of numbers held in the State up to that time by the Republican party or by any other party. Both houses of the Legislature had adjourned, as many of its members were accredited delegates. General public interest in the work of the convention was so great that Sherman's Hall was "full to overflowing." For the first time in the history of the Republican party of Iowa its delegates had assembled for the sole purpose of selecting delegates to a national convention of the party.

(a) *The Preliminaries of Organization.*

The convention was called to order by Mr. John A. Kasson, chairman of the state central committee. On behalf of the committee Mr. Kasson nominated for temporary chairman, Mr. Ed Wright of Cedar county—a selection at once fitting and significant. He had been sent to the lower house of the General Assembly in 1856 and soon achieved distinction as a master of the technicalities of parliamentary procedure. Mr. Wright's home was near Springdale, John Brown's rendezvous in eastern Iowa previous to his raid on Harper's Ferry. He was a Quaker or Friend in religious belief. Like most, if not all, Friends, he was an Abolitionist in fact as well as in the-

ory, being a promoter of the Underground Railway.¹ For secretary of the convention *pro tem*, Mr. Geo. A. Hawley, a lawyer of Leon, Decatur county, then quite prominent in the party's councils in Southern Iowa, was nominated. Both nominations were confirmed without opposition.² In these days Mr. Wright would have instructed or entertained or harassed the delegates with a speech, essaying to sound "key-notes" for the ensuing campaign, but the reports indicate nothing of the sort. The work of organization proceeded at once.

In constituting the committees on credentials and on permanent organization, eleven members were named, one from each of the judicial districts of the State. Among the members of the committee on credentials were Col. Alvin Saunders of Mt. Pleasant, and Senator M. L. McPherson of Winterset; and among the committee on permanent organization were Dr. J. C. Walker of Ft. Madison, John Edwards of Chariton, Samuel Merrill of McGregor, and W. P. Hepburn of Marshalltown—delegates who either participated in the convention at Chicago, or who later had distinguished careers in the State.

The committee on credentials found that its task of canvassing the certificates of the delegates or their proxies, even though there were no contesting delegations, was not to be done in a few minutes; and two hours or more were consumed before they completed their work. The convention meanwhile, being indisposed to adjourn, indulged in hilarity and speeches *ex tempore*. Sundry leaders or orators were called upon by their admirers or henchmen—Messrs. Wm. Penn Clarke, James F. Wilson, Jacob Butler, John Edwards, C. C. Nourse, J. B. Grinnell, John A. Kasson, Henry O'Connor and others—some responding, some refusing. One of the speakers and the incidents of his speech were out of the ordinary and illustrate in an interesting fashion some of the phases of the convention.

¹Charles Aldrich in *The Annals of Iowa* (3rd Series) II, 376-386, article on "General Ed Wright."

²*The Daily State Register*, Jan. 19, 1860. In what follows respecting the convention the account of the proceedings in the *Register*, Jan. 19 and 20, is taken unless otherwise stated.

The big chiefs, or those who would venture, had spoken; and intermittent noise and confusion prevailed. There was a moment's lull and some one (the writer suspects the late Charles Aldrich) called, "Johns!" Forthwith a striking figure arose in the fore left corner of the hall and started toward the platform. The convention was silent with astonishment for an instant, and then derisive laughter and shouts burst forth. The prospective speaker was of medium height, solidly built, vigorous of mien and tread, with a fine head firmly set on sturdy shoulders. He had seen sixty winters. Thin grey hair fell in straggling locks on his shoulders and a shaggy, unkempt beard covered his face and throat. His garb consisted of blue "home-made" jeans trousers and blouse that had done yeoman service. The artistic climax of the stranger's habiliments was his headgear. It consisted of a knit cap of blue and white yarn that "ran up to a peak," whence a tassel flared and flirted jauntily with the motion of body and head.

This picturesque figure advanced rapidly to the platform, indifferent to the uproar which his appearance produced, and faced the convention. He was as stalwart as a Sioux. His weatherbeaten features were stern and impassive. His keen grey-blue eyes swept the crowd with a haughty glance. One chronicler, who witnessed the scene, states that his manner strongly suggested "Brown of Ossawatomie." He made no effort to speak, for the shouts increased as the assembly got a full view. He was a veritable backwoodsman and a "sight" indeed. Chairman Wright hammered the table lustily to secure order but in vain. Not knowing the stranger's name and catching the eye of Mr. Charles Aldrich, seated near the edge of the platform, Mr. Wright stepped over to him and asked who "the old chap" was. "Why," came the reply, "that is Father John Johns of Webster county, and if you'll get this infernal mob still enough to hear him, he'll give them a good speech!"

The self-possession, perfect poise and dignity of the stranger, soon brought the delegates back to a proper sense of decorum, and Chairman Wright introduced him. He was a hunter and trapper and withal an itinerant Baptist preacher

of the "Free Will" persuasion, who lived on Skillet creek, near Border Plains, in south central Webster county. He was a Kentuckian by birth and upbringing and an Abolitionist of the militant type—a fact that made his emigration from his native heath expedient, if not imperative. The character and substance of his speech can be but partially indicated. He certainly fulfilled Mr. Aldrich's prediction, as all accounts refer to his effort with decided approval.

He mastered his audience at once. In manner he was serious, almost solemn in delivery. His language was concise, unadorned, pointed. Barbed and nipping words seem to have frequently expressed his thoughts with telling effect. The righteousness of the Republican cause and the party's great opportunity, the iniquities of Slavery and the aggressions of the Slavocrats in Kansas, in the courts and at Washington, the blunders and corruption of "Buck-Hannan's" administration, were the main considerations of his speech. Many of his sharp thrusts elicited rounds of applause.

The impression made by the speaker was somewhat complex and contradictory. Mr. G. H. Jerome, editor of *The Iowa City Republican*, informs his readers that his speech contained some of "the wittiest and quaintest remarks that it has ever been my fortune to hear in any convention. He repeatedly brought down the house."¹ On the other hand Mr. John Mahin writes his readers that the stranger "seemed himself,

¹*The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25, 1860. Correspondence dated Des Moines, Jan. 18.

The account of John Johns and his speech is based upon correspondence and interviews of the writer with Hon. Levi S. Coffin of Fort Dodge, Judge C. C. Nourse, and W. S. Moore of Des Moines, Charles Aldrich, late Curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, and Professor D. R. Dungan of Drake University, a nephew of John Johns; also upon the recollections of Charles Aldrich, published in July, 1892, entitled "Recollections of Rev. John Johns of Webster County," *Iowa Historical Record*, VIII, 321-325; and W. S. Moore's "A Notable Convention," *Iowa State Register*, September 4, 1892, p. 10.

The reader may study the features of John Johns in a reproduction of an old "tin type," taken two or three years after the convention, in a group of "Some of Iowa's Delegates-at-Large" to the Chicago Convention, opposite page 186 of Volume VIII of *The Annals*.

however, to be too earnest and solemn in his opposition to slavery to treat things jocularly, and scarcely indulged in a smile while on the stage.¹

The speech of John Johns was the one dramatic episode of the convention. The subsequent action of the delegates indicates conclusively its striking effect. In the various reports of the proceedings of the convention in the press of the State his speech was the one thing especially mentioned.²

Between four and five o'clock the committee on credentials reported. According to the only published list of the counties represented, there were 406 delegates or their proxies present, representing 78 out of the 99 counties of the State. Had all of the counties sent their quota of delegates there would have been 466 present. In view of the modes and conditions of travel and the time of the year the representation was very large. Iowa City was the western terminus of the only railroad of consequence in the State. Steamboats theoretically and occasionally navigated the Des Moines river but transit thereon, especially in the tortuous courses of the upper fifty miles, was exceedingly uncertain. Stage coaches were the main public carriers and the condition of roads in country and town in Iowa in the middle of January in 1860 may easily be imagined. The public interest and personal zeal of partisans that brought so many delegates together at such a time under such conditions must have been very pronounced.

The counties not represented were Adair, Adams, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Cerro Gordo, Cherokee, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Harrison, Hancock, Ida, Jones, Montgomery, Monona, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Sac, Shelby, Union and Winnebago. For the most part the counties were near the borders of the State. Their quota of delegates, however, amounted all told to only 34. Twenty-two of the counties represented failed to send their entire quota, the number thus deficient being 36.

¹*The Daily Muscatine Journal*, Jan. 23, 1860.

²*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 23; *The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25; *The Muscatine Journal*, Jan. 23; *The Pella Gazette*, Jan. 25; *The Oskaloosa Herald* quoted in the *Hamilton Freeman*, Feb. 4, 1860.

(b) *The Character of the County Delegations.*

The delegates reported present represented the party and the State excellently both as regards the commonalty and the yeomanry as well as the leaders. Some of the State's best character and largest caliber were found among them—men who had been foremost in public affairs or who then were pressing rapidly to the front and were later to have distinguished careers in the State and the nation. It is so common in popular prints and among academic writers and those who class themselves with the elite, literary and social, to refer contemptuously to ordinary party conclaves, that brief mention of the careers of some of the delegates assembled in Sherman's Hall that afternoon may be worth while. A few delegates reported as present appear not to have attended. It is probable that they were selected by local caucuses or county conventions and were so reported to the committee on credentials, but even if not present their selection indicates the wishes of the local constituency.

A poll of the delegates with respect to their nativity and ages, their states of residence prior to coming to Iowa and years of their residence in the State previous to the convention, their education, general and technical, their occupations and professions, their religious creeds and church preferences, their party affiliations prior to joining the Republican party, their public honors and services before and after the convention, would be both interesting and instructive, but the writer does not possess complete data.

Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson county is credited with being one of the secretaries of the Pittsburg convention, February 22, 1856, which has substantial claims as the first Republican national convention. Mr. Andrew J. Stevens of Polk county was selected by that convention as the member of the national committee for Iowa and joined in the call of March 29, addressed "To the People of the United States" urging all "without regard to past political differences or divisions" to send delegates to a convention in Philadelphia

June 17, 1856. Mr. Stevens was the first chairman of the Republican state central committee in Iowa.

Nineteen counties sent 31 delegates who had attended as delegates at Iowa City, February 22, 1856, when the Republican party was organized in Iowa. They were John Shane and J. C. Traer of Benton county, J. A. Chapline, R. I. Thomas and W. W. Hamilton of Dubuque, Wells Spicer and Ed Wright of Cedar, J. W. Sherman of Dallas, Fitz Henry Warren of Des Moines, Jackson Orr of Greene, J. F. Brown of Hardin, S. McFarland of Henry, J. W. Jenkins of Jackson, R. Gaines and J. F. Wilson of Jefferson, E. and R. Clark of Johnson, G. D. Woodin of Keokuk, H. Taylor of Lee, H. C. Angle of Linn, Wm. M. Stone of Marion, Jacob Butler, S. Foster, John Mahin and Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek, B. F. Gue, J. C. Quinn and A. Sanders of Scott, and J. W. Caldwell and J. W. Norris of Wapello. Mr. J. B. Grinnell is credited with the authorship of the "Address" of the convention to the people of Iowa.¹

Six of the delegates had been chosen by the first state convention in 1856 as delegates or alternates to represent the party at the first national Republican convention at Philadelphia, in June of that year: Messrs. F. H. Warren of Des Moines county and J. W. Caldwell of Wapello as delegates and Messrs. Jacob Butler, Thomas Drummond, J. W. Jenkins and Daniel Anderson, alternates. Three of those named could not attend and Messrs. J. W. Sherman of Dallas county, R. L. B. Clarke of Henry, and A. J. Stevens of Polk exercised their proxies at Philadelphia.

Mr. G. M. Swan of Warren county is credited with the authorship of the call that caused the first meeting in Columbus, Ohio, whence resulted the organization of the Republican party in Ohio,² and Mr. Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque was the secretary of that state convention when it was organized.³

Six of the delegates had been members of the Constitutional Convention of 1857 that had framed the supreme law of

¹List of Delegates compiled by Mr. Louis Pelzer in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, IV, 521-525.

²*History of Warren County* (1879) p. 502.

³*John Sherman's Recollections*, p. 76.

Iowa under which the people have since continued to live. Messrs. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson county, R. L. B. Clarke of Henry, John Edwards of Lucas, J. C. Traer of Tama, Wm. A. Warren of Jackson, and James F. Wilson of Jefferson. Two other delegates, Alvin Saunders of Henry and S. Goodrell of Polk county (then of Muscatine county) had been members of the Constitutional Convention of 1846, which framed the first constitution for the State; and Judge Ralph P. Lowe had been a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1844, that first undertook to construct a constitution for the people.

Fifty-six delegates had been, and of the number 47 then were and 32 later became members of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Iowa. Thirty-six had been and 22 then were members of the state Senate and 26 thereafter became members of that body. Two delegates, Samuel McFarland of Henry county had been and John Edwards of Lucas then was the speaker of the House of Representatives; and two others, Rush Clark of Johnson and Jacob Butler of Muscatine county were later to become speaker. Messrs. W. W. Hamilton of Dubuque county and Oran Faville had been presidents of the Senate and Nicholas J. Rusch of Scott county then was; and Enoch W. Eastman of Hardin, B. F. Gue of Scott and Frank T. Campbell of Jasper county were thereafter to be elected lieutenant governor of the State, and thereby became presidents of the Senate. Three had had experience in the legislatures of older eastern states; Messrs. Jesse Bowen of Johnson and John Edwards of Lucas in Indiana, and Samuel Merrill of Clayton in the legislature of New Hampshire.

There were a number who had held, were then holding or were destined to hold prominent positions in the state government. Dr. Jesse Bowen of Johnson county was adjutant general of the militia. Mr. M. L. Morris, also of Johnson county, had been, and Mr. George W. Bemis of Buchanan was to become treasurer of state. Messrs. Andrew J. Stevens of Polk, John Pattee of Bremer had held, and Jonathan W. Cattell of Cedar was holding the office of auditor of state. W. A. Warren of Jackson was the candidate of the Whig party in



SHERMAN'S HALL,
Third Street and Court Avenue.

Meeting place of Republican State Convention, Des Moines, Iowa, Jan. 18, 1860.
(Photographed October, 1910.)

1848 for that office. Thomas H. Benton, Jr., of Pottawattamie had been superintendent of public instruction and Mr. Oran Faville afterwards held the office. Mr. Ed Wright, the temporary chairman was later to serve the people as secretary of state and Messrs. George A. Hawley of Decatur, J. W. Jenkins of Jackson, M. L. McPherson of Madison, J. W. Thompson of Scott had been or were later prominent but unsuccessful candidates for the office.

Ralph P. Lowe of Lee had been Governor of Iowa, retiring from that office the week preceding the convention; and Messrs. Samuel Merrill of Clayton, Wm. Larrabee of Fayette and Wm. M. Stone of Marion county, later became Chief Executive of the State. Messrs. J. B. Grinnell, Henry O'Connor, J. B. Weaver and Fitz Henry Warren became prominent candidates for the office.

A number had been, or later became, judges of the district or circuit courts. Thus John H. Gray of Polk county, Ralph P. Lowe of Lee, Samuel Murdock of Clayton, John W. Rankin of Lee, Wm. Smyth of Linn and W. M. Stone of Marion were judges prior to the convention. Messrs. M. B. Burdick of Winneshiek county, D. D. Chase of Hamilton, H. C. Henderson of Marshall, Wm. Loughridge of Mahaska, C. C. Nourse of Polk, Geo. W. Ruddick of Bremer, and John Shane of Benton afterwards became judges.

There were present eight who had been or then were "County Kings," to-wit, the county judges who under the Code of 1851 exercised all the legislative, executive and judicial functions previously exercised by the county commissioners: G. M. Dean of Allamakee, F. B. Doolittle of Delaware, Oran Faville of Mitchell, P. P. Henderson of Warren, Lewis H. Smith of Kossuth, Wells Spicer of Cedar, Wm. Van O'Linda of Plymouth, and J. C. Hagans of Ringgold county.

As the work of the convention was not directly or immediately connected with "local issues" superficially considered, the presence of judges, even of the court of highest resort in the State, was not deemed inappropriate, and among the delegates we find the names of every member of the Supreme Court as then constituted, namely: Caleb Baldwin of Potta-

wattamie county, Ralph P. Lowe of Lee, and L. D. Stockton of Des Moines. George G. Wright of Van Buren had but a few days before left the court and was later to be its Chief Justice. Sundry important officials of that court were also in the convention. Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson was reporter of the supreme court from 1855 to 1860. The first attorney general of the state, Mr. D. C. Cloud, of Muscatine county, had been selected by the party convention at Muscatine, but his attendance at Des Moines is not recorded. Two of the delegates in Sherman's Hall afterwards became attorney general, Messrs. John F. McJunkin of Washington and Henry O'Connor of Muscatine.

Two members of the commission to revise the code of the State that submitted its report to the General Assembly in 1860, Messrs. Charles Ben Darwin of Des Moines county, who had been active in securing Abraham Lincoln's consent to speak in Burlington in 1858, and Wm. Smyth of Linn county, were among the delegates.

There were nine state officers in the convention as delegates; three district judges and three district attorneys; two county judges, three clerks of county courts, and one county treasurer — twenty-one all told. This number was not very large considering the fact that there were at the time about five hundred and fifty state and county officers, two-thirds of whom were probably Republicans.

If we include the members of the state central committee as servants of the convention, sixteen delegates had represented or afterwards represented the people of Iowa or other states in the national House of Representatives at Washington, many of them achieving noteworthy distinction in the deliberations and decisions of that body. They were Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque county, T. M. Bowen of Page, Rush Clark of Johnson, W. G. Donnan of Buchanan, John Edwards of Lucas, J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek, W. P. Hepburn of Marshall, A. W. Hubbard of Woodbury, John A. Kasson of Polk, Wm. Loughridge of Mahaska, Jackson Orr of Greene, Charles Pomeroy of Boone, Wm. Smyth of Linn, James Thorington of Scott, James B. Weaver of Davis and James F. Wilson of Jefferson.

Five of the delegates subsequently entered the Senate of the United States. Judge George G. Wright served from 1871 to 1876 when he refused re-election. Mr. T. M. Bowen, after a noteworthy career in Kansas and Arkansas, went to Colorado whence he was elected to the Senate in 1883 serving until 1889. The other three delegates who reached the Senate were Messrs. Alvin Saunders of Henry, James F. Wilson of Jefferson and W. B. Allison of Dubuque county, of whose careers more will be said. In 1854 Mr. Fitz Henry Warren was the leading candidate of the Whigs for the Senate, but Mr. James Harlan was finally elected. In 1858 Wm. Penn Clarke and Wm. Smyth were prominently mentioned and received votes in the party caucus when Mr. Grimes was selected.

In the executive departments of the national government some of the delegates had had, or later achieved, position and influence. Mr. Fitz Henry Warren had been assistant postmaster general under President Taylor and subsequently was secretary of the national committee of the anti-slavery Whigs in the presidential campaign of 1852. W. H. F. Gurley of Scott county, became President Lincoln's first district attorney in Iowa; ill health and death soon cut off a career of brilliant promise. The careers of Messrs. Henry O'Connor and H. C. Caldwell will require mention subsequently.

Three of the delegates accredited to the convention in Sherman's Hall that afternoon attained to such nation-wide influence that at various times they were urged by admirers in national political parties for presidential honors. Mr. J. B. Weaver of Davis county was twice nominated for the presidency; first, by the National Greenback party in 1880, receiving 350,000 votes, and, again, in 1892 by the People's party, obtaining 1,042,531 votes at the polls and 22 votes, representing five states, in the Electoral College. The mention of Messrs. H. C. Caldwell of Van Buren county and Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque county in this connection will be referred to later.

Within a year and a half after the convention met war drums were calling men to arms in defense of the Union, the existence of which was attacked because of the action they, or

their delegates for them, were to take at Chicago in deciding the national leadership. Nearly one-fifth of the delegates enlisted in the volunteer regiments.

Fifteen delegates became Captains: F. T. Campbell of Jasper county, M. Clark of Jefferson, C. F. Conn of Lee, G. M. Dean of Allamakee, F. M. Kelsey of Jackson, J. P. McEwen of Guthrie, P. G. C. Merrill, of Warren, J. C. Mitchell of Wapello, L. C. Noble of Fayette, Jackson Orr of Greene, J. H. Powers of Chickasaw, P. A. Queal of Story, R. M. Rippey of Greene, J. H. Shutts of Benton and W. P. Ward of Jackson.

Messrs. L. Dewey of Henry, W. G. Donnan of Fayette, W. C. Drake of Wayne, Charles Foster of Scott, H. B. Lynch of Iowa, Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, N. J. Rusch of Scott, John Safely of Linn and Calvin Taylor of Davis became Majors. Messrs. Charles Aldrich of Hamilton and L. C. Noble of Fayette were tendered the rank of Major but for business reasons declined the advance in official rank.

Doctors Wm. McK. Findley of Davis, D. C. Hastings of Buchanan and Amos Witter of Linn county became regimental surgeons:

Eight of the delegates became Lieutenant Colonels—J. W. Caldwell of Wapello, Geo. B. Corkhill of Henry, Thomas Drummond of Benton, J. Ferguson of Marion, W. P. Hepburn of Marshall, Geo. W. Howard of Chickasaw, J. W. Jenkins of Jackson, Samuel McFarland of Henry, and S. C. Van Anda of Delaware county.

Among Iowa's Colonels we find Daniel Anderson of Monroe, A. H. Bereman of Henry, H. C. Caldwell of Van Buren, P. P. Henderson of Warren, Samuel Merrill of Clayton, John Pattee of Bremer, J. W. Rankin of Lee, John Shane of Benton, and Wm. Smyth of Linn. Messrs. R. H. Ballinger of Boone and Henry Ramming of Scott, entered the army in Illinois and became Colonels. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson as Paymaster had the rank of Colonel and M. L. McPherson attained the rank by brevet at the close of the war.

For distinguished service, bravery and meritorious conduct, Messrs. T. M. Bowen of Page, Thos. H. Benton, Jr., of Pottawattamie, D. B. Hillis of Davis, Hiram Scofield of Washing-

ton, Franklin A. Stratton of Webster, W. M. Stone of Marion, J. B. Weaver of Davis, and Ed Wright of Cedar county appear on the muster rolls at the close of the army as Brevet Brigadier Generals. Mr. John Edwards of Lucas attained full rank as Brigadier General of volunteers and Mr. Fitz Henry Warren of Des Moines county closed his army service in defense of the Union with the rank of Brevet Major General.

Among the delegates was a group that added special spice and flavor—a group that had been foremost in furthering the extreme anti-slavery views. They were all especially active in connection with Kansas, John Brown and Underground Railways. When the settlement of Kansas was the object of so much contention between the Slavocrats and the “Free state men” in 1856, Wm. Penn Clarke was the member for Iowa of the notable National Kansas Committee. He forwarded many “Liberty men” and Sharpe’s rifles to Tabor. When matters approached their crisis in 1856 a mass meeting was held in Iowa City to aid the emigration of anti-slavery men to Kansas, and a committee was appointed on which were Messrs. Clarke, M. L. Morris and I. N. [G. H. ?] Jerome. One result of the meeting was that Mr. Geo. D. Woodin, then of Johnson, but later of Keokuk county, traveled throughout southern Iowa organizing local committees. Among the local committeemen were Judge Wm. M. Stone of Knoxville, Mr. A. J. Stevens of Des Moines, and Dr. B. S. Noble of Indianola.¹ It was Mr. R. L. B. Clarke of Henry county who led the fight in the Constitutional Convention of 1857 to strike “white” from the constitution and entitle Negroes to enjoy all political privileges, and it was Mr. Henry O’Connor of Muscatine who championed the unpopular measure on the hustings. When John Brown passed through the State the last time, in 1858 with the slaves which he had forcefully assisted in escaping from their masters in Missouri, Rev. Demas Robinson, near Des Moines, Mr. J. B. Grinnell, at Grinnell, and Dr. Jesse Bowen and Mr. W. P. Clarke at Iowa City gave him “aid and

¹*History of Keokuk County* (1880) p. 432-3.

comfort'' at risk of the public peace, and their personal safety.¹ When Virginia's sheriff, on Gov. Letcher's requisition, sought Barclay Coppoe, the youth of Springdale who was one of Brown's aids at Harper's Ferry, it was Messrs. Ed Wright of Cedar and B. F. Gue of Scott who gave the alarm at the capitol and Messrs. J. B. Grinnell, J. W. Cattell, auditor of state, Amos Hoag of Winneshiek and David Hunt of Hardin county, who co-operated in sending the post rider to warn the fugitive at the Quaker village in Cedar county.² Among other staunch promoters of the rights of Negroes and supporters of John Brown in the convention were Mr. Coker F. Clarkson of Grundy and Mr. Jacob Butler of Muscatine. It was Mr. Butler who presided at the Congregational Council in Chicago in 1859, when some stout anti-slavery resolutions were adopted. All the foregoing took part in the proceedings in Sherman's Hall.

A number of the delegates had then engaged or later engaged in literary effort of the formal sort to an extent that would entitle them to enrollment among the "literary folk" of the State. Excluding the judges of the supreme court who are book-makers *ex officio*, and editors of weekly or daily newspapers, there were seventeen who have to their credit published writings dealing with matters of historical or technical interest, appearing in the form of articles or brochures, biographies, memoirs, official reports and treatises. Of the legal work of Charles Ben Darwin, especially his report recommending a new code of civil and criminal procedure, a recent commentator says: "He exerted more influence, probably, than any one man of his age and experience upon the practice of the State of Iowa."³ Mr. D. C. Cloud, Iowa's first attorney general, originally designated as one of the delegates from Muscatine county, wrote two stout treatises on the *War Powers of the President* and *Monopolies and the People*. Messrs. C. F. Clarkson, Suel Foster and J. H. Sanders became extensive writers upon farming, horticulture and stockbreeding. Wm. Penn Clarke, and Hawkins Taylor later made sub-

¹*Annals of Iowa* (1st Series) Vol. IV, 667-669, 715-719.

²Gue, *History of Iowa*, II, 17.

³Cole & Ebersole, *The Courts and Legal Profession of Iowa*, 1, 87.

stantial contributions to the historical literature of the State. Articles from the pen of James F. Wilson appeared in our national magazines. The letters of Fitz Henry Warren to *The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* and later to the *N. Y. Daily Tribune* have become historic. It was his celebrated criticisms of the course of the national government in the early days of the Civil War under the caption, "On to Richmond," that precipitated the disaster at Bull Run. In 1855 Mr. H. P. Scholte put forth an interesting brochure on *American Slavery*, containing an acute discussion of that moot question. Mr. J. B. Grinnell has given us a considerable volume of recollections, entitled *Men and Events of Forty Years*. Mr. J. H. Powers wrote *Historical Reminiscences of Chickasaw County*. Mr. Wm. Larrabee is the author of *The Railroad Question*, an energetic discussion of a vexed question. Mr. B. F. Gue, besides extensive contributions to local biography and history, wrote four substantial volumes entitled *The History of Iowa*. L. D. Ingersoll, celebrated in Iowa during the "sixties" as a war correspondent under the *nom de plume* of "Linkensale," wrote three considerable volumes, *Iowa and the Rebellion*, *The Life and Times of Horace Greeley* and *The History of the War Department*. Besides sundry minor contributions of worth, Mr. John A. Kasson wrote a scholarly treatise on *The Evolution of the Constitution of the United States and History of the Monroe Doctrine* which has become one of the standard references on these subjects in all our public and university libraries. Mr. Charles Aldrich, an editorial writer of great force and vivacity, in addition to the authorship of numerous articles re-established and for sixteen years edited *The Annals of Iowa*. His *magnum opus* in the conclusion of his career was the creation of the Historical Department of Iowa and bringing into being the handsome, stately structure on capitol hill which now houses his precious Collections and the increasing historical lore of the State of Iowa.

It is possible, of course, that the Republicans of Iowa have had state conventions whereat a higher average of ability and achievement and a greater number of notables have been in

attendance than was true of the conclave of the party's chiefs and workers at Sherman's Hall on January 18, 1860, but the writer doubts if the fact can be demonstrated.

(c) *Selecting the Delegates to the National Convention.*

For the committee on permanent organization, Mr. Charles Foster of Scott county, reported in favor of the nomination of the following delegates for the offices mentioned. Their recommendations were concurred in. Mr. W. W. Hamilton, of Dubuque, who had won distinction as presiding officer of the state Senate in 1856 and 1858, was made chairman. Pursuant to an amiable custom doubtless not free from artful design, ten delegates were designated as "Vice-Presidents"; among the number being Benedict Hugel of Lee county, Judge A. W. Hubbard of Woodbury, Mr. J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek, Jackson Orr of Greene, Mr. Jacob Butler of Muscatine, Mr. Francis Mangold of Dubuque, Mr. Amos Hoag of Winneshiek and Mr. Charles Pomeroy of Boone. D. D. Chase of Hamilton, J. G. Davenport of Linn, J. K. Graves of Dubuque, T. R. Oldham of Clarke, Henry Lischer of Scott, and H. P. Scholte of Marion, were made secretaries. In the selection of Messrs. Hugel, Mangold, Lischer and Scholte, one may discern delicate, and as diplomats phrase it, "distinguished consideration," of the foreign vote in the eastern counties. In the exaltation of so many notables of Dubuque one suspects shrewd tactics anent the senatorial election then pending.

The delegates proceeded at once with the business of the convention. On motion of Mr. Hawley of Decatur county, it was provided that the entire vote of a county could be cast by the delegates or delegate present. Senator Drummond of Benton county then introduced a resolution directing that the convention proceed to elect "eight delegates to the national Republican convention, four from the State at large, and two from each congressional district—but one delegate to be elected at a time and by a *viva voce* vote, on a call of the counties, a majority being required to elect." Mr. Brown of Black Hawk moved to amend by striking out eight and in-

serting two from "each judicial district" of which there were eleven in the State, the delegates to be "named by each district." As a substitute Mr. Gue of Scott county moved the adoption of the following:

Resolved, That the convention now proceed to elect two delegates from each judicial district, to be selected by the delegates from each district, and five delegates at large, to be elected by a *viva voce* vote upon call of the counties, one delegate to be elected at a time.

We are told that upon the introduction of Senator Drummond's motion "an animated discussion ensued," lasting for two hours. The enthusiasm of the disputants and the delegates at times "kindled into a blaze." The correspondent of *The Hawk-Eye* tells us that "it was dark when these preliminary matters were settled and the entire afternoon was consumed in boisterous though good-humoured debate in which neither the chairman nor any member could define what the question before the convention was."¹ Mr. Gue's motion was finally modified by an amendment of Senator Drummond's providing for selection of the delegates by a plurality vote.

The convention first took an informal ballot on delegates at large with the following result:

L. C. Noble, 43; T. J. W. Tabor, 20; W. Penn Clarke, 52; J. A. Kasson, 28; Henry O'Connor, 36; N. J. Rusch, 12; J. W. Norris, 31; J. F. Wilson, 22; A. Sa[u]nders, 33; M. L. McPherson, 16; S. Bagg, 5; Thomas Seeley, 10; J. B. Grinnell, 11; Scattering, 18.

The convention thereupon proceeded to a formal ballot. The distribution of the votes among the sundry favorites named on the several ballots is not less interesting than in the informal ballot, and a transcript of the proceedings as published follows:

1—J. W. Norris 4, Thomas Seeley 4, W. Penn Clarke 110, T. J. W. Tabor 52, J. A. Kasson 5, A. Saunders 33, Henry O'Connor 15, L. C. Noble 2, M. L. McPherson 4, J. F. Wilson 31.

On motion W. Penn Clark of Johnson county was unanimously elected a delegate at large.

¹*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 23, 1860.

2d formal ballot—L. C. Noble 134, J. W. Norris 27, H. O'Connor 37, J. A. Kasson 39, M. L. McPherson 21, J. F. Wilson 51, A. Saunders 22.

On motion, L. C. Noble of Fayette county, was unanimously elected the second delegate at large.

3rd formal ballot—J. A. Kasson 161, J. W. Rankin 16, H. O'Connor 145, J. W. Norris 4, T. Seeley 4.

On motion, J. A. Kasson of Polk county, was unanimously elected the third delegate at large.

4th ballot—H. O'Connor 161, J. W. Rankin 55, J. F. Wilson 116, M. L. McPherson 6.

On motion, H. O'Connor of Muscatine county, was unanimously elected the 4th delegate at large.

6th [5th?] ballot—C. F. Clarkson 23, J. F. Wilson 148, J. W. Rankin 110, E. Bloomer 17, N. J. Rusch 9.

On motion, J. F. Wilson of Jefferson county, was unanimously elected as the fifth delegate at large.

The selections apparently did not suffice or they perhaps produced some discontent on the part of the friends of several receiving votes but unsuccessful, for immediately, on motion of Dr. Bowen of Johnson county, the following persons were unanimously elected as additional delegates at large:—Judge J. W. Rankin of Lee county, Senator M. L. McPherson of Madison, Mr. C. F. Clarkson of Grundy, and Lt.-Governor N. J. Rusch of Scott, making nine altogether.

The roll of the judicial districts was then called for nominations for delegates to represent the local constituencies. The nominees apparently were all unanimously elected without delay or dispute. It is not indicated whether they had been selected by district caucuses held prior to the assembly of the delegates in Sherman's Hall or by conferences on the floor during the convention. The following are the names of the gentlemen elected in the order of the roll:

The first district selected Mr. Alvin Saunders of Henry and Dr. J. C. Walker of Lee county. For the second, H. Clay Caldwell of Van Buren and Mr. M. Baker of Wapello [Wayne?] county were designated. The third district chose Mr. Benjamin Rector of Fremont and Mr. George A. Hawley of Decatur county. The fourth district nominated Judge A. W. Hubbard of Woodbury and Mr. J. E. Blackford of Kos-

suth county. The fifth selected Messrs. Thomas Seeley of Guthrie and C. C. Nourse of Polk county. For the sixth, Judge W. M. Stone of Marion and Mr. J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek were nominated. The seventh district nominated Mr. Wm. A. Warren of Jackson and Mr. John W. Thompson of Scott. The nominees of the eighth district were Mr. John Shane of Benton and Judge Wm. Smyth of Linn county; and of the ninth, Messrs. Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque and A. F. Brown of Black Hawk county. The tenth district nominated Judge Reuben Noble of Clayton county and Mr. E. G. Bowdoin of Floyd county. The eleventh district presented the names of Mr. Wm. P. Hepburn of Marshall county and Mr. J. F. Brown of Hardin county.

All of the delegates chosen at Des Moines attended the national convention at Chicago save three—Messrs. J. E. Blackford, H. C. Caldwell and A. W. Hubbard. Their proxies were exercised by Messrs. Jacob Butler, J. W. Caldwell and Herbert M. Hoxie. Mr. R. L. B. Clarke was with the delegates in the Wigwam and took part in their conferences and decisions as an alternate.¹ In what follows the proxies and their principals will not be distinguished. As the years have increased, the distinction of the convention at Chicago has increased and likewise the claims to membership in Iowa's delegation. The writer has come upon the names of four others for whom biographers or eulogists have claimed membership therein; but so far as he can discover without warrant. We may suspect that attendance at the convention as unofficial representatives has been transmuted into official representation.

As soon as the delegates to Chicago were decided upon, Senator Thomas Drummond introduced the following resolution:

Resolved, That the delegation from Iowa are hereby instructed to cast the vote of the State as a unit, and that a majority of the delegates determine the action of the delegation.

The motion was lost. Whether or not there was any debate thereon and by what number of votes the resolution was de-

¹Interview with Judge C. C. Nourse and letter of R. L. B. Clarke to the writer (Mss.).

feated are not recorded. The significance of the resolution, the design of the mover, and the real purport of the action of the convention in refusing thus to control the course of their delegates at the national convention, can only be surmised. The mover was an able and tried tactician in practical politics. He had attended the first national convention of the Republican party at Philadelphia in 1856 as a delegate and he was an influential editor and leader in the party's councils in the State. It is hardly probable that his resolution was unpremeditated, introduced on the spur of the moment on a vagrant impulse. He knew that in national party conventions, as in state or local conventions, a delegation or its leaders are potent when they have their delegates well in hand and can "count on them" and can swing them to the right or to the left at critical junctures in manœuvres. Divided delegations, like dissevered army corps, are usually impotent. Judge McLean's nomination at Philadelphia in 1856 might have been accomplished with ease had Ohio's delegation been a unit on his behalf instead of split asunder by bitter, obstinate factional differences and preferences. Senator Drummond probably had the avoidance of such inefficiency in mind. Moreover, it is not unlikely that he expected the resolution, if adopted, to operate in favor of the candidacy of Senator Seward. Senator Drummond, as we have seen, entertained radical anti-slavery views, sympathizing frankly with John Brown. He was also a staunch friend and supporter of Senator Harlan, who was a known friend and admirer of the Senator from New York, and then or very soon thereafter becoming an advocate of his nomination at Chicago. The activity of Gov. Seward's friends in all of the northern states, straight west of New York, on behalf of his candidacy and their success in securing instructions for him in all, save Iowa, gives color to the surmise here ventured. It is the recollection of Judge C. C. Nourse that it was the opinion in the lobbies that Gov. Seward was to be the beneficiary of the resolution.¹

¹Letter of Judge C. C. Nourse to the writer (Mss.)

An account of the proceedings in *Der Demokrat*, the German Republican paper of Davenport, gives grounds for thinking that possibly specific instructions for Senator Seward were formally presented and formally rejected. In a brief notice of the convention we find the statement that "ein antrag die delegaten zu instruiren wurde verworfen." This assertion that instructions were defeated is followed by another indicating the self-control of the delegates: "Die stimmung der convention war sehr stark zu gunsten von Wm. H. Seward fur President." Two facts make one skeptical as to the former statement. First, it is the only one to the same effect the writer has discovered in the press reports or in the editorial comments on the proceedings; and we should normally expect a matter of such vital significance in the political contest then approaching its culmination to be generally referred to in contemporary comment. Second, the context suggests some confusion. Just preceding the first sentence quoted is the statement that the convention adopted Senator Drummond's resolution providing for a "plurality" rule in voting. Apparently Senator Drummond's resolution to bind the national delegates by the unit rule was confused with another motion by him amending Mr. Gue's, whereby the convention should elect the delegates to the national convention by a plurality instead of by a majority of the votes cast. On the other hand, the publisher of *Der Demokrat*, Mr. Henry Lischer, and one of its leading writers, Mr. Henry Ramming, were both delegates from Scott county to the convention. One or the other, doubtless penned the account from which the statement above is quoted and we may presume that he wrote advisedly. Whatever may have been the facts we shall see that the rejection of Senator Drummond's resolution providing for the unit rule was subsequently considered as equivalent to refusal to instruct for Senator Seward.¹

The defeat of Senator Drummond's resolution was followed by a motion to adjourn until eight o'clock. As the primary purpose of the convention had been accomplished one feels

¹*Der Demokrat*, Jan. 21, 1860.

curiosity as to the object of reassembling the delegates. The delegates were in the city and other social diversion for such a number may not have been feasible and sociability and speech-making may have been the only matters contemplated. Nevertheless, those familiar with popular assemblages are likely to suspect shrewd designs. Mass meetings, unless controlled by dominant leaders, are the prey of fitful, contradictory and erratic currents. Emotionalism is wont to prevail; sentimentalism rather than sense. Unforeseen events, oftentimes artfully produced, may result in gusts, flurries and sometimes violent outbursts of feeling that drive the delegates pell-mell in some direction. Skillful tacticians at such times easily accomplish purposes otherwise impossible. The convention had made no declaration of principles. It had refused to bind its national delegates by instructions. Public discussion was rife with issues that aroused intense animosity. Partisans of sundry views, ardent advocates of specific courses, energetic friends of candidates, disappointed in obtaining action favorable to their hopes may have had some expectation of success in furthering their cause or candidate "after supper."

Whatever the considerations or designs, the delegates on reassembling transacted but little business; but that little was interesting and significant. Two more delegates at large were added to the nine selected at the afternoon session. They were the Rev. Henry P. Scholte, editor of *The Pella Gazette* and founder of the Holland community at Pella, and Rev. John Johns, the pioneer preacher from Webster county whose speech had so stirred the convention a few hours before. The selection of the former signified again recognition of the strategic importance of the foreign vote in the coming campaign, and the choice of the latter may have indicated an appreciation of the votes in the congregations of the Baptist church or a spontaneous proof of the power of the oratory of the itinerant preacher.

The convention then converted itself into a "mass ratification meeting." Speeches were delivered by Messrs. Henry O'Connor and Jacob Butler of Muscatine, Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson, Enoch W. Eastman of Hardin, C. C. Nourse and

John A. Kasson of Polk, Geo. May of Marion, James F. Wilson of Jefferson, and Rev. John Johns. "The speeches," Mr. Jerome of Iowa City reported, "were very spicy, full of marrow and the meeting was enthusiastic to a high degree."¹ In the course of his speech at the evening session Mr. Johns, while indicating very clearly his strong personal preference for the nomination of Wm. H. Seward for the presidency by the Republicans at Chicago, is credited with the observation that, in case the Democrats in their national convention at Charleston should nominate Stephen A. Douglas, the Republicans could not do better than to nominate Abraham Lincoln who in popular judgment had worsted the "Little Giant" in their celebrated debate in 1858.

Before one can justly estimate the conduct of the delegates or the significance of their action, the conditions under which the business was transacted must be appreciated. The comments of two eye witnesses, one a participant as a delegate, the other a representative of the opposite political party, are interesting. "R," correspondent of *The Gate City*, penned the following on the night of the convention:

Impartial justice requires the statement that it was the noisiest, most uproarious, confused, good-natured, hardworking and enthusiastic convention ever witnessed in Iowa or any other country on this mundane sphere. It was also, I believe, the largest Republican convention ever held in this State.²

The correspondent of *The Dubuque Herald* after referring with customary partizan irony to the claim of Republicans that their party comprehended "all the decency and intelligence," wrote (Jan. 23):

It was the most disorderly, uproarious and undignified gathering that has lately come to the knowledge of the peaceful denizens of this locality. Still they got through with the business for which they assembled in a manner most satisfactory to everybody but themselves.³

Evidently the delegates gave their feelings full vent and the right of way. Spontaneity of expression rather than docility

¹*The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25, 1860.

²*The Daily Gate City*, Jan. 23, 1860. Corr. dated at Des Moines, Jan. 17.

³*The Dubuque Herald*, Feb. 1, 1860. Corr. dated at Des Moines, Jan. 23.

and obedient concurrence in a program, constituted the definitive condition in the determination of the conclusions of the convention. Some considerations will demonstrate this.

(d) *Did a Machine and Wirepullers or Common Sense Control the Convention?*

A distinguished national historian, contrasting the character of the first Republican national convention at Philadelphia and that of the second convention at Chicago, designated the delegates to the first as "liberty-loving enthusiasts and largely volunteers," and those to the second, as mainly "wirepullers" and "machine politicians" chosen by "means of the organization peculiar to a powerful party" who were, he adds, "in political wisdom the pick of the Republicans."¹

One might ask for definitions of terms. Be the merits of the contrast what they may it is well to keep in mind that those unfamiliar with the practical procedure of politics are wont to regard philanthropists and reformers who initiate political and social movements as always animated by purely ethical considerations, as free from malice and thoughts of personal gain, and "politicians" as wirepullers whose ways are devious and dark, whose motives are petty, or sordid or malevolent, who interpret the public welfare in terms of personal profit or party advantage with the same objective in view. Any one who has had but little intimate acquaintance with philanthropists and politicians knows that very prosaic human considerations prompt and energize both species of mankind. The chicanery and hypocrisy of philanthropists are not less extensive nor less vicious than the sordidness of politicians. Moreover, experience is likely to make one conclude that the sentimentalism and stupidities of enthusiasts in politics and government are more to be dreaded than the designs of politicians pulling wires and the public purse strings for personal or party advantage.

The delegates selected by the Republicans of Iowa to represent their interests and wishes at the Chicago convention were,

¹Rhodes *History of the United States*, II, 457.

of course, "politicians." They were politicians in the old Greek sense of citizens. They were politicians in the sense of familiars or workers in the science and art of government. They were politicians in the sense of tacticians adept in the management and manoeuvres of party caucuses and campaigns. Many of them, doubtless all of them, sustained reputations in their bailiwicks for capacity and force, for caution and shrewdness, for patience and persistence in the pursuit and accomplishment of personal or party purposes. They are, nevertheless, individually and in the aggregate, thoroughly representative of the ability and achievement of the yeomanry and of the leadership of the Republican party then in control of the public affairs of the people of Iowa. Moreover the mode of their selection gives no basis for the assumption that the delegates were either "machine" politicians or the appointees of the managers of a "machine" in the disagreeable sense in which the term is used nowadays.

There was in the parlance of the day, a group of party leaders known throughout the State as the "capitol crowd," who no doubt worked to further their interests in the selection of the delegates; but if they had a program or "slate" it was completely smashed and their forces utterly routed. "The old wheel horses in the Republican team," a correspondent of *The Hawk-Eye* informs us, "opposed sending any more than one man to cast one vote . . ." but the delegation selected exceeded four delegates for every vote of Iowa's quota. Senator Grimes in his letter to Governor Kirkwood said he would select "a goodly number to cast the vote of Iowa," but he probably did not think of more than sixteen delegates. The larger the number in a delegation the less the certainty of concert of action. Some of the leaders later indicated publicly their disapproval of the large number. Mr. Jacob Rich of the *Buchanan County Guardian* could "not see the object,"² and Mr. Teesdale ironically observed:—"If the hall [at Chicago] is large enough the delegates will all probably be admitted and exert their influence on the action

¹*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 23, 1860.

²*Buchanan County Guardian*, Jan. 26, 1860.

of the body."¹ All of which means that the convention went counter to the wishes of the leaders or of any ring or machine that may have sought to control its action. It is not without significance that the conventions of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, two states whose political complexions were very dubious, likewise sent large delegations to Chicago, the former with seven votes sending 21 delegates and the latter with 27 votes sending 108 delegates.

The distribution of the votes of the convention in the informal and formal ballots for delegates at large affords interesting evidence of the absence of autocratic, domineering leadership so characteristic of a machine as the public now uses the term. On the informal ballot the votes were divided among more than thirteen candidates. The highest vote cast for any one man was only 52 for Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke. Two only of those voted for had attained the position that in these days would insure them the title of a party "boss." They were Mr. John A. Kasson, then chairman of the state central committee, and Mr. Alvin Saunders, who served Senator Harlan so efficiently as his field officer. But both fell below four other candidates in votes received in that informal ballot. The second man in that ballot, Mr. L. C. Noble, was a merchant of West Union, in Fayette county, and on the second formal ballot he was elected, winning over Messrs. Kasson, O'Connor, McPherson, Norris, Saunders and James F. Wilson, all potent leaders of state-wide fame. He was not conspicuous as a state leader. He was then a member of the lower House of the Legislature and for the first time. He was, according to the recollections of old associates, a likable and popular man in Fayette county and in the General Assembly. The votes on all of the ballots for delegates at large demonstrate conclusively that there were neither party bosses in charge of the convention nor dominating favorites among the leaders.

Another highly interesting fact in line with this conclusion was the absence of nearly all of the names of the party chiefs then honored with high official position, either at the state

¹*Daily Iowa State Register*, Jan. 20, 1860.

capitol at Des Moines or at the national capitol at Washington. Senator Grimes had urged Gov. Kirkwood to secure a place on the delegation; but his name was not presented at all. None of the men in what we may designate as the major state offices were voted for and neither Congressman Wm. Vandever nor S. R. Curtis, nor Senators James W. Grimes or James Harlan received votes. Their conspicuous positions doubtless operated to prevent the consideration of their names in the balloting. As prudent politicians, they would realize that any effort on the part of themselves personally or of their promoters, to secure the honor of going to Chicago when so many were anxious to attend the national convention with official credentials, might irritate and mayhap alienate friends and supporters and have serious adverse results upon their careers afterwards. They or their influential friends unquestionably prevented the use of their names. Senator Harlan's candidacy for reelection to the national Senate was then in the balances and this fact would of itself make him and his friends backward in urging his name as a delegate.

Mr. Teesdale thought that it would be "regarded abroad, as somewhat singular that no member of our Senatorial or Congressional delegation has a place on the delegation."¹ Iowa's course in this, however, was typical of the course of the conventions of most of the states sending delegates to the Chicago convention. That convention was noteworthy for the absence of congressional leaders. New York and Rhode Island alone of the twenty-seven states represented, each sent one of their respective Senators, and Missouri and Pennsylvania each sent one Congressman and Ohio sent two.

Again the rejection of the resolution to bind the delegation by the unit rule and the absence or apparent absence of any motion to instruct the delegation, indicates clearly the democratic and popular character of the convention in Sherman's Hall. Anything suggestive of control of the delegation either as to numbers or as to free expression of the preferences of the delegates or their freedom of decision at Chicago, produced

¹*Ibid*

spirited debate and plump negatives and contrary action by the convention. The effect of the speech of John Johns suggests that spontaneous action rather than a program, controlled the delegates.

The refusal of the convention to bind its delegates by a unit rule and its non-action in the matter of instructions, possess significance in other respects. Describing the conduct of the convention in a letter to his paper, *The Iowa City Republican*, Mr. G. H. Jerome observed: "The mention of the name of W. H. Seward, the first man of the Republic, awoke the echoes of the hall. I think among all the candidates named, Seward is the decided favorite of the people of Iowa."¹ Whether the enthusiasm that made those echoes animated chiefly the non-official onlookers in Sherman's Hall or the delegates, is not indicated; but it is probable that sentiment in favor of Senator Seward prevailed decidedly over that for any other candidate. Under such circumstances the decision of his partisans not to press a resolution of instructions affords us substantial grounds for believing that conservative counsels predominated. In Oregon, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan the friends and promoters of his candidacy pushed and secured specific instructions binding the delegations to vote for him. They sought them in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts; and it was only by careful management and shrewd tactics, especially in Maine² and Massachusetts that Seward's opponents prevented similar resolutions in those states. His admirers and advocates at Des Moines appreciated that his popularity with the major portion of the rank and file of the Republicans was one thing, and his popularity with a belligerent minority and with the independent voters of the opposition was or might be an entirely different matter. When majorities are small and uncertain victories are won in the middle grounds. Iowa's Republicans at Sherman's Hall were controlled by clear-eyed and cool-headed party leaders, and not by reckless, erratic, tempestuous en-

¹*The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25, 1860.

²C. S. Hamlin's, *Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin*, pp. 331-351. Boutwell's *Reminiscences of Sixty Years of Public Life*, I, 253.

thusiasts. Mr. Jerome's own account of the proceedings illustrates this admirably; for in the sentence immediately following the one just quoted anent the popularity of Seward he says, "The delegation, however, goes uninstructed. This is as it should be." And in this policy or procedure the action of Iowa was precisely the action of Indiana and of all the New England states, save the one that had a candidate of its own to commend to the convention at Chicago.

(e) *The Delegation to the National Convention.*

However we may regard the delegates sent by the Republicans of Iowa to the convention at Chicago, whether as patriots or as politicians, an examination of their careers before and after the convention in Sherman's Hall will convince most persons that they represented their constituents excellently, their patriotism and their prejudices no less than their principles and policies.

The delegates were comparatively young men, their average age being 38 years. Their ages ranged from 27 to 60 years. Three were under 30 years. Ten were between 30 and 35; eleven between 35 and 40; eight between 40 and 50; and three between 50 and 60 years.

The nativity of the delegates approximated the nativity of the state's citizenship. Six were natives of New England states. Six were born in New York and two in Pennsylvania. Nine were born in states south of Mason and Dixon's line. Eight were natives of Ohio, one of Indiana, and one of Illinois. Two were born in Ireland, one in Holstein, and one in Holland.

The duration of their residence in Iowa prior to 1860 ranged from three to twenty years. Thirteen delegates had lived in the State an average of only five years. Fourteen had been residents for an average of 13 years and four had lived in Iowa for 23 years. The average duration of the 31 known was twelve years.

As regards their education in the narrow sense of "schooling," one-half of the delegation had but little more than the

usual training afforded in the common schools. They had obtained their education in the give and take of ordinary affairs, behind the plow or at the work bench, in the counting room or behind the counter, at the type-setter's case or in the editorial room, at the bar or on the bench. Nearly half of the delegates had attended academies, then often approximating collegiate institutions in rank or public esteem. Ten delegates had been students at colleges or universities, in most cases being graduates. The major number with collegiate training were natives of northern states, chiefly of New England and the Middle States. Two had been matriculates of European Universities.

In point of scholastic training and attainment, in respect of the mastery of the ancient or classical and the modern languages, and familiarity with the writings of the learned doctors in philosophy and law, Mr. Henry P. Scholte of Marion county, probably could easily claim superior rank. He had his first training at the Athenaeum Illustre of Amsterdam and then became a student and graduate of the University of Leyden. Lt. Governor Rusch of Scott county, was perhaps entitled to second place: he had been educated first at the Gymnasium in Meldorf and thereafter he studied "eine zeit lang" at the University of Kiel until his participation in the agitation for more liberal government in North Germany in 1846-47 made his emigration to the United States highly expedient.¹ Of the native born, Mr. John A. Kasson was *facile princeps*. He was a graduate of the University of Vermont and early attracted public notice as a writer on legal matters, and as an orator. In 1849, Charles Sumner had spoken of an article containing his suggestions for the reform of the legal procedure of Massachusetts in flattering terms² and in

¹Eiboeck, *Die Deutschen von Iowa*, p. 417.

²The article referred to may be found in *The Monthly Law Reporter* (Boston) June, 1849, v. 12 (n. s. v. 2) pp. 61-80, entitled *Law Reform—Practice*.

Mr. Sumner's commendation is expressed in strong terms. Three sentences from his letter follow: "I admired the vivid style, the facility of practical illustration, and the complete mastery of the subject which it showed. You have done good service to Jurisprudence, and helped discharge the debt which Lord Bacon tells us we owe to our profession, by this able exposition of a vicious system. I trust that our Commonwealth will have the wisdom to adopt your suggestions." Charles Sumner to John A. Kasson, New Bedford, July 12, 1849. The original is in the Aldrich Collections in the Historical Department of Iowa. The letter is reprinted *in extenso* in E. L. Pierce's *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. III, 43.

1854 when the Chamber of Commerce of St. Louis invited the legislators of Illinois to be their guests at a banquet, Mr. Kasson, although a young man, was asked to serve as the toast-master, so great then was his capacity for polished speech.¹

The delegates were engaged in various occupations; but strict classification is not easy for the reason that business and professional pursuits were not then sharply differentiated, nor did those therein always specialize and confine themselves to one line. Nor was private business much lessened during the occupancy of public office. Mr. Coker F. Clarkson of Grundy county had been an influential editor in Indiana, but in 1860 he was a farmer:—then and thereafter, however, was constantly engaged in editorial work. Mr. Jacob Butler of Muscatine, while a well known lawyer, was then largely interested in the operation of banks, a gas company and in railroad construction. Mr. J. B. Grinnell had been technically educated for the ministry and for many years he had followed that profession, doing so even at that time, but he listed himself as a farmer and wool grower and was constantly engaged in town and railroad building. Mr. Scholte while editing *The Pella Gazette*, was simultaneously acting as a banker, as a lawyer, as a land broker, as a preacher, having been especially educated for the latter profession. Taking those occupations in which they were primarily engaged or in which they were chiefly known, the delegation to Chicago contained one banker, two preachers, four merchants, five farmers and twenty-three lawyers.

The absence of editors from the delegation is noteworthy, particularly in view of the considerable number present in Sherman's Hall, and their normal potency in political matters. Aside from mere chance, two facts may account for their absence. Some of the prominent editors were at that time either occupants of profitable positions in the State or were candidates for them. We have already seen that half a dozen prominent editors were talked of as candidates for public printer. Again the profits of newspapers then depended largely upon the favorable disposition of the allowances of

¹*Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, I, 612.

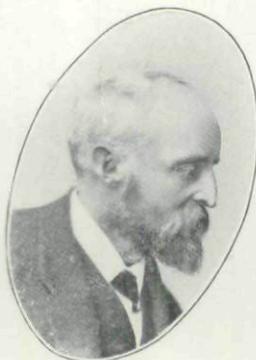
state and local budgets in the matter of public printing, namely for the publication of the laws and the "delinquent tax lists." Consequently for editors to push for the honor of going to the national convention as accredited delegates was not prudent. However, Mr. Scholte, Mr. A. F. Brown of Black Hawk, Mr. W. Penn Clarke, of Johnson, Mr. C. F. Clarkson, of Grundy, and Mr. Wm. M. Stone of Marion county, had been editors of considerable experience.

The careers of many of the delegates were then or were to become full of honors and achievement in the public service of the State and of the nation, both in peace and in war. The names of Allison, Caldwell, and Clarkson, of Grinnell, Hepburn and Hoxie, of Hubbard, Kasson and Reuben Noble, of Nourse, O'Connor and Saunders, of Smyth, Stone and Wilson. —these were names to conjure with in Iowa during most of the sixty years just past.

Nearly all of the delegates had made their mark in state affairs before their selection by the convention at Des Moines. Nine had helped to organize the Republican party at Iowa City:—Messrs. J. F. Brown, Jacob Butler, J. W. Caldwell, J. B. Grinnell, C. C. Nourse, Henry O'Connor, John Shane, Wm. M. Stone, and James F. Wilson. Three had taken part in the first national conventions of the party in 1856, Mr. W. Penn Clarke at Pittsburg and Messrs. J. W. Caldwell and R. L. B. Clarke at Philadelphia. Messrs. Reuben Noble, O'Connor and Stone had been the nominees of the Republicans for presidential electors in 1856. Mr. Alvin Saunders had been a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1846; and Messrs. W. Penn Clarke, R. L. B. Clarke, Thomas Seeley, Wm. A. Warren and James F. Wilson had been members of the Constitutional Convention of 1857.

Messrs. A. F. Brown, Hepburn, Nourse and O'Connor and Benjamin Rector had attained local celebrity either as prosecuting or as district attorneys. Mr. Wm. P. Clarke was then reporter for the supreme court. Four of the delegation had occupied the district bench—Judges Hubbard, Rankin, Smyth and Stone. Both Mr. Clarke and Mr. Nourse, though young

SOME OF IOWA'S DELEGATES AND ALTERNATES.
Chicago Convention, May 16-18, 1860



A. W. HUBBARD
U. S. Representative

H. M. HOXIE *
U. S. Marshal
*Alternates

J. E. BLACKFORD
Farmer
H. CLAY CALDWELL
U. S. Circuit Judge
JACOB BUTLER *
Lawyer

JOS. W. CALDWELL *
Merchant

R. L. B. CLARK *
Lawyer

men, had been urged as candidates for the supreme court. Later Messrs. Nourse, Noble and Shane were elected to the district bench and twice Judge Reuben Noble was the nominee of the Democratic party for the supreme court. Judge Wm. Smyth was then a member of the Code Commission. Two of those just mentioned, Messrs. Nourse and O'Connor, became attorney general of Iowa.

Nine of the delegates had had experience in one or both houses of the state Legislature:—L. C. and Reuben Noble, Thompson and Wilson in the lower and Grinnell, McPherson, Rankin, Rusch, Saunders and Wilson in the upper house. Ten were in the Legislature at the time they were chosen:—Blackford, Bowdoin, Caldwell and L. C. Noble in the House and A. F. Brown, McPherson, Rankin, Saunders, Thompson and Wilson in the Senate. Subsequently Messrs. Butler, Kasson and Seeley were elected to the House; Mr. Butler being elected speaker and Mr. Kasson securing the appropriation for the present state capitol. Mr. C. F. Clarkson and Mr. John Shane were elected to the Senate. Mr. Rusch was Lt. Governor at the time and thereby presiding officer of the Senate.

Messrs. Kasson and Seeley were members of a committee appointed by Gov. Lowe to examine into the condition of the public offices of the State and to report: their recommendations presented in 1860 worked a revolution in the methods of accounting. Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke had been nominated for Governor in 1848 by the Abolition party, and he was frequently mentioned for the office later. Judge Stone in 1863 was elected Governor, serving four years; and in 1872 Mr. O'Connor was a leading candidate for the nomination. Messrs. Geo. A. Hawley, M. L. McPherson and John W. Thompson were prominent candidates for the Republican nomination for secretary of state that year, or in 1862.

Nineteen of the thirty-seven delegates and alternates entered the army service during the Civil War, a number attaining high official rank. Messrs. L. C. Noble, Henry O'Connor, Benjamin Rector and N. J. Rusch became Majors;

J. W. Caldwell and W. P. Hepburn Lt. Colonels; H. C. Caldwell, McPherson, Rankin, Shane and Smyth the rank of Colonel; and Wm. M. Stone attained the rank of Bvt. Brigadier General. Majors Rector and Rusch died at the front.

A third of the delegation had noteworthy careers in the service of the national government either in the administrative branches or on the bench or in Congress. In 1864 President Lincoln appointed Col. H. Clay Caldwell Judge of the Federal District Court for Arkansas, a position in which he steadily increased his fame; and in 1890 President Harrison elevated him to the position of U. S. Judge of the Eighth Circuit, his jurisdiction comprising Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado.

Mr. O'Connor was appointed solicitor of the State Department at Washington by President Grant and served in that important post continuously under Secretaries Fish, Evarts, Blaine and Frelinghuysen.

Mr. Herbert M. Hoxie became United States Marshal for Iowa under President Lincoln and won great applause for the vigor of his administration. Following the war he entered upon an increasingly successful career in the construction of railroads and in railway administration, being at his death in 1886 the virtual head of the Gould system of roads in the southwest and classed among the foremost railway managers in the country.¹

Mr. Kasson's career in the service of the national administration was notable. He was appointed First Assistant Postmaster-General under President Lincoln. He initiated the first International Postal Commission at Paris in 1863, and represented our government. Later he gained distinction as our Minister to the Courts of Austria and Berlin. He represented our government in the Congo Conference at Berlin and in the Samoan Conference at Washington; and was a member of the Canadian Commission. He closed his career as

¹*Harper's Weekly*, XXX, p. 784 (Dec. 4, 1886).

the negotiator of the Treaties of Reciprocity with sundry countries under the McKinley tariff law.

Seven members of the delegation first selected, entered the lower House of Congress—Messrs. Allison of Dubuque, Grinnell of Poweshiek, Hepburn of Marshall, Hubbard of Woodbury, Kasson of Polk, Smyth of Linn and Wilson of Jefferson county. Three other members came near achieving the same distinction. Mr. R. L. B. Clarke of Henry was the Whig nominee for Congress in 1854 and fell but little short of winning the election. In 1866 Mr. M. L. McPherson of Madison was the strong third in a triangular contest for the Republican nomination in the old Fifth district, the prize going to Gen. G. M. Dodge. In 1866 Judge Noble of Clayton parted company with the Republican party over President Johnson and reconstruction, and was Mr. Allison's opponent in the congressional canvass. Mr. C. F. Clarkson came near receiving a nomination for Congress in 1868.

In the crucial days of the war and following, there were few more influential men in the lower House at Washington than Wm. B. Allison, John A. Kasson and James F. Wilson. "The men from Iowa" were both guides and leaders in congressional debates and party caucuses and potent in moulding public opinion.¹ Mr. Wm. B. Allison had not served his first term before Mr. James G. Blaine, himself then about succeeding Thaddeus Stevens as leader of the House, included the young Iowan among the three most influential leaders of Congress.²

¹Tarbell, *The Tariff in Our Times in The American Magazine*, LXIII, 279. "Messrs. Allison, Wilson and Kasson, members of Congress from Iowa, led in the fight against the outbreak of high protection which immediately followed the war."

²*Ibid.*, p. 474. Miss Tarbell relates the following: Discussing the domination of Thaddeus Stevens and the emancipation of the Republican party from his rule on his death in 1868, Mr. James G. Blaine in response to a question, "Whom have you got for leaders?" is reported to have said: "There are three young men coming forward. Allison will be heard from, so will James A. Garfield," and then he paused. "Who is the third?" "I don't see the third," Blaine replied, gazing into the dome."

The great goal of political ambition then as nowadays was membership in the Senate of the United States. In connection with the senatorial elections in 1858 and '60 the names of Henry O'Connor, Wm. Penn Clarke and Judge Smyth were mentioned and urged in the former and those of Mr. Butler, Mr. Kasson and Judge Reuben Noble in the latter election. Senator Grimes regarded Judge Smyth as his most dangerous competitor in 1858. In the seventies and again in the eighties Mr. Kasson was the candidate of a powerful group of the party but the fates did not decide in his favor. Three of the delegation, however, entered the Senate. Alvin Saunders of Henry county was appointed Governor of the Territory of Nebraska in 1861, serving until 1867, and in 1883 he was sent to the Senate from that State, serving one term. James F. Wilson, after his distinguished career in the House of Representatives, became a Senator of Iowa in 1883, and remained so up to his death in 1895. In 1873 Mr. W. B. Allison entered the Upper Chamber, after eight years in the House of Representatives, serving without interruption for almost thirty-six years, a career without duplicate in that noted body. Among its members he became, Senator Hale of Maine asserts, "an exalted and accepted leader",¹ whose solid achievements won from Senator Lodge of Massachusetts the encomium that "for many years he was the nation's 'best senator,' " becoming like Webster "one of the institutions" of the country.²

Two of the delegates were at various times widely mentioned in public discussion as candidates for the Presidency. The nomination of Judge H. Clay Caldwell by the national Democratic party was strongly urged in 1896 and 1900; some of his decisions respecting the relations of railroads to their laborers and their relations to the public had made him very popular with the masses as well as with the profession; but he refused to allow his friends to promote him.³ At the national Republican convention at Chicago in 1888, Senator Al-

¹*Congressional Record*, Proceedings in the Senate, Feb. 6, 1909.

²*Ibid.*

³*The Annals of Iowa* (3d Series) VIII, 267.

lison's name was formally presented and the late Senator Hoar of Massachusetts informs us that "no other person ever came so near the Presidency of the United States and missed it," the contrary disposition of one notable alone controlling the vote of the New York delegation and thwarting his nomination.¹

(f) *Contemporary Comment on the Conclusions of the Convention.*

The proceedings and conclusions of the convention, as was the case with the call and the preliminaries thereof, elicited comparatively few comments in the party press of the State. Editorial comment is rare. Epistolary or reportorial comment is more frequent. Such papers as *The News* of Boone, *The Hawk-Eye* of Burlington, *The Intelligencer* of Charles City, *The Daily Gazette* of Davenport, *The Gate City* of Keokuk, *The Journal* of Muscatine, *The Courier* of Ottumwa, *The Hamilton Freeman* of Webster City, made no editorial comment. We need not conclude, however, that their respective editors were either ignorant of or indifferent to the work of the convention. The editors of all, save *The Hawk-Eye* and *The Intelligencer*, were delegates and took part in the proceedings. Some of them sent interesting letters back to their readers in which we find what were virtually editorial observations.

Some of the comments upon the boisterous character of the proceedings have been given. Sundry editors pass judgment upon the significance of the proceedings and a few make assertions as to the attitude of the convention and of its national delegates towards national candidates. Altogether they afford us interesting evidence of the contrary and divergent interpretations of the same transactions. Each one saw what his predilections or prejudices inclined him to see. Their expressions are given with but little condensation in what follows.

¹G. F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, I, 410-413.

In the fore part of 1860 the columns of *The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* contained a number of racy letters from "Our Iowa Correspondent." They were the product of the facile pen of Fitz Henry Warren of Burlington. On his return from the convention at Des Moines, where he was chairman of his county's delegation, he wrote the following, dated at Burlington, Jan. 21.

Our state convention for the election of delegates to Chicago was in convulsive throes last Wednesday. As there were over five hundred candidates for the places you can calculate the number in attendance. The representation first proposed was three hundred and thirty, but there being still some disappointed aspirants, the number was made thirty-three. I can give you one negative item of information only—they are *not* for Bates. When people die in this country, they are buried, and though tenderly remembered, are never disinterred for political or other purposes; in which regard we are far behind the refined tastes of our eastern kinsfolk.

My bowels of compassion are strongly moved for the unfortunate seven who may be selected for the cabinet of the Republican president, if, contrary to my expectations, we are to have one. Let them court the protection of granite battlements, mounted with cannon and culverin, ditched and counterscarped, portholed and portcullised. Never since the northern barbarians overran the vine clad hills and valleys of Italy, has there been such an irruption as there will be into Washington with a change of dynasty. Let the prayers of the Christian Church go up in advance for these predestined victims of the universal "give, give," of famished patriotism. We need not waste our supplications on women in the "perils of child birth" and "sick persons and young children," when manhood and mature age are gasping for breath in the suffocation of an office-seeking mob.¹

Another observer, an Ohioan who happened to be in Des Moines the day of the convention, attended its sessions. He gave *The Cincinnati Gazette* an account of the character of the delegates with a slightly different flavor, observing:

Iowa may be relied upon as one of the firm Republican states. The leading politicians are generally young men of a high order of talent, devoted to principles rather than to men; energetic and en-

¹*The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* (wk.) Feb. 4, 1860. The writer is indebted to Mr. Otha Thomas, a graduate student of law in Yale University for the extract.

thusiastic they will arouse the whole State in the coming canvass, to an extent which will result in a Republican majority of at least five thousand votes.¹

A correspondent of *The Fairfield Ledger*, who signs himself "Vindex" discusses the delegation, its work and the party's prospects in a pointed fashion. As Fairfield was Senator James F. Wilson's home town one is curious whether or not his views are reflected. The letter was penned at Des Moines the day following the convention (Jan. 19.)

The delegation is left uninstructed and will go "perfectly free to regulate their vote in their own way" which I think is entirely proper and right. It cannot be told now who it will be best to select as the representative for the ensuing contest. Whoever he may be I hope he will be a full grown Republican—no weakkneed, limber backed, half and half compromiser. The country and the times demand a thoroughbred Republican and I doubt not that the Chicago convention will meet this demand promptly and with the right kind of a man.

The Republican party has a severe contest before it; but a triumph is certain if the right kind of counsels prevail. Advices flow into this point from all sections of the country and evince a strong and steady growth of Republican sentiment—the truth is that a prudent and firm course at Chicago will bring to our support a host of men who are little suspected of Republican proclivities. I am advised of quite a number of leading and influential Democrats who are waiting for the action of the Republican convention before determining their course in the coming canvass. I know that many of them have, in private, said that they are sick of the Democratic party and its detestable dogmas. They acknowledge that the party is completely sold out to the slave power and insist that they cannot and will not continue to insult their intelligence by trying to apologize for and whitewash the flagrant wrongs perpetrated by their party.²

The conspicuous fact in public debate was Slavery. Yet Abolitionism was the *bete noir* of prudent politicians. The convention indulged in no resolutions respecting the vexed question, but it favored two men who were tainted with strong prejudices favorable to the Negro. This phase of the convention's work is adverted to by *The Indianola Visitor*, whose

¹*The Weekly Iowa Citizen*, Feb. 8, 1860.

²*The Fairfield Ledger*, Jan. 27, 1860.

editor, Mr. J. H. Knox, was a Marylander, with an anti-slavery bent but with an aversion for Abolitionists. Writing from Des Moines he says:

You will see by reference to this list [of delegates] that there is just enough of the Brown sympathizing Republicans in the delegation to give it a strong Abolition odor. Grinnell and Clarke are avowed and undeniable Abolitionists; the former having been a bosom friend of the Harper's Ferry insurrectionist up to the moment of his death and would be today loud in praise of his acts were he not afraid that it might possibly be unpopular to openly eulogize treason. When Brown went through his town with a lot of stolen property Mr. Grinnell harbored him and raised money to aid him on his journey to Canada. W. Penn Clarke is known all over the State as an Abolitionist and is the leader of that wing of the party to which he belongs. He is a man of ability—one who has worked his own passage through life from the position of a tramping journeyman printer to that of a prominent politician and one of the ablest members of the bar in the State. With the aid of Grinnell, Clarke will make the Iowa delegation show the ebony at Chicago. I do not know whom the majority of the delegation are in favor of for President, nor do I think they can consistently decide in favor of any Republican. The call for the national convention is not for a Republican convention but for one composed of delegates from every party opposed to the policy of James Buchanan. Under the call Free Lovers, Garrisonites and Woman's Rights parties, all have a perfect right to send their delegates to the convention and there put forth their candidate for nomination.¹

Similar, but much less sympathetic sentiments were expressed by Mr. Stilson Hutchins, who had then but recently assumed editorial control of the *Iowa State Journal*, the organ of the Democrats at the capital city. Under the caption "‘Union Men’ of the North" he made (Jan. 21) the following comments on some of the notables honored by the convention:

Wm. Penn Clarke, one of John Brown's Iowa correspondents when that "martyr" was at Harper's Ferry, perfecting his "unwise and censurable scheme," heads the list of delegates to represent the great Republican States rights party at Chicago.

J. B. Grinnell, as pure an Abolitionist as today treads Massachusetts soil—and the man who, in the pulpit of the Congregational

¹*The Indianola Visitor*, Jan. 26, 1860.

church in the town of Grinnell, in Poweshiek county, stood by the side of John Brown, then reeking with the blood of his murdered victims, and appealed to the audience to subscribe liberally to aid him on his way, is a co-delegate.

Jacob Butler, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Convention of which Clarke and Grinnell are the representatives, attended as a delegate a Disunion Abolition Convention at Chicago last summer, and made, of all members, the most infamous disunion speech. These are the representatives of the "conservative" spirit of the country, and the candidates they put in nomination, Webster and Clay Whigs will feel proud to support.

One of the obstreperous facts in the political field in 1860 was the presence of the foreign voter and his belligerent disposition in all matters closely affecting his welfare. Both parties studiously avoided irritating the foreign born; but the latter's experience with Know-Nothingism was still a vivid memory and we see some signs of their sensitiveness respecting their treatment in the comments of the press. The chief fact in the proceedings of the convention as Mr. F. M. Zieback, editor of the *Sioux City Register*, the organ of the Democratic party in the northwest part of the State saw it, was the clash of the elements in respect of slavery and the "foreigners." He thus characterized the proceedings:

There were three different elements in the Convention, viz.: The Irrepressible Brown Republicans who favored Seward; the Germans who favored a Michigan gentleman, and the dark lantern party who favored Bates. They had a stormy time, as might be expected.¹

In the columns of *The Pella Gazette* we find some interesting observations upon the makeup of the delegation that indicate how real to the foreign born was the fear of nativistic antagonism and how welcome were definite signs of its abatement. Mr. Scholte observed:

If our readers look over the list of delegates they will perceive that not only the different parts of the State are represented in the delegation, but also that several naturalized citizens are among the delegates. The last feature is certainly a renewed and indubitable proof that there is no proscription of foreign birth. That part of the population of Iowa has a fair proportion in the representation

¹*The Sioux City Register*, Jan. 28, 1860.

of our State in the national convention for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States. We call attention to that particular feature because the Democratic leaders are continually trying to influence foreign born citizens by the unwarranted assertion that the Republican party is under the control of the party generally known as the Know-Nothing or Native American.

We do not object to a native American having more sympathy with the native born—that is natural,—and exists among Democrats as well as Republicans; but when that natural sympathy degenerates into exclusion and proscription of citizens of foreign birth it ought to be denounced and resisted. We are therefore well pleased to see the frequent refutation of that slander by the Republican party in the election of foreign born citizens.¹

A few surmises are ventured as to the attitude of the delegation selected for Chicago towards the candidates for the Presidency. Some are direct and positive, some are balanced with alternatives. They indicate the inclinations of the writers as much as they do their cool judgment. The correspondent of *The Vinton Eagle*, presumably Senator Drummond, wrote, under date of Jan. 23:

The "Irrepressibles" are well represented on the delegation, a majority being of that faith. But it makes no difference about that in this State. Iowa is sure to give her vote to the Chicago nominee whoever he may be, and the general impression here is that Cameron will be the man.²

On January 20 a correspondent wrote *The Keosauqua Republican* from Des Moines:

The Convention sent 33 delegates to Chicago to cast 8 votes. Many of the delegates are supposed to be Seward men, though most of them declared themselves not committed and determined to be influenced in their choice only by considerations of public good and availability. No doubt a large portion of the delegation will go for Seward if they believe from the sentiment and lights developed at Chicago that he can be elected. Some of the delegates undoubtedly have a decided preference for some more conservative man, or at least some one who is regarded by the people as a more conservative man.³

¹*The Pella Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1860.

²*The Vinton Eagle*, Jan. 31, 1860.

³*The Keosauqua Republican*, Jan. 27, 1860.

About the same date the correspondent of *The Dubuque Times*, presumably Mr. Frank W. Palmer, penned the following:

Some of the delegates expressed their unalterable determination to cast their votes and use all honorable means within their power to secure the nomination and election of the "man of the hour" whose past career, unclouded and unspotted, shall be deemed a sufficient guarantee of his future action—a *true and unfaltering* exponent of the principles of the Republican party¹

One might conclude that Gov. Seward was in the mind of those delegates with "unalterable determination" but the conclusion is not necessary.

A correspondent of *The Gate City* wrote the following dated at Des Moines, Jan. 21:

The delegates were uninstructed, which was right. All the proposed candidates have friends among them, though we presume no one has a majority. We think Lincoln and Cameron have more friends, very decidedly, than any other two.²

The same sentiment was expressed by the veteran, John Teesdale, in terms that summarize many of his own editorial observations in *The Citizen* during the year preceding:

The delegates go uncommitted; as they should do. No attempt was made to pack the delegation for any aspirant to the Presidency. Seward, Chase, McLean, Bates, Lincoln, Cameron, and other distinguished statesmen, have their friends in the delegation. But when it is fairly ascertained who is the man to bear aloft the Republican banner, and lead the free masses to victory, Iowa will be found ready to declare her preference.³

A dispatch to the *Chicago Press and Tribune*, printed Jan. 21, declared that the delegates from Iowa were in favor of the nomination of Mr. Seward. Later reports contradicted the first advices. An editorial rectifying first comments concluded with the observation "The spirit of the Iowa Republicans was and is, to go for the man who seems likeliest to be elected when the national convention meets, provided al-

¹Reprinted in *The Lyons Weekly Mirror*, Jan. 26, 1860.

²*The Gate City*, Jan. 26, 1860.

³*The Daily Iowa State Register*, Jan. 20, 1860.

ways that he is a staunch Republican with a backbone perfectly straight." This sentiment of *The Press* elicited the following from Mr. Add H. Sanders:

The Press is right. The Iowa delegation will enter the Republican national convention as every other delegation should do, unpledged to any man and thus in a position to calmly make their choice after the claims and strength of the different candidates for nomination are thoroughly investigated, with the sole object before them of the success of the Republican party above and beyond any particular individual's personal elevation. Whoever is nominated of those whose names have been prominently mentioned in connection with the position, our delegation may safely promise the people and the party the electoral vote of Iowa. The people will redeem this promise most gloriously. No State in the Union is more thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of true Republicanism than Iowa.¹

Mr. John Mahin noting the first dispatch or a similar report referred to above wrote *The Muscatine Daily Journal* denying its authenticity and saying:

We judge from conversation with many of the delegates and from the hearty applause which greeted the mention of Mr. Seward's name by the gentlemen who addressed the convention, that he is the first choice of the majority of the Republicans of the State; but the disposition appeared unanimous to acquiesce in the action of the national convention.²

The extract from the *Press and Tribune* quoted above was reprinted in *Der Demokrat* also of Davenport with comment in agreement, concluding with the observation: ". . . at present the views of the several delegates in regard to the president to be nominated are still widely diverging."³

Another paper of Chicago, the *Journal*, announced that "the delegates . . . it is understood, favor the nomination of Mr. Seward for the Presidency." Commenting on this statement, Mr. Clark Dunham said:

¹*The Davenport Daily Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1860.

²*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, Jan. 23, 1860.

³*Der Democrat*, Jan. 24, 1860. The writer is indebted to Mr. Harry E. Downer and Dr. August P. Richter of Davenport for the citations from *The Daily Gazette* and *Der Demokrat* relative to the reports and comments in *The Press and Tribune* of Chicago.

Our Chicago contemporary has sources of information which are inaccessible to us. So far as we can learn our delegation is not committed to *any* candidate, the sentiment of the convention was, that our representatives shall consult and co-operate with those from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Indiana. We think we may venture to say, that whoever is the strongest in these states will be the one for whom our vote will be thrown.¹

So far as the writer can discover no criticism of the convention because of its action or non-action in the matter of instructions, or in respect of the makeup of the delegation, or the alleged or presumed preferences of the delegates for candidates, was made by any Republican editor in Iowa. None indicated any positive or insistent preferences. Each and all seem to assume and to presume that success at the polls in the coming election was the paramount consideration. The ambitions of candidates or the claims of their friends or promoters and the demands of this or that state or section for "recognition" were minor matters and negligible.

(g) *Commentary and Conclusion.*

However one may regard the character of the delegates to the Republican state convention that assembled in Sherman's Hall on Wednesday afternoon, January 18, 1860; whatever conclusion is tenable as to the *motif* impelling the delegates in the proceedings; and be one's opinion such as it may as to the character or careers of the delegates selected by the convention to represent its wishes and to determine for its members on the proper course at Chicago—several conclusions are justified by the foregoing exhibits.

If a "machine" controlled in the preliminaries of the convention at Des Moines, that is in the caucuses and conventions in the cities and country districts in the selection of the county delegates, the managers of the machine picked and sent to Des Moines some of the best ability and finest character to be found in the Republican party in Iowa at the time of its maximum vigor and virtue. Its delegates thoroughly represented not only the vitality of the party, but the general average of Iowa's citizenship.

¹*See Davy Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 25, 1860.

If "politics" controlled in the proceedings of the convention at Des Moines it was the natural and necessary result of the collision of contrary interests in the State whose representatives in the nature of the case sought position and power to protect and further those interests. The conclusion of their proceedings—their negation of instructions or of the unit rule—in the light of the conditions then manifest and in the judgment of those who have studied them in the lights and shades of subsequent events, was the very essence of common sense as well as the very substance of political wisdom.

If the delegates selected by Iowa's Republicans on January 18, 1860, to represent them in the celebrated convention at Chicago were "politicians" and "wire-pullers" they were certainly excellent samples of the species—and a sort that it would be well if their numbers and kind would increase and multiply.

The attitude of the delegates in Sherman's Hall towards national issues and the several candidates then mentioned and urged upon their consideration completely represented the dominant wish of the rank and file of the party throughout the State as it was indicated in their party press during the year preceding. Prejudices relative to sundry moot points that aroused animosity and alienated allies and personal preferences for particular candidates were deliberately checked, in order that there might result an efficient harmony on matters of universal interest among the opposition to the Administration in control at Washington.

Finally the name of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois seems to have been as much in the minds and in the calculations of the delegates and leaders at Des Moines, as were the names of Banks or Bates or Cameron or Chase or Fessenden or McLean or Wade—and possibly—or Seward.

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