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THE IOWA GERMANS IN THE ELECTION OF 1860

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THE GERMAN-AMERICANS IN NATIONAL POLITICS IN 1860

In the stormy period of the 1850's the young American nation was trying by democratic processes to determine its future way of life. Many of its statesmen had come to realize that the agrarian civilization of the South based upon slavery and the new industrial civilization of the North were incompatible. They saw that if the nation was to endure, one of these opposed cultures must predominate. It was a critical choice which the Americans were forced to make in that trying decade, and the problem was only resolved by a bitter civil war.

Strangely enough, circumstances transpired which gave the new German-American citizens, largely untrained in American ideas and ideals, an importance in deciding this question which was all out of proportion to their numerical strength. The Presidential election contest was closely fought in 1860, and the winner, Abraham Lincoln, received fewer popular votes than his combined opponents, becoming the fourth minority President of the United States. In so close an election a small minority group without strong allegiance to either party could, if well led and united, wield tremendous influence.

The German born Americans comprised such a group. Although only 1,301,136, or 4.73%, of the entire population of the United States in 1860 were of German birth, the fact that the great majority of these immigrants had settled in those states west of the Appalachians and north of the Ohio,

gave them great political significance.¹ Professor A. B. Faust says that in 1860:

The Germans clearly held the balance of power at the polls in Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota, in Illinois and Wisconsin, in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.²

The unity of the German-Americans was another element in their political strength. Like other foreign language groups, the German immigrants were clannish. They lived in settlements and certain cities—Cincinnati, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and Davenport—came to be known as German cities. The German language press was large and active. According to the Cincinnati *Gazette* of 1854, it consisted of eighty-eight papers in that year. Devotedly following their able leaders, the German-Americans presented a nearly solid political front in 1860.

Until 1850 the great majority of German-Americans were Jacksonian Democrats, largely because the Democratic party had always been the party of the immigrants and the "common people." After the Mexican War, however, the increased agitation of the slavery question and the arrival of the "emigrés" from the German Revolutions of 1848 led many Germans to renounce their ties to the Democracy. The "forty eighters," who soon assumed the leadership of the German-Americans, hated slavery as another form of the oppression from which they had fled. Therefore, when in 1853 Stephen A. Douglas introduced in the United States Senate a bill to repeal the Missouri Compromise, his German followers deserted the Democratic party by the thousands.³

The problem of finding a party which stood for political principles to which they could subscribe confronted those who had left the Democracy. The great opposition party, the Whigs, was decadent, ineffectual, and in the process of disintegration. No major party appeared to take its place as an opponent of the Democratic measures which the Germans

¹*Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, Joseph C. Kennedy, Superintendent of Census, Washington, 1864, p. xxviii.

²Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States*, New York, 1909, I:462.

³Frank I. Herriott, "The Conference of German Republicans in the Deutsches Haus, Chicago, May 14-15, 1860." Reprint from *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society for 1928*, pp. 11-12.

had found so distasteful. Some of the German voters did ally themselves with the Whig party. Others supported the Free Soil party, newly organized by those opposed to the extension of slavery into the Territories. *Der Bund Freier Manner*, an independent anti-slavery party, was organized by German radicals in Louisville in 1853, and spread through most of the Western states.⁴ Needless to say, the American, or "Know-Nothing," party, which was definitely anti-foreign and anti-Catholic, gained no German adherents.

When the Republican party was organized in 1854 and 1855 to prevent the extension of slavery and to succeed the party of Clay as a proponent of internal improvements, a protective tariff, and a strong central government thousands of Germans attached themselves to it. Among the German leaders who took an active part in early Republican councils were Gustav Korner and George Schneider of Illinois, Philip Dorheimer of Buffalo, and Carl Schurz of Wisconsin.

Nineteen of the delegates to the first Republican Convention in Philadelphia on June 17, 1856, were German-Americans. George Schneider composed the tenth plank in the platform adopted by this convention. This resolution, which was an assurance to German voters that the party had their interest at heart, condemned all proscriptive legislation. It was an open challenge to the nativistic element within the party.⁵ During the campaign that followed, the "forty eighters" worked strenuously for Fremont, the Republican nominee. Although the Republicans lost the election, the labor of these German leaders bore fruit. Schurz estimated that 300,000 German votes were cast for Fremont in 1856 in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio.⁶

Although these Germans gave the Republican cause strong support in 1856, there were elements within the party organization that antagonized the new citizens. In addition to the nativistic element, there was a puritanical group within the party which attempted to regulate Sunday observance and prohibit the use of alcoholic drinks. This ran counter to the German's interpretation of individual liberty and

⁴Faust, *op. cit.*, II:130-190.

⁵Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

⁶Frederick Franklin Schrader, *The Germans in the Making of America*, Boston, 1924, p. 194.

separation of church and state. Naturally the Democrats were quick to point out to the Germans the harshness of these elements.⁷

The activities of Know-Nothings under the cover of Republicanism made the German-Americans particularly anxious. Less than two months after the election of President Buchanan, a bill was sponsored in Congress by Republican representatives which would have required a foreigner to reside twenty-one years in this country before he should be allowed to vote. The bill was defeated by a Democratic majority.⁸ Further evidence of the existence of nativism within the Republican party appeared in 1857 when Carl Schurz was defeated for lieutenant-governor of Wisconsin by the same Republicans who had used his name to decoy German votes for the Republican ticket.⁹

There was, however, no organized movement among the German Republicans to protest against nativism within the party until 1859. In that year the General Court of Massachusetts, in which the Republicans were in a large majority, passed what was known as the "Two Year" amendment to the state constitution. This provided that:¹⁰

No person of foreign birth shall be allowed to vote, nor shall he be eligible for office, unless he shall have resided within the jurisdiction of the state for two years subsequent to his naturalization and shall be otherwise qualified according to the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth.

The amendment was submitted to the voters of the state whose affirmative vote made it a law. So evident was the activity of the Massachusetts Republicans in behalf of this proscription that Republicans in other states could not disavow the action although they did condemn it.¹¹

Immediately a storm of protest arose from the German Republicans. Although the German press was angered, it was not united in either its conclusions or its recommendations. A movement was initiated to call a national convention of German Republicans during the summer of 1859, but it

⁷Faust, *op. cit.*, II:31.

⁸*Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, Oct. 26, 1860; Nov. 2, 1860.

⁹Faust, *op. cit.*, II:134.

¹⁰*Iowa Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Sept. 29, 1859.

¹¹*Ibid.*, June 2, 1859.

failed.¹² The assurances of friendship given the adopted citizens by the western Republicans undoubtedly helped to hold their allegiance to the new party.

Had nativism seemed to the Germans to be the greatest issue facing the Republican party in 1859 they would probably have left the organization without even making an attempt to alter party policy. But by this time they were thoroughly aroused over the slavery question and were bent upon forcing the nomination for President of a man whose anti-slavery attitude was strong and sure. William Henry Seward of New York was the German Republicans' first choice for President,¹³ Lincoln had also made himself acceptable to the German element by his clear statements on slavery and Know-Nothingism.

The desires of the German Republicans in regard to the platform of 1860 were as definite as was their choice of candidate.¹⁴

A minimum of demands of the German radicals embraced the following: 1. Repeal of the infamous Fugitive Slave law; 2. Protection of citizens of free states sojourning within the slave states; 3. Freedom of speech, press, and of assembling in the southern states as well as in the northern; and, 4. Abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, which depends solely upon Congress.

Some within the Republican councils in 1859 and 1860 felt only a moderate candidate, who was not unfavorable to slavery and Americanism, could be elected President. This group, led by Horace Greeley and his New York *Tribune*, inaugurated a movement for the candidacy of Judge Edward O. Bates, of St. Louis, many months before the national convention. Because of Judge Bates' pro-slavery and nativistic views he was unacceptable to the German Republicans; and as his campaign gained momentum, it met stiff opposition from the Germans.

On March 7, 1860, the Germans of Davenport, Iowa, called together by Henry Ramming, associate editor of *Der Demokrat* of that city, held a mass meeting to discuss the proper attitude for the Germans to maintain in the coming contest

¹²Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹³Faust, *op. cit.*, II:134-135.

¹⁴Theodor Olshausen, in *New York Abendzeitung*, January, 1860, quoted in Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

for the Republican presidential nomination. The result of the meeting was a series of resolutions denouncing the conservative element in the party and Judge Bates in particular. The resolutions concluded with the statement that "we therefore under no circumstances will vote for the Hon. Edward Bates."¹⁵

The German Republicans of New York City, probably influenced by the Davenport meeting of March 7, adopted seven resolutions on March 13, denouncing the Massachusetts amendment and demanding a presidential candidate who was unequivocally opposed to Know-Nothingism and the perpetuation of slavery. Ten days later the same committee sent out a call to "all similar organizations" urging them to send delegates to a meeting to be held in Chicago on May 14, to influence the Republican platform and to control the German delegates to the Republican National Convention to be held in Chicago on May 16.¹⁶

The Conference of the German Republicans was held at the Deutsches Haus, in Chicago, as scheduled, William Kopp, editor of the *New Yorker Demokrat*, presiding. The resolutions adopted at this meeting were really an "Ultimatum that the German Republicans would bolt the ticket if their demands as to the platform were not complied with and their general wishes as to the character of the Candidate were not met."¹⁷

There can be no doubt that the Deutsches Haus Conference greatly influenced the actions of the Wigwam Convention. The platform adopted at the Convention complied with the demands of the German Republican Committee of New York of March 13, 1860. While Seward, the German choice, did not receive the nomination for the Presidency, Lincoln, an entirely acceptable candidate did. The German Republicans had defeated the conservative elements of the party by preventing the nomination of Judge Bates for President.

While addressing the Convention on behalf of the naturalization plank, Schurz promised the party 300,000 votes in

¹⁵*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, Mar. 21, 1860; Herriott, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-49; Louis Pelzer, "The History of Political Parties in Iowa, 1857-1860," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, VII:217.

¹⁶Herriott, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 35.

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio. Schrader estimates the German Republican vote in those states in 1860 to be nearly 450,000. A vote of 450,000 could easily have swung those states into the Democratic line. If Schrader's estimate is at all reasonable, the Germans of the Northwest tipped the scales for Lincoln; for, without the Northwestern states, Lincoln would have only secured 114 electoral votes to his nearest opponent's 138 electoral votes.¹⁸

THE GERMANS IN IOWA: THEIR LEADERS AND PRESS

Although it has been asserted that the Iowa Germans seemed to have little genius for pioneering or frontier life,¹⁹ many of them were to be found among the early settlers of Iowa. They had been drawn from Missouri, Illinois, and the eastern states, along with the native Americans, toward new homes and brighter prospects in the new territory.²⁰ Most of their settlements were along the Mississippi River or in the country immediately west of it. Dubuque, the largest city in the state in 1860, had, at one time, a population that was over half German. The two other leading cities, Des Moines, the state capital, and Davenport also had large German populations. From the nucleus at Davenport, other German communities sprang; such as Avoca, Minden, Walcott, Wheatland, and Dewitt. Many of the Germans in these communities were from Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark. German Catholics settled the town of New-Wein, northwest of Dubuque; and Guttenberg, north of Dubuque on the Mississippi, was founded by Germans from Cincinnati.²¹

Several communistic and mystical religious groups of Germans migrated to Iowa before 1860. The Amana settlement in Johnson county was well established by this time. It was a group bound by religious ties. Another communistic society, the "Iearians," moved from Nauvoo, Illinois, to Corning, Adams county, Iowa, in 1856. They had bought the property from the Mormons in Nauvoo, in 1850, when the Latter Day Saints fled to the west under Brigham Young. These communists, upon the death of their leader, Etienne Cabet, settled at Corning and named the community they

¹⁸Schrader, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

¹⁹George F. Parker, *Iowa—Pioneer Foundations*, Iowa City, Iowa, 1939, p. 143.

²⁰Faust, I:461.

²¹*Ibid.*, I:462.

founded the "Icaria Commune" in honor of Cabet's book *Icarie*. Most of the members of this society were French, "but the most influential of them after Cabet's death were Germans." On "Potato Prairie," in Clayton county, Heinrich Koch, after his return from the Mexican War in 1847, founded another colony of German communists.²²

Much greater in number were the Amish Mennonites, a mystical religious sect, composed largely of Germans. The vanguard of this group settled in West Point township, in Lee county, in 1831. They next founded a community in Henry county, in 1843. The Johnson county settlement, from which was destined to grow the largest Amish district in the state, was made in 1846. The Mennonites in Davis county came to Iowa in 1854.²³

The early Germans in Iowa were mostly of the peasant type. They were content to work their farms or conduct their little businesses. Proud of their new nationality, they attempted, without complete success, to become Americanized. To their leaders, who were sometimes incapable and short-sighted, they gave blind obedience. Their record of political leadership in Iowa is not brilliant. In the history of the state there has never been a candidate for either Governor or United States Senator with a German name.²⁴ What political strength they possessed was due, largely, to their numbers and unity.

Less than one-third of the early Iowa Germans were Catholics. A small minority were members of various mystical sects and the remainder were Protestant.²⁵

There were 38,555 native Germans living in Iowa in 1860. This formed 5.79 per cent of the entire state population of 674,913 and 36.34 per cent of the total foreign population of the state, which was 106,081.²⁶

The Germans in Iowa, as in other parts of the United States, had turned, during the "fifties," for leadership to the refugees of the German and Austrian revolutions. Henry

²²*Ibid.*

²³Melvin Gingerich, *The Mennonites in Iowa*, Iowa City, Iowa, 1939, pp. 57, 67, 93.

²⁴Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 144.

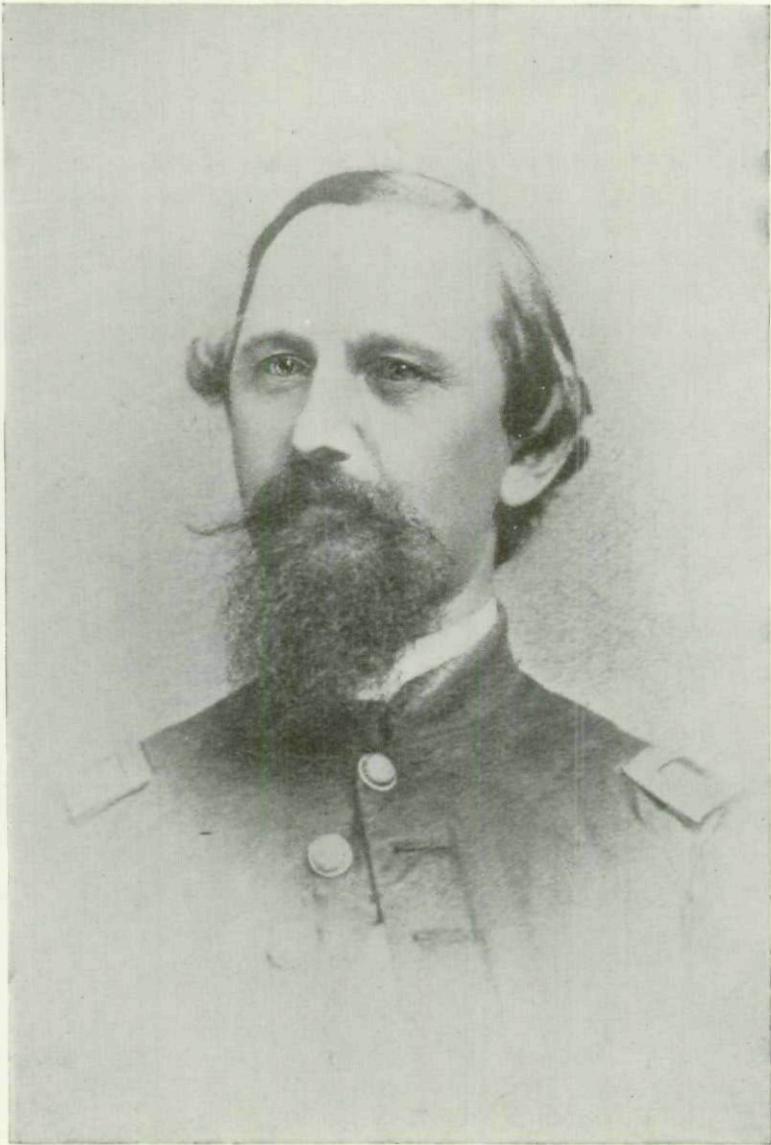
²⁶*Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, Washington, 1864.

Ramming, of Davenport, was such a leader. A native of Hungary, he had once been an officer in the Austrian army. From 1856 to 1860 he served as associate editor of *Der Demokrat*, and was editor of that newspaper in 1860 and 1861. During the Civil War he served on General Fremont's staff and later as Colonel of the 3rd Missouri Infantry.

Carl Rotteck, a leader of the German radical thought in the state, was also a refugee of the Revolution of 1848. Educated as a lawyer in Germany, he attempted farming in America. Like many another "latin farmer" he was unsuccessful in this enterprise. After a second failure, this time as a shoe merchant, he founded the *Muscatine (Iowa) Zeitung* in 1857. Because of Rotteck's outspoken comment in this paper, readers were alienated and he was forced to stop publishing the *Zeitung*. In 1859 he moved to Burlington, Iowa. From there he went to Keokuk where in 1862 he published the *Beobachter des Westens*.

Dr. William Hoffbauer of Guttenberg and Dubuque, Iowa, was a leading Republican and a close friend of Carl Schurz. He had been educated at the University of Berlin from which he had received the M. D. degree. Dr. Hoffbauer had lost an arm, supposedly in a duel, before coming to America. As a member of the Frankfort Parliament, he was on the extreme left, and upon the collapse of the Revolution he fled to Switzerland, from where he had come to the United States in 1850.

Another prominent leader of the Iowa Germans in 1860 was Nicholas J. Rusch, who served as lieutenant-governor of Iowa in 1859 and 1860. Rusch was born in Marne, Holstein, in February, 1822. He received his education at the Gymnasium in Meddorf, a Seminar of Segeberg, and later at the University of Kiel. Because of political disturbances in Schleswig-Holstein he emigrated to Scott county, Iowa, near Davenport, where he farmed very successfully. He was elected to the State Senate of Iowa in 1857 where he served until his election as lieutenant-governor of the state. In 1860 Governor Kirkwood appointed Rusch Immigration Commissioner for Iowa. He resigned this position when Civil War broke out and gave his services to the Union cause.



NICHOLAS J. RUSH, STATE SENATOR 1855-59;
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR 1859-60.

When he died at Vicksburg, Mississippi, he was serving as a Colonel in the Union army.²⁷

Hans R. Claussen and Theodor Olshausen were also leaders of great authority among the Germans of Iowa. The latter acquired a national reputation as an editor and writer. For years he edited *Der Demokrat*, a German Republican newspaper in Davenport, Iowa. "Olshausen was of a famous family and had a notable career in letters and politics" in Germany. Claussen had been an advocate in the Holstein courts, and a member of the Frankfort, Holstein, and Stuttgart Congresses. These two men had been imprisoned in Denmark, because they had protested against the treatment of the Holsteiners by the Danish king. Upon their release from prison they had migrated to America and had eventually settled in Iowa.²⁸

In 1860 only five German newspapers were being published in Iowa. The oldest of these, the *Iowa Staats Zeitung*, had been founded in Dubuque in 1849, as the *Northwest Demokrat*. Its first editor was B. Hauf, who published the paper until 1855. In that year D. A. Mahoney became the editor, but in a short while John Bittman took over the publishing of the *Northwest Demokrat* and changed its name to the *Iowa Staats Zeitung*. At the same time Dr. George Hillgartner became the editor. The *Zeitung*, originally Democratic, became Republican in 1856.

The Burlington, Des Moines County, *Volksblatt*, was established in 1852 by Metz and Loeber. It changed editors several times, and in 1855 the name of the paper became the *Freie Presse*. In 1860 it was being edited by a Mr. Vanzelow.

Der Demokrat, an important Republican newspaper, was founded in Davenport as a Whig organ in 1851. Henry Lischer and Company owned *Der Demokrat* in 1860, and Theodor Olshausen was its editor.

The Democratic German-American newspaper, *Beobachter des Westens*, was located in Keokuk. It was begun in 1855 by William Kopp, but was managed by Leopold Mader in 1860.

When the *Northwest Demokrat* changed its political affiliations in 1856, a demand arose in Dubuque for a Democratic

²⁷Herriott, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

German newspaper. In answer to this demand, Frederick A. Giuffke founded *Der National Demokrat*. This paper was published as a daily in 1857, but reverted to a weekly about a year later.²⁹

The political sympathies of the German newspapers in Iowa in 1860, were, no doubt, reflections of the attitudes of their constituents. The fact that these papers were so evenly divided on party ties, leads one to suspect that neither political party in Iowa could claim the entire German vote in 1860.

THE POLITICAL SCENE IN IOWA BEFORE 1860

The decade of the 1850's was a period of political revolution in Iowa. Sentiment in the Territory of Iowa had been strongly Democratic. Only once, in the "hard cider" year of 1840, did the Whigs win control of the Territorial legislature. During the first eight years of statehood, from 1846 to 1854, the state government remained in the hands of the Democracy. In that year, however, under the dynamic leadership of James W. Grimes, their candidate for governor, the Whig party won a foothold in the government at Iowa City. Although the Democrats secured a majority of one in the state senate, the Whigs had won the governorship and a majority in the house.³⁰

Several factors probably entered into this unexpected political turn. The source of immigration to Iowa had shifted from the southern and "border" states to the strongly Whig states of New England, New York and Pennsylvania. The pro-slavery leanings of the Democratic senators from Iowa, Augustus C. Dodge and George W. Jones, as demonstrated by their votes for the Kansas-Nebraska bill and against the Wilmot Proviso, also had an unfavorable effect upon the Iowa Democracy. No doubt the personal popularity of Grimes was an added factor in the Whig victory of 1854.

Governor Grimes, who had parted with the Whig party before he took office, was instrumental in the formation of the Republican party in Iowa. On February 22, 1856, a meeting was held at Iowa City, at which the state party

²⁹Hildegard E. Frese, *German-American Journalism in the State of Iowa*, 1935, pp. 12-16.

³⁰Pelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

organization was established. The Republicans gained strength so rapidly that twenty-one of the thirty-six delegates elected to the constitutional convention in August 1856 were listed as Republicans.³¹

This first Republican administration of Iowa was one of reform. During its tenure of office the State Constitution was revised, a state bank founded, and a prohibitory liquor law, similar to the famous "Maine Law," was passed. The latter measure proved to be very unpopular with the Germans in the state and was modified in 1857 and again in 1858.³²

When Governor Grimes refused the renomination which the Republicans offered him in 1857, Ralph P. Lowe of Muscatine was chosen instead and elected Governor. Grimes succeeded George W. Jones to the United States Senate on March 4, 1859.

In the election of 1858 the Republican ticket swept the state. For the first time in the history of Iowa there was an overwhelming representation of one party in the state government. The Republicans controlled both houses of the General Assembly by substantial majorities; and elected a complete slate of Republican State officers. In addition both United States Senators and the entire delegation to Congress were Republicans. The political revolution was complete.³³

While the Republican party had entrenched itself in the state capitol in 1858, its chances for success in the elections of 1859 and 1860 were not assured. There was criticism of state taxes and expenditures which had been raised to carry out the Republican reforms. The Democrats were demanding a "revision of existing banking laws and of the State Constitution."³⁴ Attacks were being made on the Republican attempt to amend the Iowa School law which barred negro children from schools unless unanimous consent of the white parents of the district was given.³⁵ Democratic papers were accusing the Republicans of being a prohibition party, on

³¹Cyrenus Cole, *Iowa—Through the Years*, Iowa City, 1940, pp. 150-260.

³²*Weekly Independence (Iowa) Civilian*, Aug. 18, 1859; *The Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Sept. 22, 1859; Cyrenus Cole, *A History of the People of Iowa*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1921, p. 277.

³³Pelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 220.

³⁵*Weekly Independence (Iowa) Civilian*, Aug. 25, 1859.

the one hand, and of amending the prohibition law on the other.³⁶ Among the more serious worries of the Republicans was the restlessness of the Germans, who suspected Iowa Republicans of sympathy with the Know-Nothings.³⁷

THE STRUGGLE FOR GERMAN VOTES IN THE CAMPAIGNS OF
1859 AND 1860

The Iowa Republicans were put on the defensive in their dealing with the naturalized citizens by the passage of the proscriptive "two year" amendment which was submitted to the people of Massachusetts in March, 1859. As soon as this measure had passed the Republican Massachusetts legislature, the Democratic press of Iowa featured it in their editorials as an evidence of Know-Nothingism within the Republican ranks. These papers warned the Germans that the only reason that such a measure had not been introduced by the Iowa Republicans was that the party in Iowa needed the German vote; but that as soon as the Republicans could, with the aid of the German voters, split the nation in two and get control of the government, they would turn on their German friends.³⁸ Not only had the Massachusetts Republicans debased the foreigner, but by enfranchising the negro had placed the adopted citizen in an even more unworthy position. The editor of the *Iowa Weekly Democrat*, of Sigourney, sarcastically remarked:³⁹

But Massachusetts has made . . . progress; she has extended to the African the immunities of the elective franchise, and repealed all laws that stigmatized the negro, and in her love for humanity, has adopted State laws in conflict with the Constitution of the United States, and now she is endeavoring to disenfranchise the white foreign citizens by extending the period allowed them by the federal constitution to become voters and citizens of the American Union.

The Democratic party, they said, "places the adopted citizen, wherever he may have been born, or at whatever altar he may worship on a basis of perfect and entire equality with the native."⁴⁰ Several of the Democratic papers

³⁶Louis Schade in *Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian*, June 16, 1859; *Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Sept. 22, 1859.

³⁷*Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Aug. 4, 1859.

³⁸*Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian*, Mar. 17, 1859.

³⁹April 22, 1859.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, Mar. 25, 1859.

printed a clipping from the *Quincy* (Massachusetts) *Herald* of the proclamation of the Germans of Massachusetts that they would never again support the Republican party.⁴¹

The Republican papers of the state were equally emphatic in condemnation of the Massachusetts amendment, but pointed out that the entire Republican party could not be censured for the actions of its partizans of one state. They said that the Republican party the country over condemned the "two years" amendment, and went so far as to hope that the Republicans of Massachusetts would lose the coming election.⁴² No doubt this wish was sincere for it was felt that many Germans would be driven from the party by the amendment, and as one paper said; "Without the German vote, Illinois and Wisconsin would today be in the hands of the black Democracy."⁴³

When on May 9, 1859, the people of Massachusetts ratified the "two year" amendment, the discussion of the question became even more agitated in Iowa. Many of the Democratic papers in the latter state carried several articles on the subject in one issue. The *Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian* prophesied that if the Republicans of Iowa⁴⁴

were strong enough to do without foreign votes, they would soon be walking in the steps of Massachusetts. But the Democratic party has never had but one creed and one record on this question. The Democratic party has never proscribed any portion of the white race, and has claims upon the support of naturalized citizens that we believe will not be forgotten. Old friends are the best, provided they have been tried and found true,—new friends may prove treacherous.

By this time, the Republicans had organized a rebuttal, which, however, was very weak. *The Gate City*, *Keosauqua Republican*, and *Davenport Gazette*, following the lead of Horace Greeley's *Tribune*, charged that the Massachusetts amendment was passed by a secret vote of the Democrats, in an effort to discredit the Republicans.⁴⁵ The Democratic press, in refutation, pointed out that the *Boston Bee*, a Republican paper, boasted that the amendment was a Re-

⁴¹*Sioux City* (Iowa) *Register*, April 14, 1859; *The Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, April 14, 1859; *Columbia City* (Iowa) *Enterprise*, April 30, 1859.

⁴²*Weekly Maquoketa* (Iowa) *Excelsior*, April 12, 1859.

⁴³*Vinton* (Iowa) *Eagle*, April 5, 1859.

⁴⁴May 12, 1859.

⁴⁵*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, May 25, 1859.

publican victory,⁴⁶ that the *Springfield* (Massachusetts) *Republican*, though opposing it, admitted it was a Republican measure,⁴⁷ and that the Massachusetts Germans, themselves, blamed the Republicans of that state for the law.⁴⁸ The *Sioux City* (Iowa) *Register* said:⁴⁹

It is useless for the Republicans of two or three Western States to excuse or repudiate the purpose foreshadowed by the action of Massachusetts. Adopted citizens simply ask the enjoyment of all the political rights and equality guaranteed them by the constitution—no more or less. These they begin to see will be secured to them by the Democracy only, a party that has never wavered in its fidelity to the constitution.

In answer to the Republican defense that the nativist attitude in the party was purely local, the Democrats showed the Germans that a proscriptive amendment was pending at the time in Connecticut, sponsored by the Republican party and that the Republican State Convention in New York had recommended a similar law for that state.⁵⁰ The union of the American and Republican parties in Hamilton, Ohio, was also pointed to as proof that Know-Nothingism was not a local element in the Republican party.⁵¹

The best defensive argument that the Iowa Republicans could present was that the vote on the Massachusetts amendment was very small, very close, and from the city districts; indicating that it was an American rather than a Republican vote.⁵²

The nativist Republican press of the east caused the Iowa Republicans more worry than did the Massachusetts amendment. Their editorials were freely clipped by Democratic papers in Iowa to offer proof of the American tendencies of the Republicans. Two eastern Republican papers so used by the Democratic press were the *Cleveland* (Ohio) *Herald* and the *Boston* (Massachusetts) *Bee* which denounced all foreigners and Catholics in very insulting terms.⁵³

The Germans of Iowa were thoroughly aroused by the

⁴⁶*Ibid*; *Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, May 27, 1859.

⁴⁷*Sioux City* (Iowa) *Register*, June 16, 1859.

⁴⁸*Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, June 24, 1859.

⁴⁹May 26, 1859.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, June 30, 1859.

⁵¹*Page County Herald*, Clarinda, Iowa, July 29, 1859.

⁵²*Columbia City* (Iowa) *Enterprise*, June 2, 1859; *Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, May 26, 1859.

⁵³*Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, April 15, 1859; May 27, 1859.

Massachusetts amendment and seemed to fear that the Republicans of the west were sympathetic to the nativist activities of the eastern party members. Nicholas Schade, a German-American of Burlington, Iowa, on May 20, 1859, wrote a public letter of nearly five columns length to the press of Iowa, urging the Germans not to vote the Republican ticket because the Republicans were the party of nativism and prohibition.⁵⁴ The Republicans were to hear more of Schade before the end of the campaign. An association of Germans known as the "Schulverein" met at Le Claire, Scott County, to draw up a set of resolutions denunciatory of Massachusetts Republicanism.⁵⁵ In April a committee of German political leaders, among whom were Hillgartner, Bittman, Freund, Olshausen, and Gulich,—submitted a questionnaire to the Congressional delegation from Iowa, in which they asked them:⁵⁶

1st. Are you in favor of the Naturalization Laws as they now stand, and particularly against all and every extension of the probation time?

2nd. Do you regard it as a duty of the Republican party, as the party of equal rights, to oppose and war upon each and every discrimination that may be attempted to be made between the Native born and Adopted citizens as to the right of suffrage?

3rd. Do you condemn the late action of the Republicans in the Massachusetts legislature, for attempting to exclude the Adopted citizens for two years from the ballot box, as unwise, unjust, and uncalled for?

Senator James W. Grimes, in an open letter from Burlington, Iowa, on April 30, replied to this inquiry:⁵⁷

To each of these interrogations I respond unhesitatingly in the affirmative.

In regard to the recent action of the Massachusetts Legislature in relation to the right of suffrage, I have this to say: That while I admit that the regulation sought to be adopted is purely of a local character, with which we of Iowa have nothing *directly* to do, and while I would be one of the last men in the world to interfere in the local affairs of a sovereign State, or with the action of any party in that State upon local matters, yet I claim the right to condemn, as my judgement may dictate, such a State

⁵⁴*Weekly Independence (Iowa) Civilian*, June 16, 1859.

⁵⁵*Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, May 13, 1859.

⁵⁶*Weekly Maquoketa (Iowa) Excelsior*, May 17, 1859.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

or party action, when, in my conviction, it is based upon a false and dangerous principle.

I believe the action of the Massachusetts Legislature alluded to, to be based upon such a principle, and to be fraught with evil and only evil, continually, to the whole country and not to Massachusetts alone. Hence I condemn and deplore it without equivocation or reserve.

Knowing how much the adoption of the proposed constitutional provision will offend their brethren elsewhere, the Republicans of Massachusetts owe it to their party, that this amendment should be overwhelmingly voted down.

In reply to the same letter Senator James Harlan answered:⁵⁸

I am compelled as a Republican, to say in reply to your first interrogatory, that I am not an advocate for any material change in the naturalization laws; to the second I do not approve any discrimination whatever against the rights of naturalized citizens; to the third, that I would not, if I were a citizen of Massachusetts, advocate the adoption of the proposed amendment to her Constitution.

Representatives Curtis and Vandever answered the inquiry in terms equally clear.⁵⁹ Because of his letter Grimes was accused of hypocrisy by the Democrats, who charged that he had been a Know-Nothing in 1854-1855 and had supported the belief that all foreigners should wait twenty-one years after naturalization before voting.⁶⁰

It was necessary in the face of these charges of nativism that the Republican party of Iowa, if it was to win the German vote, take a definite stand against proscriptive legislation. Such a step was taken even before the "two year" amendment went to the people of Massachusetts for their approval. In the spring of 1859 the Republican State Central Committee of Iowa issued a public denunciation of the recent action of the Massachusetts Legislature. This proclamation did not meet the approval of all of the Iowa Republicans. There were those who felt that though the action of the Massachusetts Legislature was impolitic, it could not affect the party elsewhere. "It is their affair, and not ours," they said. "Our policy is to let the Republicans of each state take

⁵⁸*Ibid*; *Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, May 25, 1859.

⁵⁹*Columbia City (Iowa) Enterprise*, May 26, 1859.

⁶⁰*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, May 18, 1859.

care of themselves.”⁶¹ The Democrats, of course, cried again, “Hypocrisy!”⁶²

Many of the county conventions of both parties, who were choosing delegates to the coming state conventions, passed strong resolutions denouncing the “two year” amendment of Massachusetts.⁶³ Prejudice, though, appeared in the ranks of both parties in spite of their professions of friendliness to the naturalized citizens. In the Johnson County Convention, Edward Zitschke, a German-American, asked to represent the German element of the county at the State Convention, and his name was placed on the ballot list by a friend. Without reason his name was erased.⁶⁴ In the Davenport city election the editor of the *Davenport News*, who was a candidate for office, offered a ballot to a German citizen. When the German refused it, the candidate called him “a d—d Dutchman.” In the next issue of his paper, June 11, 1859, the editor admitted that he used the phrase and reserved the right to use it against any German who gave him provocation.⁶⁵

Many Republicans, however, thought that mere denunciations were not enough to hold the vote of the Germans of the party. They felt that more tangible proof of friendship was needed. This group recommended that the Republican State Convention nominate a German for lieutenant-governor.⁶⁶ Such a move had a precedent, for in two neighboring states the Republican party had chosen German leaders as standard bearers. Illinois, where the German vote was important, had honored Gustav Korner with the lieutenant-governorship in 1852 and again in 1854.⁶⁷ The Republicans in Wisconsin, to hold the German vote, had nominated Carl Schurz for lieutenant-governor in 1857, but he had been defeated.⁶⁸

⁶¹*Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, May 5, 1859.

⁶²*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, May 11, 1859.

⁶³*Columbia City* (Iowa), *Enterprise* June 16, 1859; *Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian*, June 2, 1859; June 9, 1859; *Weekly Maquoketa* (Iowa) *Excelsior*, June 28, 1859.

⁶⁴*Iowa City* (Iowa) *Reporter*, quoted in *Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, June 24, 1859.

⁶⁵*Oskaloosa* (Iowa) *Herald*, quoted in *Montezuma* (Iowa) *Weekly Republican*, June 16, 1859.

⁶⁶*Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian*, May 12, 1859.

⁶⁷Faust, I:132.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

This suggestion was fruitful, and at the State Republican Convention at Des Moines on June 22, 1859, the name of Nicholas J. Rusch, a German, was placed as lieutenant-governor on the ticket headed by Samuel J. Kirkwood.⁶⁹ Rusch, who had been educated in Germany, came to Scott county, Iowa, in 1847. He had been elected to the state senate in 1857 and was prominent in that body as a liberal.⁷⁰ At the Republican State Convention at Iowa City on June 17, 1858, he was chosen for the State Republican Central Committee,⁷¹ and at the moment he was in the political lime-light because of a powerful letter he had written to the *New York Tribune* on April 11, 1859, severely criticizing the action of the Massachusetts Republicans for sponsoring the "two year" amendment.⁷²

In appearance Mr. Rusch was a typical German. He smoked a long-stemmed pipe, the bowl of which was porcelain and had pictures painted on it.⁷³ His English was so poor that he felt it to be a handicap. When Rusch learned that he had been mentioned as a possible candidate for lieutenant-governor, he wrote to Kirkwood that he felt his "broken English and little experience are not proper qualifications for an office of that nature."⁷⁴

No doubt Senator Rusch's estimate of himself was too modest. As might be expected, the Republican papers spoke very favorably of his ability.⁷⁵ But a leading Democratic organ paid him a high compliment, the sincerity of which cannot be doubted. Before the Republican nominating Convention was held, the *Davenport (Iowa) News* prophesied that if "Iowa remains a Republican State, and Rusch's countrymen continue to exercise so important an influence over the destinies of the Republican party here, he will have, with his fine natural abilities, a glorious future before him.

⁶⁹*Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, June 30, 1859.

⁷⁰Herriott, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

⁷¹Pelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

⁷²Herriott, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

⁷³Marx D. Hauberg, *The Memoirs of Marx D. Hauberg*, Rock Island, Illinois, 1923, p. 41.

⁷⁴Dan Elbert Clark, *Samuel Jordan Kirkwood*, Iowa City, Iowa, 1917, p. 124.

⁷⁵*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, July 14, 1859; *Cedar Valley (Iowa) Times*, quoted in *Columbia City (Iowa) Enterprise*, July 16, 1859; *Weekly Maquoketa (Iowa) Excelsior*, Sept. 28, 1859.

He will undoubtedly go eventually to the arena of the United States Senate to display them."⁷⁶

Among the planks of the Republican platform adopted at the Des Moines Convention in June, 1859, was one claiming "for citizens, native and naturalized, liberty of conscience, equality of rights, and the free exercise of the right of Suffrage." This plank cordially approved "of the action taken by the Republican State Committee in regard to the amendment proposed by the Massachusetts Legislature to its Constitution."⁷⁷

The platform contained two other planks of special interest to the Germans of the state. One was a resolution denouncing the Democratic party for defeating, in the United States Senate, "the Homestead Bill, which was designed to secure free homes for free people, whether native or foreign birth." The other of these two planks resolved:⁷⁸

That the rights of citizens are equal, and they are equally entitled to protection at home and abroad, without regard to nativity or duration of domicil, [sic] and that the late refusal by the federal government as expressed in the late official communication of Lewis Cass, Secretary of State, to guarantee against arrest and detention abroad of naturalized citizens on the ground of their allegiance to a foreign power, is a cowardly abandonment of the true and noble position hitherto occupied by our government.

The latter resolution referred to the difficulty being encountered by the State Department in attempting to protect naturalized American citizens who visited their homelands from being forced into military service abroad against their wills. France, Austria, Prussia, and some other foreign countries denied the right of expatriation. This problem, always a trying one to the United States, had increased in difficulty with the breaking out of the Austro-Sardinian War in the winter of 1859. In May of that year Mr. Felix Le Clere, of Memphis, Tennessee, a naturalized American who was a refugee from France for refusing military service, asked the United States government to protect him if he should return to France. In a letter of May 17, 1859, Secretary Cass informed Le Clere that his naturalization in this country would

⁷⁶*Davenport (Iowa) News*, quoted in *Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, July 28, 1859.

⁷⁷*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, July 6, 1859.

⁷⁸*Ibid*; *Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, July 1, 1859.

not exempt him from the military service that the French government claimed from him.⁷⁹

Another naturalized citizen, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Ernst of Cincinnati, an officer of the Ohio militia, wished to observe the European War zone. Although he had been an American citizen for thirty years, Secretary Cass would not guarantee his protection from impressment.⁸⁰ The government gave a similar warning to a German, Mr. A. V. Hofer, in June, 1859.⁸¹

The seeming weakness of the Buchanan administration in protecting naturalized Americans abroad greatly alarmed the Germans and gave the Republican party a backfire against the Democratic attack on nativism. "If a 'naturalized' citizen cannot claim the protection of his government in a foreign country", they said, "then it is clear that no citizen can, unless there is a distinction between the native and foreign born; and if there is a distinction, it will not be forgotten that a Democratic administration was the first to find it out and make it operative."⁸² Compared to this ruling of the State Department, the restrictive action of Massachusetts was as nothing, the Republicans claimed. "If one ten times more stringent were enacted in every State in the Union, it could not affect the foreign born citizen so disastrously" as the Cass ruling.⁸³

The Iowa Democrats contended that this policy of the government in regard to naturalized citizens abroad had been adhered to for years and quoted past incidents similar to those of Le Clerc's to prove their contention.⁸⁴

These two issues, the Massachusetts restrictive amendment and Cass' "Le Clerc ruling," were the major points of argument in the struggle for the Iowa German vote in 1859. They were hotly debated in the newspapers of the state from March until well after the October election.

On June 23, the day after the Republican State Convention in Des Moines, the Democrats convened in the same city to choose a state ticket and construct a platform.

⁷⁹Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 13; *The Vinton (Iowa) Eagle*, July 5, 1859.

⁸⁰*The Page County Herald*, Clarinda, Iowa, July 8, 1859.

⁸¹Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁸²*Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, June 23, 1859.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, July 6, 27, 1859.

Augustus C. Dodge, United States Minister to Spain, was nominated for Governor and Lysander W. Babbitt for lieutenant-governor. The lengthy platform adopted included a plank assuring naturalized citizens that the doctrine of the Democratic party was equal rights and protection for adopted and native born citizens at home and abroad. It also favored a homestead law.

The Democratic platform attempted to revive the question of the Iowa prohibition law, which it said was "inconsistent with the genius of free people, and unjust and burdensome in its operation." It declared that it had "vexed and harassed the citizen, burdened the counties with expense and litigation, and proven wholly useless in the suppression of intemperence."⁸⁵ Although the Democratic papers occasionally referred to the "Maine Law" during the campaign, the question of prohibition did not become a major issue. The Republicans had modified the law twice, largely at the instance of the Germans, and it is doubtful whether the temperance question greatly influenced the German vote in Iowa in 1859.

From the moment Rusch was nominated he was under fire from Democratic speakers and newspapers. They charged that he had been nominated only as a matter of policy and that even the Republicans hoped that he would be defeated, as Schurz had been in Wisconsin.⁸⁶ Unless he had been nominated, the Democrats said, the German Republicans, disgruntled over the nominations of "Know-Nothings Vandever, Harlan, Grimes, Thorington, and others" would have left the party.⁸⁷ It was prophesied that because of Rusch's nomination there would be disaffection in the Republican party, for "the lager and Dark Lantern elements rest in uneasy companionship."⁸⁸

Many of the Democrats, who had been pleading their friendliness for the adopted citizens before the nominating Convention, now turned on the Germans a scorn as biting as that for which they had previously condemned the Republicans of Massachusetts. They declared that the Germans were "busy

⁸⁵*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, July 6, 1859.

⁸⁶*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, July 14, 1859.

⁸⁷*Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Aug. 4, 1859.

⁸⁸*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, July 28, 1859.

bodies, and mischief makers in every community where they reside. They were driven out of Germany in '48 for their clannishness and meddlesomeness. They ignore the Bible, and all revealed religion, believe in no future state of rewards and punishment, and act on an infidel motto, live while we live.' They aim at anarchy in politics, morals and religion, and are a curse to any country or community.'⁸⁹

Mr. Rusch was attacked because of his activities in attempting to change the school law to make it easier for negro children to attend public schools in Iowa,⁹⁰ and for his opposition to the state prohibition law.⁹¹ His opponents denounced him as a "Red, alias Black, alias Free Thinking, alias anti-Sunday, alias anti-Bible, alias anti-Maine Law, alias pro-Lager Beer Republican."⁹²

It was charged that he was not intelligent and spoke English so poorly that it would be impossible for him to preside over the Senate. The prediction was made that if elected he would either resign the office or get sick, requiring his absence from the Senate, so that he could not preside.⁹³ A prominent Democrat was heard to say at the State Convention that the Germans would do very well for " 'Voting Stock', but he hoped the state would never be disgraced by having a German to preside in the Senate."⁹⁴

The only criticism voiced against Rusch in the Republican party was from Prohibitionists who opposed the candidate's efforts to amend the "dry" law. The Reverend Jocelyn, a Methodist minister, said that he would never vote for Nicholas J. Rusch, "who had been instrumental in modifying the prohibitory law of 1855." Senator Harlan, a prominent Methodist, was soon to be a candidate for reelection; so Rusch men declared that if the Methodists voted against Rusch, that Harlan would never be reelected.⁹⁵

The fact that Kirkwood and Rusch were both farmers caused the *Democratic Clarion*, published in Bloomfield, to deride the Republican candidates as the "Plough-handle

⁸⁹*Maquoketa (Iowa) Weekly Sentinel*, Aug. 4, 1859, quoted in *Weekly Maquoketa (Iowa) Excelsior*, Sept. 20, 1859.

⁹⁰*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, Aug. 25, 1859.

⁹¹*Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, July 27, 1859.

⁹²*Ibid.*, June 29, 1859; Aug. 10, 1859.

⁹³*Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Aug. 4, 1859.

⁹⁴*Weekly Maquoketa (Iowa) Excelsior*, Sept. 28, 1859.

⁹⁵Cyrenus Cole, *A History of the People of Iowa*, p. 324.

ticket." This proved to be a costly error, for the Republicans took up the "catchy" phrase and, comparing Kirkwood to Cincinnatus, went into the campaign marked as the friends of the farmer.⁹⁶

Mr. Kirkwood and General Dodge "took the stump" shortly after the nominating conventions had selected them. The extension of slavery was the most important issue of the campaign, but the whole reform program of the Republicans was under fire.

Neither Rusch nor Babbitt were able to do any active campaigning until late in the summer. Mr. Rusch, being a farmer, could not leave during the harvest season, and was further detained by what a friendly newspaper announced as the arrival of "another little Rusch light to illuminate his domestic pathway."⁹⁷

He was booked, generally, to deliver German addresses in German communities, but he also spoke English at times. On these occasions the Democrats mercilessly ridiculed his brogue.⁹⁸ To counteract Senator Rusch's influence with the Germans, the Democrats employed Colonel Louis Schade, of Burlington, Iowa, to debate with him in the German language. There seemed to be no organized "stump" campaign. Schade followed Rusch from town to town and disturbed his addresses by argument and, if possible, by leading part of the crowd to another meeting place.⁹⁹ Senator Rusch also met Van Antwerp and Claggett in debate during this campaign.¹⁰⁰ All in all, the German candidate seems to have carried out a successful speaking tour and to have gained many friends for himself and the party.¹⁰¹

It was freely predicted by the Democrats that even though Samuel Kirkwood should be elected Governor, Nicholas J. Rusch would be badly defeated. Some prophets guessed that Rusch would fall 5,000 votes behind Kirkwood.¹⁰² The defeat

⁹⁶*Columbia City (Iowa) Enterprise*, July 21, 1859.

⁹⁷*Davenport (Iowa) Gazette*, quoted in *Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, Sept. 1, 1859.

⁹⁸*Democratic Clarion*, July 27, Aug. 31, 1859; *Weekly Maquoketa (Iowa) Excelsior*, Sept. 20, 1859.

⁹⁹*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, Sept. 29, 1859.

¹⁰⁰*Weekly Maquoketa (Iowa) Excelsior*, Sept. 28, 1859.

¹⁰¹*Montezuma (Iowa) Weekly Republican*, Sept. 15, 1859.

¹⁰²*Weekly Independence (Iowa) Civilian*, Sept. 22, 1859; *Iowa Weekly Democrat*, Sigourney, Iowa, Oct. 21, 1859; *Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, Nov. 9, 1859.

of Carl Schurz for lieutenant-governor in Wisconsin was pointed to as proof of the treatment a German Republican candidate would receive.¹⁰³

Their predictions that Rusch would fall behind Kirkwood were correct; for, although the German candidate received 55,142 votes, a clear majority of 2,279 over his opponent, he fell 1,363 votes short of Kirkwood.¹⁰⁴

Before the furor of the election of 1859 had died away, the national campaign of 1860 was shaping itself in Iowa. The German Republicans who had so recently gained political prestige in the state, through the election of one of their leaders as lieutenant-governor, were a bloc with which the party had to reckon. They were radically opposed to slavery and certainly would not approve of a compromise attitude on that question by the party organization. When John Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859, many German citizens of Davenport wore crepe, and many business houses displayed signs of mourning. A German theater flew its flag at half mast, and *Der Demokrat* shrouded its editorial on the hanging in black lines of mourning.¹⁰⁵

In state politics the only issue of particular interest to the Germans in 1860 was the attempt of the Democratic members of the House in March to repeal the "Lager beer amendment" to the prohibition law. The Republicans supported the amendment, and it remained in force.¹⁰⁶ The attention of the Germans, therefore, was focused on the national scene.

There was strong sentiment among Iowa Republicans for the nomination of Judge Edward Bates, of St. Louis, for President. Mr. John Mahin, editor of the *Muscatine Journal*, a liberal leader, said on December 3, 1859, that Bates "would doubtless receive the united support of the Republican party." On January 17, 1860, Mr. Clark Dunham, editor of the *Hawkeye*, of Burlington, Iowa, announced that he also favored the St. Louisan. Mr. John A. Kasson, chairman of the Republican State Central Committee of Iowa, had

¹⁰³*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, Sept. 15, 1859; *Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, Sept. 21, 1859.

¹⁰⁴*Sioux City (Iowa) Register*, Jan. 21, 1860.

¹⁰⁵Pelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 211; *The Weekly News*, Mount Vernon, Iowa, Feb. 2, 1860; *Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, Mar. 14, 1860.

¹⁰⁶Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

practiced law in the same courts with Judge Bates in St. Louis before coming to Iowa and favored him as a candidate. The fact that the *New York Tribune*, which sponsored Bates' candidacy, was the most widely read Republican paper in Iowa, kept his name alive in the state as a prospective nominee.¹⁰⁷

The German Republicans the nation over were opposed to Judge Bates as a nominee for President because of his conservative stand on slavery and the taint of nativism which they felt he possessed. The first organized move that was made by the Germans against the Bates candidacy was the meeting of Germans held in Davenport, Iowa, on March 7, 1860. As previously mentioned, this meeting started a movement which culminated in the conference of German-Americans in the Deutsches Haus in Chicago on May 15 and 16 where the Bates campaign was effectually stopped.¹⁰⁸ The Davenport meeting presented resolutions to the congressional delegation from Iowa declaring that under no circumstances would the Germans vote for Edward Bates. Hans R. Claussen accompanied these resolutions to Senator James Harlan by a letter written March 31, 1860, informing him that "those who think Bates still available must not count upon the German vote."¹⁰⁹

Mr. Add. H. Sanders, the editor of the *Daily Gazette* of Davenport, criticized the Germans in his March 10 issue for the stand they had taken. He felt that if the Germans did not want Bates for a candidate, they should work to see that he wasn't nominated; but if the National Republican Convention should, in its wisdom, decide that he was the correct nominee, every Republican should support him. Theodor Olshausen, of *Der Demokrat*, replied to him that "no matter what course the majority of the republican party may pursue, we for our part shall always and immutably remain true to the principles of liberty and humanity which we heretofore have considered identical with those of the republican party."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸See pp.

¹⁰⁹Ms. Letter in Autobiographical Manuscript of James Harlan, quoted in Herriott, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 45.

The Republican State Convention held at Des Moines, January 18, 1860, to choose a delegation to the Republican National Convention of May 16 at Chicago was uninstructed.¹¹¹ Iowa had eight votes at the National Convention. On the first ballot Iowa voted: Lincoln, two; Seward, two; Cameron, one; Bates, one; Chase, one; McLean, one. On the final ballot the vote was: Lincoln, five and one-half; Seward, two; Chase, one-half.¹¹² Something had happened to the Bates "boom" in Iowa between March and May. No doubt the German attitude had much to do with it.

While the German Democrats in Iowa did not play a leading role in forming the policy of their party, as did their Republican fellows, some of them were active in support of the Democracy. At a Douglas ratification meeting held in Independence, Iowa, on June 25, 1860, three of the addresses were delivered in German by Messrs. Cummings, Bitnes, and Hegee,¹¹³ and several Germans were mentioned as converts to the Democratic party.¹¹⁴

In the campaign of 1860 there was less effort made by both parties in Iowa to win the German vote by arguments directed to them than there was in 1859. The bitter attitude that Douglas was taking toward the Germans was pointed out by the Republicans,¹¹⁵ but there were no other issues specifically presented for them. It is only through the analysis of their vote that any conclusion can be reached as to their sympathies in the election campaign of 1860.

HOW THE IOWA GERMANS VOTED IN 1860

There are four possible methods of estimating the political leanings of the Germans in 1860. One obvious way is to compare the strength and activity of the Germans in the political organizations of the time. Another method of estimating their vote is by ascertaining the opinions of contemporary politicians. A third way is to analyze the political leanings of the German press. A more accurate method than any of these is to compare the election returns of a considerable

¹¹¹Pelzer, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

¹¹²Cole, *Iowa—Through the Years*, p. 272.

¹¹³*Weekly Independence (Iowa) Civilian*, June 28, 1860.

¹¹⁴*Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Aug. 2, 1860.

¹¹⁵*Montezuma (Iowa) Weekly Republican*, July 4, 1860.

number of voting precincts with a heavy German population with the same number of townships of largely native composition.

As related above, the German-Americans took an active and influential part in the councils of the Iowa Republican party in 1860. Their vote was considered so valuable that one of their leaders was honored with election as lieutenant-governor of the state in 1859. Acting as a pressure group they killed the campaign of Edward O. Bates for the Republican nomination for President. On the other hand, there seems to have been little German activity in the Democratic party compared to that in the Republican organization. This would lead to the belief that the Germans in Iowa were preponderantly Republican in 1860.

The opinions of contemporary politicians would lead to the same conclusion. When Carl Schurz estimated that 300,000 Germans in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio voted for Fremont in 1856, he spoke as a trained political leader and observer of his countrymen. His prophecy that the same number of Germans from those states would vote for Lincoln in 1860 was also based upon an intimate knowledge of his followers.¹¹⁶ The opinion that the German vote was essential to the Republican party in Iowa was held by the leaders of both parties in the state. It was generally predicted by the newspapers that without the Germans the Republican party would be in the minority on 1860.¹¹⁷ The *Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian* said,¹¹⁸ "Well they (the Iowa Republicans) know that without their (the German) votes, Republicanism would be in the minority."

The *Sioux City* (Iowa) *Register* predicted that,¹¹⁹ "If they (the Republicans) refuse to accede to the demand of their German allies (in the Massachusetts amendment repeal) they will be defeated in every state west and north of the Ohio."

¹¹⁶Schrader, *The Germans in the Making of America*, Boston, 1924, pp. 192-194.

¹¹⁷*Columbia City* (Iowa) *Enterprise*, July 16, 1859; *Democratic Clarion*, Bloomfield, Iowa, May 11, 1859, June 29, 1859, Mar. 14, 1860; *Democratic Enquirer*, Muscatine, Iowa, Sept. 22, 1859; *Life in the West*, Sigourney, Iowa, July 28, 1859; *Montezuma* (Iowa) *Weekly Republican*, April 28, 1859, Sept. 1, 1859; *Sioux City* (Iowa) *Register*, April 28, 1859, July 14, 1859, Aug. 11, 1859; *Vinton* (Iowa) *Eagle*, April 5, 1859; *Weekly Independence* (Iowa) *Civilian*, Mar. 17, 1859; *Weekly Maquoketa* (Iowa) *Excelsior*, Sept. 20, 1859.

¹¹⁸May 12, 1859.

¹¹⁹June 16, 1859.

The Iowa Republicans considered the German voters "the chief cornerstone of their political fabric" according to the *Iowa Weekly Democrat* of Sigourney.¹²⁰ These opinions may signify that the majority of the Iowa Germans were Republicans in that year, but it is untrue that they could have given Douglas a majority over Lincoln by shifting to the Democratic party *en masse*. Lincoln received 70,118 votes in Iowa in 1860, or 54.54% of the entire state ballots. Douglas secured 55,639 votes, or 43.28% of the total.¹²¹ This gave Lincoln a majority of 11.26% of the entire vote over his strongest opponent.

German born inhabitants formed only 5.71% of the population of Iowa in 1860. Many of these Germans could not vote in that year because the Iowa election law made naturalization a prerequisite to suffrage. It can be taken for granted, then, that in relation to their whole population a much smaller proportion of Germans voted in 1860 than did native citizens.

If the German inhabitants of the State had voted in the same proportion that the native born citizens did, and if they had all voted for Lincoln, they would have been responsible for only 5.71% of his 11.26% lead over Douglas. If these Germans had voted for Douglas instead of the Republican candidate, Douglas would have had a majority of only .16% of the entire state vote over Lincoln. However, the campaign activities showed that there was some German support of Douglas, and that part of his vote in Iowa came from the German element. The additional fact that a considerable proportion of the Germans were prevented from voting by the election laws would doubtless have entirely eliminated the Douglas majority in case of a "bolt" of the German Republicans. The conclusion is that while the German vote was important in Iowa in 1860, it was not essential to a Republican victory.

Of the five German newspapers in Iowa, three were Republican organs and two had Democratic leanings. This would indicate that a majority of the Germans of the state

¹²⁰June 10, 1859.

¹²¹*Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, VII: 229.

were Republican, but that a strong Democratic opposition existed among their countrymen.

The election returns of a large number of the townships in Iowa in 1860 are not in existence. It is impossible, therefore, to compare the vote of townships settled by Germans with that of precincts with a large majority of native born citizens. Tabulation of the population and election returns of twenty-three selected Iowa townships will be found at the end of this chapter. Returns are available for only four townships with very heavy German populations. In one of these, Jefferson township, in Clayton county, 86.87% of the heads of families were born in Germany. This precinct gave Lincoln 55.24% of the total vote, while Douglas received 44.75%. Another strongly German precinct which delivered a Republican majority was the city of Davenport where the heads of 43.55% of the families were German natives. The percentage of vote in this city was: Lincoln, 64.52%; Douglas, 31.41%; Breckenridge, 1.77%; and Bell, 2.28%. 41.87% of the heads of families in Buffalo township, near Davenport, in Scott county, were of German nativity. This precinct gave Lincoln 52.54% of its vote; Douglas, 46.89%; and Bell, .56%. Although all of these election precincts gave the Republican candidate a comfortable majority, the township of Franklin in Lee county, where 66.89% of the heads of families were born in Germany, voted strongly Democratic. In this precinct Lincoln received only 43.56% of the vote, while Douglas secured 55.77% of the ballots. The other .66% of the vote went to Bell.

It would be impossible to estimate the German vote from a study of these few precincts. Such an examination merely tends to confirm the conclusion that, while a majority of the Germans in Iowa in 1860 were Republicans, neither party could claim the entire German vote, and that, while the vote of the Germans in Iowa was important in 1860, it could not, of itself, decide the issue between Lincoln and Douglas in that state.

TABLE I
Nativity of Heads of Families in
Selected Iowa Townships in 1860¹²²

County—Township	Native Born		German		Others	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Allamakee						
Center.....	21	19.09	19	17.27	70	63.63
Hanover.....	15	20.54	20	27.39	38	52.05
Boone						
Yell.....	56	100.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Clayton						
Jefferson.....	17	6.02	245	86.87	20	7.09
Crawford						
Denison.....	19	79.16	1	4.16	4	16.66
Union.....	13	68.42	0	0.00	6	31.57
Davis						
Marion.....	121	90.20	4	2.98	9	6.71
Decatur						
Center.....	157	98.12	0	0.00	3	1.88
Johnson						
Monroe.....	77	81.05	1	1.05	17	17.78
Lee						
Franklin.....	74	25.00	198	66.89	24	8.10
Linn						
Bertram.....	107	83.59	3	2.34	18	14.06
Putnam.....	65	67.81	10	10.41	21	20.83
Mahaska						
Union.....	99	90.00	6	4.45	5	4.54
Poweshiek						
Bear Creek.....	39	88.63	2	4.54	3	6.82
Deep River.....	63	92.64	1	1.47	4	5.88
Scott						
Davenport City.....	651	28.64	990	43.55	632	27.80
Buffalo.....	92	45.32	85	41.87	26	12.80
Washington						
English River.....	192	76.49	50	19.92	9	2.58
Iowa.....	91	65.46	36	25.89	12	8.63
Jackson.....	113	91.86	3	2.43	7	5.69
Webster						
Wahkonsah.....	103	58.52	23	13.06	50	28.40
Woodbury						
Sioux City Twp.....	98	61.63	21	13.20	40	25.15
Sargeant's Bluffs.....	21	91.30	0	0.00	2	8.69

¹²²Manuscript reports for Iowa and the Eighth Census, 1860, Department of History and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa.

TABLE II
Election Returns of
Selected Iowa Townships in 1860¹²³

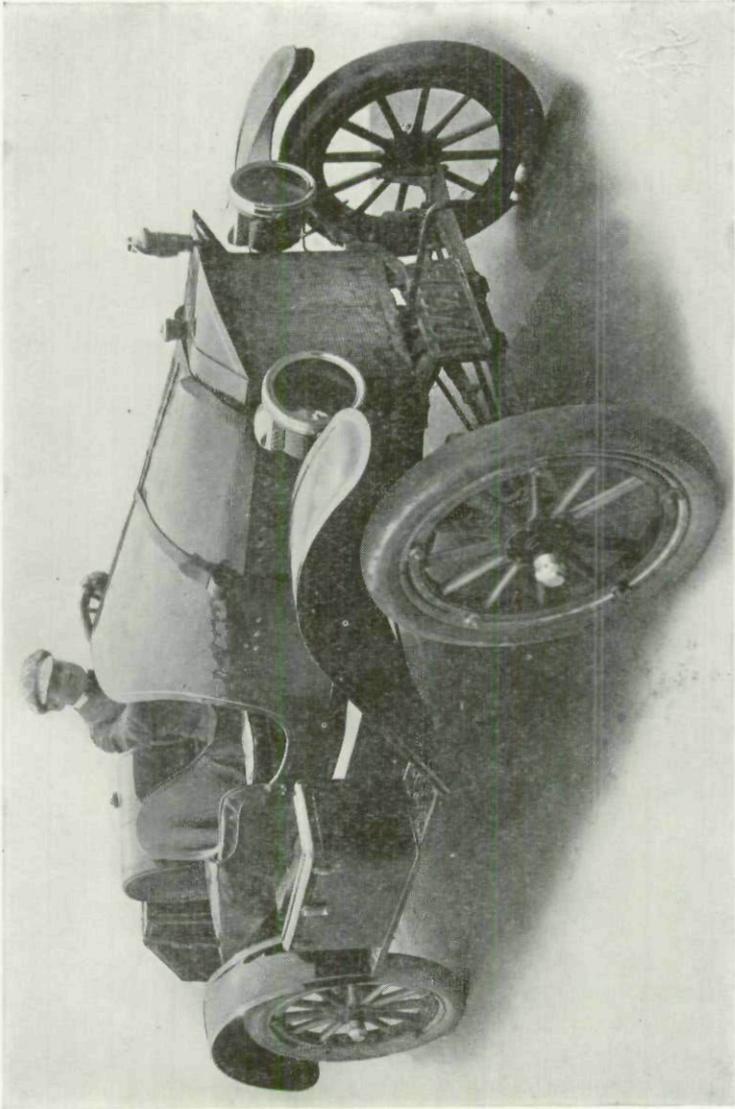
County—Township	Lincoln		Douglas		Breckenridge		Bell	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Allamakee								
Center.....	82	82.00	18	18.00				
Hanover.....	41	62.12	25	37.87				
Boone								
Yell.....	27	40.90	39	59.09				
Clayton								
Jefferson ¹²³	237	55.24	192	44.75				
Crawford								
Denison.....	17	51.51	16	48.48				
Union.....	17	73.91	6	26.08				
Davis								
Marion.....	38	25.50	77	51.00	15	10.06	19	12.75
Decatur								
Center.....	124	48.81	130	51.18				
Johnson								
Monroe.....	64	69.75	28	30.43				
Lee								
Franklin.....	132	43.56	169	55.77			2	.66
Linn								
Bertram.....	48	40.33	71	59.66				
Putnam.....	53	63.09	31	36.90				
Mahaska								
Union.....	61	49.59	62	50.40				
Poweshiek								
Bear Creek....	131	49.80	128	48.66	2	.75	2	.75
Deep River....	60	65.93	31	34.07				
Scott								
Davenport City	1493	64.52	727	31.41	41	1.77	53	2.28
Buffalo.....	93	52.54	83	46.89			1	.56
Washington								
English River..	108	42.04	125	48.63	14	5.44	10	2.89
Iowa.....	63	39.13	97	60.24			1	.62
Jackson.....	87	70.73	32	26.01			4	3.25
Webster								
Wahkonsah ¹²⁴ ..	83	41.91	72	36.36	43	21.72		
Woodbury								
Sioux City								
Township ¹²⁵ ..	68	38.62	97	55.11	7	3.97	4	2.27
Sargt's Bluff ¹²⁶	19	76.00	6	24.00				

¹²³All figures secured from the County Election Boards' abstracts of returns of the national and state elections held in Iowa on November 6, 1860, Department of History and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa, unless otherwise noted.

¹²⁴Mississippi Valley Register, Guttenberg, Iowa, Nov. 8, 1860.

¹²⁵Fort Dodge (Iowa) Republican, Nov. 14, 1860.

¹²⁶Sioux City (Iowa) Register, Nov. 10, 1860.



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