1938

Public Opinion in the North Following the Election of Lincoln

Michael I. Cleary
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/105

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1938 Michael I. Cleary
PUBLIC OPINION IN THE NORTH FOLLOWING
THE ELECTION OF LINCOLN

BY

MICHAEL I. CLEARY

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Loyola University
August
1938
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I
CAMPAIGN PRELIMINARIES

Republican Party Growth... Reasons why favored by many voters....
Attitude of Congress on slavery and slave extension... Lincoln's viewpoint....
Seward's attitude.... Stephen A. Douglas's ideas.... Analysis of
Seward's plan.... Reaction of people to Seward's stand.... Republican
Convention.... Opinion on Lincoln's nomination.... Reasons for Lincoln's
nomination.... Democratic Convention.... Attitude towards split in
Democratic party.... Opinions on the nomination of Douglas.... Opinions
on other Democratic nominees for the Presidency.

CHAPTER II
THE ELECTION OF LINCOLN

Milton's analysis of presidential canvas.... Reasons for Douglas's
poor showing.... Attitude towards Lincoln's views.... General opinion on
slavery and slave extension.... Opinion on the election of Lincoln
.... Attitude towards "black Republicanism".... General effect of Lincoln's
election.... Comments on Lincoln's attitude of failure to announce policies
.... Lincoln's trip to Washington.... Attitude of public towards trip....
Comments on plan to prevent inauguration and to assassinate.... Douglas's
viewpoint on Lincoln's Inaugural Speech.... General opinion on Lincoln's
Address.

CHAPTER III
PRESIDENT JAMES BUCHANAN

Buchanan's responsibility.... Buchanan's misinterpreted attitude of
public opinion.... Opinion of Buchanan's Cabinet.... Black's viewpoint
.... Opinion of nation on Buchanan's early secession policy.... Effect of
Buchanan's December 7th Address to Congress.... Buchanan and the South
Carolina Commissioners.... Opinion on Buchanan's firm stand to preserve and
protect Federal property.... General opinion on Buchanan's retirement.

CHAPTER IV
SECESSION

Analysis of southern viewpoint.... Effect of Lincoln's election in
the South...Attitude of informed men in the North on Secession....General opinion on cleavage....Opinion favoring the course of South Carolina....Opinion against the action of South Carolina....Opinions on the use of force to maintain the Union....viewpoint in the border states....Opinion in the East....Opinion in the West....Peaceful secessionists....Opinion on the plot of the southerners to seize control of the Government....Opinion in Illinois and Chicago.

CHAPTER V
ATTEMPTS AT COMPROMISE

Three categories of Republicans on Compromise....First general opinions for and against compromise....Congressional attempts at Compromise....Committee of Thirty Three....Committee of Thirteen....Opinion on Congressional attempts to Compromise....The Crittenden Amendments....Opinion on Crittenden plan....Lincoln's efforts in defeating Compromise....General swing of opinion for some type of Compromise....Opinion on the Peace Convention.
CHAPTER I

CAMPAIGN PRELIMINARIES

Republican Party Growth... Reasons why favored by many voters... Attitude of Congress on slavery and slave extension... Lincoln's viewpoint... Seward's attitude... Stephen A. Douglas's ideas... Analysis of Seward plan... Reaction of people to Seward's stand... Republican Convention... Opinion on Lincoln's nomination... Reasons for Lincoln's nomination....

Democratic Convention... Attitude towards split in Democratic party... Opinions on the nomination of Douglas... Opinions on other Democratic nominees for the Presidency.
CHAPTER I
CAMPAIGN PRELIMINARIES

Since its inception in 1854 the Republican party had shown a remarkable growth. From a somewhat humble beginning, it was, in the sixth year of its life sufficiently strong to elect a president of the United States. Opportunities and events coincided for the organization and development of a new party. The old Whig party had lost much of its potency; the North American party never was a vital factor in the national picture; the Democracy was badly divided by the divergent views of its northern and southern branches, which in turn were both divided on certain issues. The feeble impotency of President Buchanan, coupled with graft and scandal in the administration had thoroughly disgusted many of the old guard and drove countless staunch Democrats to the bosom of the new political Messiah. While candidates were elected to office under the guise of Republicanism their victory was actually the result of a series of fusion tickets that swept the country for several years prior to 1860. The Abolitionists hailed the Republicans as the anti-slavery standard bearer because of the pronounce- ments of certain of its leading office seekers on the extension and abolition of slavery. And finally morally minded citizens, who were religiously opposed to human servitude, rallied to the cause of the new organization. Numerous political leaders of the period shrouded themselves within its cloak not because they particularly endorsed the principles of the party but for
political expediency. It offered to them a new coradiation point from which they could again glare forth and attain political office under the guise of humanitarianism. Justifiably one may suspect that their motives were as selfish as their lust for money and power which public office would bring their greedy hearts.

As for leadership the Republican party was top heavy. As we scan the rolls of the Senate and the House of Representatives we feel the impact of such personalities as Charles Francis Adams, Morill, Burlingame, Conkling, Wilson, Wade, Corwin, Sherman, Seward and Sumner. Not found in the halls of Congress, but, nevertheless, recognized leaders, were Lincoln and Chase, the generals of the West.

The principles of Republicanism were somewhat indistinct and difficult of comprehension. There was, however, universal agreement on one point, the extension of slavery. In opposing the spread of human bondage the Republicans had a difficult time in so much as nearly all of the Northern Democrats had taken the same stand some time before the organization of the Republican party. The new party's militant leaders probably made the nation more conscious of their efforts. Seward, the reputed leader of the party, stalked about the land preaching a "higher law" and a pessimistic "irrepressible conflict" over the slave question, and in the Senate he demonstrated a most vindictive position on the subject of free labor. The western leader of the new party, Abraham Lincoln, did not talk of conflict but in his debates with Douglas he advocated the end of slave extension. Probably his thought is best demonstrated in his acceptance speech when offered the Republican nomination of the United States Senate. The high
point of his talk that evening was the declaration:

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall but I do expect it to cease to be divided. It must be all one thing or all the other.

That was a very radical statement so the true politician in Lincoln came to the fore when he temporized and attempted to qualify his initial statement.

Either the opponents of slavery (he continued) will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction or its advocates will push it forward, 'till it shall be alike lawful in all states, old as well as new... North as well as South.¹

The Congress of 1859-60 was a peculiar conglomeration of political parties and current thought. When the new House convened on December 6, 1859, there were one hundred nine Republicans, eighty-eight Buchanan Democrats, thirteen Anti-Lecompton Democrats, twenty-six Americans and one Whig. Nearly all of the Americans were from the South and among their numbers were half of the delegates from the Border States.²

Feeling was intense among the members. The Republicans were a hard driving, militant group under the leadership of Charles Francis Adams and Sherman. The Democrats, especially those from the South, were bitter at the attitude taken by their opponents over the John Brown episode. It was

1. Illinois State Journal (Springfield) June 16, 1858
   Underlining by Lincoln when he proofread galley in newspaper office after speech.
2. Congressional Globe. 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 101
quite evident that little time would pass before the question of slavery would arise for a general airing. As was expected the Republicans started the proceedings by circulating a petition among the members of Congress in which it was proposed to issue at a very reasonable price a compendium of the Impending Crisis, a book by Hinton Helper, of North Carolina, appealing to the impoverished whites of the South to emancipate themselves. The book was deeply abusive to the slaveholder and revolutionary in its advice. The southern members of the House were highly incensed, and justifiably so, at the attempts of the Republicans to sow the seed of revolution in the southern part of the country. The Democrats made the same mistake with Helper's brainchild as they did with nearly all other incendiary documents. Instead of killing interest in the book by ignoring it they gave it wide publicity by their fiery utterances, and their cry was in turn taken up by every anti-Republican press both North and South. Soon the Impending Crisis was a veritable best seller throughout the nation. It did have a profound effect upon the wavering voters of the North and assisted in developing the victory of 1860.

Men were in a fighting temper. Personal encounters on the floor of Congress were imminent, arms were carried, and vitriolic expressions of opinion were given wide publicity by the press of the land. The sentiment seemed to indicate that the South was to secede if a Republican should be the presidential choice of 1860. Martin Jl Crawford, member from Georgia,

speaking against the election of Sherman for the Speakership of the House of Representatives said:

I have this to say, and I speak the sentiment of every Democrat from the State of Georgia: we will never submit to the inauguration of a black Republican president.4

We find the counterpart to this feeling of mind in Hickman's expression when he said on the floor of the House: "The North will never tolerate a division of territory." 5 A private letter of Senator Hammond, of South Carolina, describes a situation impossible of continuance:

I assure you and you may philosophize upon it, that unless the slavery question can be entirely eliminated from politics, this government is not worth two years, perhaps two months purchase. So far as I know, and as I believe, every man in both Houses is armed with a revolver...some with two...and a bowie knife....Seeing the oldest and most conservative senators on our side...get revolvers, I most reluctantly got one myself....I can't carry it...but I keep a pistol in my drawer...as a matter of duty to my section....While regarding the Union as cramping the South, I will nevertheless sustain it as long as I can. Yet I will stand by my side—as you would—to the end. I firmly believe the slave holding South is now the controlling power of the world—that no other power could force us into hostility. This will be demonstrated if we come to the ultimate;...cotton, rice, tobacco, naval stores command the world; and we have sense enough to know it...The North without us would be a motherless calf, bleating about, and die of mange and starvation.6

5. Ibid., p.120
Every public expression had its day in the press of the nation, with the publications in the South making the most of it. As peculiar as it may seem, but still not so vexing when one gives it mature thought, the Abolitionists were taken very seriously in the South, while the threats of secession were treated lightly in the North. The people north of the Chesapeake and the Ohio could not visualize their southern brothers, although slightly estranged, breaking up the Union. In this they thought correctly from the knowledge they possessed since the Republican leaders and newspapers simply would not take too seriously the predictions on disunion made by the Southerners. Seward said:

I remain now in the opinion I have uniformly expressed here and elsewhere that these hasty threats of disunion are so unnatural that they will find no hand to execute them.7

Senator Wilson in a moment of mirthful mental tranquility said in January, 1860, of the "disunion predictions, arguments, and threats with which every breeze from the South is burdened" that they should be entitled "'This Broad Farce.'" In a way it typified the misleading attitude of the Republican radicals. They knew only too well that if the people of the North ever learned of the true expression that existed in the South, the days of Republicanism were numbered. They were willing to sacrifice for selfish and greedy purposes a united nation controlled by a combination of political factions for a divided Union, a part of which would be under the thumb of the new leaders of Republicanism. Subsequent events prove that they nearly did it. Their scheme was quite

7. Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 914.
8. Ibid., 572.
evident; a party built on the altar of human sacrifice, bloodshed, and misery, but above all things a political organization of permanency. Their zeal in this respect was almost fanatical. Stephen A. Douglas, the able Senator from Illinois, in one of his legislative pronouncements admirably summed up the attitude of the Republicans when he said

(He had) no hesitation (in expressing) his firm and deliberate conviction that the Harper's Ferry crime was the natural, logical, inevitable result of the teaching of the Republican party... The great principle that underlies the organization... is violent, irreconcilable, eternal warfare upon the institution of American slavery, with a view to its ultimate extinction throughout the land. Its vitality consists in appeal to northern passion, northern prejudice, northern ambition against southern states, southern institutions, and southern people.

With political sentiment of the members of the Congress at such hostile tenor little could be accomplished in the form of constructive legislation to alleviate the feeling of bitterness that the Republicans overly bearing attitude had engendered in the South.

The session of Congress produced oneresult and that of a selfish nature. That was the effort of brittle and overbearing William Seward to entrench himself more firmly as the titular leader of the new party, and also as the organization's leading candidate for president. In all of his speeches he assumed the lordly position of the great philosopher expounding on the subject of slavery as one of minor importance that could easily be adjusted if he were let apply his own political and judicial panaceas. On just what the plan revolved it would be difficult to state for his utterances differed with audiences and locality. In the North, particularly in his

91 Ibid., 553.
own State, New York, and the neighboring commonwealth, Massachusetts, he was particularly violent in his denunciations of slavery; in the Senate he was reasonable and temperate in his views on free servile labor. That is, while he admitted slavery was an evil, some conservative and moderate plan could be worked out to remedy the evil to the complete satisfaction of both the North and the South.

While the members of Congress were at swords' points, two Republicans of unequal strength and prominence made at about the same time speeches that attracted the attention of the thinking men of the nation. One was the expostulatory Seward, the other was the rural Illinois attorney, Abraham Lincoln. Seward expected, with an almost childlike simplicity, the Republican nomination for the presidency. Lincoln, but the year previous defeated by the capable Douglas for the United States Senate, had almost given up hope of ever holding a high political office. The possibility of being president but slowly dawned upon Lincoln. The publicity he had gained in his great debates with Douglas was extremely helpful. Lincoln's friends in Illinois and the other western states had his debate speeches widely circulated. Naturally Douglas' talks were not included in most of these pamphlets for the great Douglas had shown his adversary in a poor light in most of the arguments. None the less the debates made Lincoln a marked man in the East and the most popular in the Northwest. During the period following the debates he was called upon for speeches in many of the western cities so it is not strange that he was invited to appear, probably at the insistence of Greeley who was at odds with Seward and his adviser, Weed, at a great Republican rally in New York. Lincoln's speeches at the Cooper Institute,
February 27, 1860, was one of the best of his career. In it he traced the idea the framers of the Constitution had in mind for the Federal government to control slavery in the territories. The talk made a great impression in the East and won for Lincoln an enviable position in the hearts of the Republicans of that section. Horace Greeley was in ecstasies over the pronouncements of the callow Westerner. He said:

It was the very best political address to which I have ever listened...and I have heard some of Webster's grandest.  

Of course Greeley saw in Lincoln the opposition to his up-state adversary, Seward. Lincoln's last sentence gave the pro-slavery advocates a severe shock when he exclaimed: "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

Seward spoke in the Senate several days later, February 29. This was one of Seward's best political speeches for it brings out the sagaciousness of the master politician. He unfolded his thoughts without passion or vituperation.

What is just to one class of men (he said) can never be injurious to any other; and what is unjust to any conditions of persons in a state is necessarily injurious in some degree to the whole community. The slave state effects to extinguish the personality of the laborer, not only as a member of the political body, but also as a parent, husband, child, neighbor, or friend. He thus becomes in a political view, merely property without moral capacity, without domestic, moral and social relations, duties, rights and remedies...The state protects not the slave as a man, but the capital of another man he represents. On the other hand the state which rejects slavery encourages and animates and invigorates the laborer by maintaining and

10. Century Magazine, XX., (July 1891), 373
developing his personality in all the rights and faculties of manhood, generally with the privileges of citizenship. In the one hand capital invested in slaves becomes a great political force, while in the other hand labor thus elevated labor and enfranchised becomes the dominant political power.12

This speech was not exactly to the liking of the men of the South but it did please the reasonable voters of the North and Border States to whom Seward was appealing for the purpose of strengthening his political hand for the coming Republican convention in Chicago.

The convention of the new party convened in Chicago on May 16, 1860. Delegates were present from all of the free states, the border states, the District of Columbia, as well as the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. A special convention hall, the Wigwam, had been constructed to house the delegates for the deliberative sessions. The city was crowded with delegates and visitors, political followers of the various candidates, prospective post-masters, and general all-around convention gypsies. Success was in the air for the break-up of the Democratic Convention at Charleston had wafted the aroma of victory to the shores of Lake Michigan. The array of satellites in attendance was imposing; probably no convention prior to that time had been bedecked with so many political jewels, false or genuine. The leading contenders for the nomination were William H. Seward of New York, by now well convinced that the new party was a winner and that it was well worth while to become its leader; the flat and humorless Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, who divided his home-state delegation with Ben Wade; Simon Cameron, one of the nation's most notorious and unscrupulous political bosses headed the

12. Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 910
delegation from Pennsylvania; Edward Bates of St. Louis who was well known for his conservative expressions; and Abraham Lincoln, the favorite son of the Prairie State.

Seward, the new party's most conspicuous statesman expected to be an easy victor. His doctrines of "Irrepressible Conflict" and "higher law" made him firm with the radicals; his pronunciations in the Senate on February 29 gave him considerable prestige among the border delegates. It was almost a perfect example of fence straddling. Then too, his candidacy was being managed by the able Thurlow Weed, Albany editor, and others in his retinue were William M. Evarts, Carl Schurz, and Austin Blair. Seward's backers had many fancy arguments in the New Yorker's favor and the stock one seemed to be "Who else can get the money to finance a campaign?" Leading the opposition to Seward was the New York publisher of the Tribune, disillusioned and bitter Horace Greeley, was was working for the conservative Bates. It appeared that in Bates there was a candidate who would be in favor of compromise rather than dissolution. Seward and Weed wrongly blamed Greeley for their defeat in the Chicago Convention.

Those opposed to Seward realized that there was little chance in stopping him. Chase could not even muster a solid delegation from his own state; Pennsylvania's delegation was whipped into line for their own favorite son, S. Cameron, but that is as far as his strength went; Bates had little strength other than the wrangling Greeley and a few conservative politicians.

If Seward was to be defeated all of the outsiders must unite on one candidate. David Davis, Lincoln's convention manager, sensed the course of the delegates and set about to bring all of those opposed to Seward under the spell of Lincoln.

While Seward had contributed much to the Republican party success, especially in his appeal to the more radically minded with his Rochester manifesto, the thoughts and ideas that Lincoln had presented were much shrewder. James Milton's analysis of the situation in his epochal work, *The Eve of Conflict*, is a genuine contribution. In his discourse Milton goes on to show that in 1857, when Lincoln laid his plans for his debates with Douglas, it was quite evident to politically minded Republicans, as well as conservative southern Democrats, that the question of slavery was about to become a dead issue. Nearly all of the issues that were debated in that historic forensic duel had now ceased to be alive; Kansas was definitely headed for the Free-State side; Nebraska had ceased to be a stamping ground for pro-slavery agitators; New Mexico had passed laws protecting the rights of slave owners. Since these issues were dead there was no reason for the continued existence of the Republican party. But the Republican politicians, as is the common lot of all politicians, saw that if their ends were to be satisfied, e.g., power, office, income, the party must not be allowed to go out of existence; it must be supplied with new formulae that would keep it alive and preserve it, and, perhaps, improve it. The Territorial slavery issue ended the question so far as the right to interfere with slavery in the states existed, but many of the northern people were still for the idea of attacking slavery within the states, and
would support any party that would come out with that idea. Although such
a plan could not be executed openly, a hidden threat to do so would be
sufficient bait to carry along the voters.

Lincoln's 'House Divided' doctrine seemed to be the proper remedy for
ailing Republicanism. Reading it as a whole, placing no emphasis on either
of the two propositions, it was most harmonious, but when special emphasis
was given to one of the alternatives an entirely different thought was
derived. It was probably one of the shrewdest political formula ever de-
vised. Milton estimates the doctrine quite accurately in his expert analysis

Abolitionists accented the statement,
would be either 'put in the course of ultimate
extinction' or its advocates would make it lawful
in all states. This broad hint that the Southern
Ultras would soon undertake to force slavery on
the Northern States acted as a trumpet call to
the North to prevent such aggression, and was
an elixir for the Republican Party. The other
aspect of the statement was an anodyne for the
Conservatives. Such words as 'permanently' and
'ultimate' could be used to indicate Republican
belief that the change would come slowly and
in the day of another and perhaps distant
generation. Those anxious to show Lincoln's
and his party's conciliatory purposes here
placed the emphasis. Although Lincoln did not
get the Senate on his 'House Divided Doctrine',
he did through it increase the zeal of the
Abolitionists and at the same time quiet Con-
servative fears. Such a doctrine was an ideal
formula for practical politicians and helped give the Republican party a new lease on life.

Thus stood candidates, doctrines and manifestoes when the convention was
organized on Wednesday morning, May 16. David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania,

author of the Wilmot Proviso, the cornerstone of Republicanism was the temporary chairman; the presiding officer of the affair was George Ashum, Massachusetts delegate. When the platform was brought before the convention for approval, Joshua Giddings, who represented the abolition spirit of the delegates, offered as an amendment to the first resolution the oft-quoted assertion of the Declaration of Independence. In fear that he would go too far and create the impression that Republicanism was Abolitionism the managers of the convention had the amendment voted down. Giddings was furious and like most fanatics was unreasonable to the extent that he bolted the convention. Naturally it would not be good politics to have the new party tied too closely with the ideas of Garrison and Phillips. However, that is eventually what happened. A short time later, after an impassioned plea by George Williams, who realized that if Republicanism was to be a winner it could not afford to drive the radicals from the fold, the convention agreed to the admission of Giddings' amendment. Giddings was reconciled and through him the radical element of the party.

The Republican platform was a remarkable piece of all embracing terms. Among its headlights were the assertions that the rights of states were inviolate; the John Brown raid as "among the gravest of crimes;" it censured the Buchanan administration for attempting to force the Lecompton Constitution on Kansas; it denounced the new doctrine that the Constitution of its own force carries slavery into the territories; it declared that the Democratic dogma of popular sovereignty was a deception and a fraud; it denied

17. Marat Halsted, Caucus of 1860 (Follett, Foster and Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1860) 137
the authority of the Congress, territorial legislature, or any individual to give legal existence to any territory; denounced the reopening of the African slave trade; demanded the admission of Kansas under the Wyandotte Constitution; advocated the homestead bill; and favored the adjustment of duties on imports so as "to encourage development of industrial interests of the whole country." Even the Pennsylvania delegates, browbeaten as they were by the ruthless Cameron, were somewhat pleased at the last plank of the platform. All controversial issues were consigned, so far as the platform was concerned, to the depths of Lake Michigan, and so consequently no mention was made of the Fugitive Slave law, personal liberty laws, abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the much maligned Dred Scott decisions. With such all embracing backing of popular issues the platform was received with open arms and thankful hearts by Seward, Lincoln and Bates. They were of the opinion, evidently, that the platform could not offend the South any more than the Republican leaders had done in the past by their incendiary statements. There was, too, the possibility that the north and border states might take to such a bit of honey thereby greatly strengthening them and 18 enhancing the chance of victory.

The convention recessed at six o'clock the second day without so much as taking a ballot on the candidates. The evening was spent by the candidates' managers in "fence building." Champagne flowed freely at Seward's headquarters in the Richmond House. Weed, the Seward general, assisted by his floor leaders, Evarts and Schurz, gave council, advised

delegates, and promised much if victory smiled upon them. So formidable did the New York Senator's backers appear that Greeley, although bitterly opposed to Seward, had published in his New York _Daily Tribune_: "My conclusion from all that I can gather tonight, is that the opposition to Governor Seward cannot concentrate on any candidate and that he will be nominated." The Cincinnati _Commercial_ carried a similar news story. In the meantime, Lincoln's manager, Judge Davis, had not given up hope. The promise of several cabinet positions won the votes of Ohio and Pennsylvania, while dissatisfaction in the ranks of the delegates from several of the smaller states greatly enhanced the position of the "rail splitter." Still Weed was so sure of Seward's ultimate success that bands hired by him spent half the night serenading the various delegations that were expected to assist him on the work of the morrow.

The balloting commenced on the third day. The first vote was given over to favorite sons; the vote being split among a half dozen candidates. The Sewardites were jubilant and expected no opposition on the next ballot. The second ballot showed Lincoln trailing Seward by only three and a half votes. Bargains were beginning to tell. Seward's hopes were blasted. The final ballot showed Lincoln a decisive winner over Seward. Evarts in a gloomy gesture eventually moved that the nomination be made unanimous. Hannibal Hamlin of Maine was nominated Vice-president.

19. Chicago Dispatch, 11:40 P.M., May 17, 1860, May 18, 1860
20. Chicago Dispatch, May 18, 1860.
21. Rhodes, op.cit., 466 et seq.
Rhodes, op.cit., 460 et seq.; Milton, op.cit., 457 et seq.
Seward's men were thoroughly angered over the whole affair. Some went so far as to say that they must nominate a man who could "hardly read or write." Thurlow Weed was in the depths of despair. Men thought that Seward had been sacrificed upon the political altar in favor of an available candidate whose only claim to fame was that he could split logs. They did not look upon Lincoln as the embodiment of Republican principles but as the less offensive candidate that might win. Greeley took to Lincoln like a long lost brother for his New York Daily Tribune carried remarkable news items and editorials concerning the Illinois favorite son. That hour must have been Greeley's sweetest for his arch-enemy Seward was thoroughly humiliated and made to appear as a small town politician in the eyes of most of the office holders and seekers throughout the nation. Greeley disclaimed in his paper any weighty influence he might have exerted to defeat Seward. Undoubtedly Seward had over estimated his own strength for he did not command the votes of the conservative delegates. Senator Wilson expressed the feeling of many of the political leaders when he was talking with Seward several days prior to the convention.

If I could elect a President I would nominate you or Mr. Chase...But...like Mr. Chase you have by your ability and long devotion to the anti-slavery cause, excited prejudices and awakened conservative fears in the great states of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, New Jersey, and Connecticut which are to be the battle grounds of the contest, and whose vote must be secured to give success....I do not think your name will command the necessary strength. 24

According to Chadwick, Lincoln's victory was a simple question of availability. No doubt he had never been thought of seriously as a presidential candidate until the Illinois Republican State Convention, May 10, 1860, where, by chance the appearance of a couple of rails supposed to have been split by "Old Abe" stampeded the delegates to a frenzy of enthusiasm for a rail splitting candidate for the presidency. However, despite the popular appeal of a second Andrew Jackson in the field, Seward was the popular choice. "Certainly two thirds of the delegates...preferred him for president."  

The elections of governors in Pennsylvania and Indiana were to be held in October. The Republican party of Pennsylvania had not yet adopted the name Republican, but was a party of fusionists with the American party contributing a very strong element and this group was bitterly opposed to Seward. A recognized authority in an analysis states:

Without its (American party) aid the success of Curtin (Republican nominee for governor of Pennsylvania) was simply impossible. A like condition of things existed in Indiana ....While the anti-slavery sentiment asserted itself by the election of a majority of Republicans in Congress in 1858, the entire Democratic state ticket (Pennsylvania) was successful by majorities from 1534 to 2896 ...The one thing the Curtin, Lane (Republican nominee for governor of Indiana) and their respective lieutenants agreed upon, was that the nomination of Seward meant hopeless defeat in their respective states.  

25. Chadwick, op.cit., 124
26. McMasters, op.cit., 455 et seq.
28. Chadwick, op.cit., 122
29. McClure, op.cit., 31 et seq.
The nation's crisis evidently was not considered in nominating the Republican presidential candidates, for it appears that it was the greedy politicians with their own axes to grind who took precedence. Apparently Seward was defeated before the convention convened in Chicago. The contest was not between Seward and Lincoln but the real struggle was between conservative Bates and the straddling Lincoln.

The Republican newspapers for the great part seemed to be tolerant of Lincoln's nomination. The two main presses behind Lincoln, the Chicago Tribune and the New York Daily Tribune were confident of his election. Greeley's Daily Tribune was continually harping on the need of cooperation and undivided zeal. He was out to humiliate Seward for his political trickery of 1854 and high handed snobbery of 1860 when Greeley had to qualify as an Oregon delegate to sit in the convention. The influential presses of the East made much over Lincoln's honesty. The Hartford Press stated that he was so well thought of by his own people that they had honored him with the title of "Honest Abe Lincoln." Nothing but whiteness could be found on his public or private character stated the Syracuse Standard.

With the Cavode investigation in mind the New Haven Palladium backed the Republican standard bearer with the cryptic comment that an honest man was needed for a sorely swindled nation. Some of the press such as the Utica Morning Herald, a leading up-state New York paper, bombasted the subscribers

32. Editorials, May 22, 1860.
with the "old man of the people" climax by pounding away on the idea that Lincoln sprang from the loins of the people, early poverty was his school, and that only his native perseverance and energy had placed him at the top.

The people of the West had a warm spot in their heart for the Republican presidential choice. Extremely proud of Lincoln's frontier upbringing, the Republicans of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Iowa were delighted at his victory over the easterner, Seward. The sedate East, at first somewhat stunned at the defeat of their glorified politician, decided that a friendly attitude toward Lincoln would work to the advantage of the new party. However, the choice of the Illinoisian did not make a favorable impression on the leaders of the East. Lowell in the October Atlantic Monthly wrote:

We should have been pleased with Mr. Seward's nomination for the very reasons we have seen for passing him by ... that he represented the most advanced doctrines of his party.

Subsequent events, however, prove almost conclusively that the great poet was a better versifier than politician. Few leaders of the East shared Douglas's idea when commenting on Lincoln's nomination to a group of Republicans in Washington: "Gentlemen, you have nominated a very able and a very honest man." 37

The masses of the East led by the Albany Journal, Philadelphia Press, and the New York Daily Tribune were gradually brought around to believe that the choice of Lincoln was a very wise one. The Boston Courier, however,

could not be jubilant when it stated that the nomination of Lincoln brought sobriety and sadness to that city. No doubt the sorrow was all on the part of the Republicans. But, as usual, sentiment is difficult to gauge even by the most competent observers. A.A. Lawrence, an almost impartial witness, in correspondence with John Crittenden on May 25 stated:

The whole public sentiment which appears on the outside is in favor of 'Old Abe' and his split rails. The ratification meeting here last night was completely successful. Faneuil Hall was filled and the streets around it.39

Joseph Medill, Chicago Tribune publisher, defended Lincoln from the criticism of Boston's fanatical Abolitionist, Phillips. The Liberator quoting from a speech by Phillips said:

For every blow that Abraham Lincoln ever struck against the system of slavery, the martyr of Marshfield (Seward) may claim that he struck a hundred.40

And just to help along the cause of Mr. Lincoln and to increase the pains of Mr. Medill and Mr. Greeley the uncompromising Mr. Phillips termed the Republican candidate "the slave hound of Illinois," using Lincoln's congressional career as the basis of his assertion.41

The fire-eating, dyed in the wool disunionists, Yancy, Johnson, and Davis must have been beside themselves with wonderment. Here was a presidential candidate, supposedly a blood cousin to the Negroes in the South in

38. News account, May 18, 1860.
40. News account, June 8, 1860.
41. Editorial in the Liberator, (Boston) June 22, 1860
the minds of the Southerners, that was being attacked by the slaves best friend, Phillips. But after all there was little to worry about for the controlled Southern press for the most part was radical and they gave out few startling attacks such as that of Phillips for consumption. If the literate did hear it they could readily charge it to disappointment on the part of Phillips over Seward's presidential calamity. Lincoln, the people of the South were led to believe, was a black Republican ready to liberate the slaves, turn them on their masters, and set up a high tariff to complete the ruin.

After the Democratic press had passed on Lincoln it is little wonder that the populace could have been anything but bitter towards Republicanism. The press of the Democracy had been prepared to give Seward a blast but with the change of events their galley proofs were of little use. But true to the militant spirit of the political press no time was wasted in making a few changes and the poisonous gases came forth as never before. So little was known of Lincoln's political career which could be smeared, the only recourse their bitterness could give vent to was his inabilities. The Chicago Post, the Chicago Inter-ocean, New York Journal of Commerce, Rochester Advertiser, Boston Courier, New York Herald, Buffalo Daily Courier, Detroit Free Press, and the National Intelligencer began to tear Lincoln into shreds.

That Lincoln's only claim to fame consisted in being beaten for the Senate by Douglas was the cry of the Detroit Free Press. The Buffalo Democratic paper praised the nerve, perserverance and independence of the man

42. Various issues of Charleston Mercury, June to December, 1860. 43. Editorials, May 21 to June 5, 1860.
but found fault with his lack of culture, which, of course, a president must possess, his inexperience in public office and lack of statesmanship. Seward's home town press did nobly by Mr. Lincoln, when he was classified with the rank and file of semi-humorous orators that attach themselves to any and all parties. It deplored his failure to show any principles or sentiment on public questions. Under his leadership the Republicans could do nothing but lose. The New York Journal of Commerce gave Lincoln credit for being a respectable citizen of Illinois but not a presidential candidate. His only claim to immortality was his ability to split rails. The term "Honest Abe" seemed irksome to the editor. Several of the up-state New York papers vented their love for Lincoln by stating that he was a self made man, tall, rather cadaverous-looking, a good stump orator and possessed of many qualities that made him popular with "the boys." James Bennett, popular publisher of the New York Herald, classified Lincoln as a fourth rate lecturer who did not know the rudiments of good grammar.

And so the Republicans nominated a president in 1860.

In the final analysis of the causes and forces which nominated Mr. Lincoln, great weight must be given to the influence which came from the setting of the convention and the power and pressure of the surrounding crowd. Illinois Republicans were present by the thousands all of whom favored the "native son." The power of the mob in controlling public opinion is always a potent factor. Had the place of the convention been in Albany it is certain that Mr. Seward would have secured the nomination in view of

46. Editorial, May 19, 1860
47. Editorials in Rochester Advertiser and Binghamton Democrat, May 22, 1860
the open method of balloting in vogue at that time. There can be little
doubt that Lincoln would not have won the nomination. Regardless of the
leadership the electrifying effect of a great throng shouting and advocating
a cause will have a tendency to sway the mind of even the luke warm. That
is a psychological factor of mob movement. The Seward faction felt bitterly
disappointed but from later results it is apparent that no hatreds were
permanent nor harmonies disrupted in the long run by the nomination of
Lincoln. In a way the attitude taken by Seward apparently seemed sincere
for the devotions to a cause and the political ambitions of a lifetime were
evidently subordinated in his bowing to the will of the convention. The
sting of defeat was taken in a manner by Seward that bespeaks of him as a
true politician, who, regardless of personal ambitions could leave the
impression that the will of the people must never be questioned or that his
undying devotion to an ideal could ever be shaken.

By 1860 the Democratic party had reached a peculiar position of stagna-
tion. If the thoughts of the leaders reflected the opinions of its adherents
then it was hopelessly divided and had been for several years prior to 1860.
The inevitable results of deep seated opinions and radical thought were
brought to a head when they were exposed for a public airing at the Democratic
Convention which gathered at Charleston, South Carolina, April 23, 1860.

Douglas was the outstanding candidate for the presidency. The delegates
from the northern states and many of the leaders from the western states had
pledged him their support. The radical southern general-staff hated Douglas
for they thought "Douglas as bad as Seward and popular sovereignty as bad
as Sewardism." Douglas could not be their candidate if he was to make his
own platform although he would have been acceptable if Davis and Yancy could
dictate his policy. And therein lay the cause for the break-up of the
Convention at Charleston. The platform committee of the convention reported
in a majority and a minority report. The former represented the views of
the radical southern statesmen and may have been the hand work of Davis.
It reaffirmed the platform made at Cincinnati in 1856 of "non-interference by
Congress with slavery" which was perfectly in line with Democratic principles
but following additions were generally unacceptable to Northern delegates
for it went on to state, that during the existence of a territorial govern-
ment, all persons have the right to settle in that territory with their
property, personal or otherwise, without their rights to either person or
property being destroyed by Congressional or territorial legislation; and it
was the duty of the Federal government to protect, when necessary, such
rights. That was the viewpoint of the violent South. Naturally their
plan was apparent to all; they had plotted well their unavoidable conflict.

The minority report, which was favored by all of the delegates from the
northern states while basically not different from the majority report was
so worded that it would be acceptable to the Union loving Northern votes.
It reaffirmed the Cincinnati platform of 1856, but instead of defining the
duties of the Congress and the territorial legislatures in regard to real and
personal property, added a resolution "That the Democratic Party will abide

50. Rhodes, op.cit., 443.
51. Chadwick, op.cit., 110.
by the decisions of the Supreme Court... on the questions of constitutional law.

After bitter wrangling in which it was apparent that the southern group was asking for division of the party of the Democracy, the report of the minority was adopted. That divided the Democratic cause clearly for the delegates of the "deep South" walked out of the Convention. The remaining delegates then voted for a candidate for president under the two thirds rule. After 57 ballots it was apparent that Douglas could not muster enough votes to get the nomination so the convention adjourned, May 3, to meet in Baltimore, June 13.

The seceding delegates had met in the meantime and adopted the southern platform, and adjourned to meet in Richmond, June 10.

The reconvened regular Democratic Convention which met at Baltimore was not a harmonious group despite the desertion of the Southern radicals. The delegates of Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee withdrew in a fight over the admission of some of the delegates. From then on events progressed rapidly culminating in the nomination of Douglas for president and Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia for vice-president.

The southern radicals met in Richmond, June 11, but adjourned to meet in Baltimore where they reconvened during the last week of June. They endorsed the majority platform of the Charleston Convention with no dissenting votes. John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, and bosom friend of President Buchanan, was chosen as the nominee for president. Joseph Lane of Oregon

52. Stanwood, op.cit., 282 et seq.
53. Chadwick, op.cit., 115; Haisted, op.cit., 164 et seq.
was nominated his running mate.

It was apparent that harmony among the Democrats was impossible so the different factions had no qualms of political conscience in running an occasional candidate or two against the Republican choice. Since the so-called radicals of the North were to have a candidate and the slavers of the South were to be in the running with an avowed advocate of the southern system the men who were supposed to represent the conservative element of the party met in convention at Baltimore on May 9. Most, but not all, of the delegates were from the Border States and had been affiliated with the disintegrated Whig and American parties. This convention of the "solid men" of the Union nominated Bell of Tennessee for president, and silver tongued Everett of Massachusetts for vice-president. Their platform was actually remarkable since it was merely the statement of a fact that no man could deny: "The Constitution of the United States, The Union of States, and enforcement of the law." The Constitutional Union Party, as it was termed, had no chance of winning but did hope to throw the election of a president into the House of Representatives.

Division seemed to be the Democracy's prominent issue. All Democrats were aware of it but none seemed to have the capabilities necessary to effect an efficient compromise. From the antics of the southern block, the Douglas boosters, and the New England liberty lovers it is almost apparent that they did not want compromise on any of the issues nor to develop a compromise candidate. The old party of the Democracy was on a stormy sea

55. McKee, op.cit., 117 et seq.
with too many captains willing to sink with the ship. Jefferson Davis knew, as did his co-radicals, that the southern candidate could not win. Douglas was aware of the fact that he could not win without the support of the South which had already denied him. Breckinridge wanted to make sure that no one would win by popular vote or electoral vote, and, as such, should take his place along side the southern radicals for sharing their selfish view. Possibly the task of developing harmony within the Democracy would have been a job that no living man at that time could have performed. The radical disunionist men in the South were desperate and were fighting as men who were forced into an uncompromising position. This time they must win and carry their point of territorial slave integrity or they, not the South, were doomed to political extinction. Their selfishness was aptly expressed by their leader, Jefferson Davis, four years later when he answered an inquiry by two Federal Commissioners as to why the South revolted. 

"We did it," he responded, "to escape the rule of the majority."

There was no hope for the electorate in the Democracy in 1860; no real leaders of the type that had the confidence of the voters; a platform, or rather a series of platforms, that were constructed of worn planks and of insufficient strength to warrant their use again; and not enough thought for the good of the nation but mostly of self.

The election of 1860 produced some remarkable results along with what already had been pre-conceived.

56. Milton, op.cit., 479
CHAPTER II

THE ELECTION OF LINCOLN

Milton's analysis of Presidential canvass... Reasons for Douglas's poor showing... Attitude towards Lincoln's views...
General opinion on slavery and slave extension... Opinion on the election of Lincoln... Attitude towards "black Republicanism"
... General effect of Lincoln's election... Comments on Lincoln's attitude of failure to announce policies... Lincoln's trip to Washington... Attitude of public towards trip... Comments on plan to prevent inauguration and to assassinate Lincoln... Douglas's viewpoint on Lincoln's Inaugural speech... General opinion on Lincoln's address.
CHAPTER II

THE ELECTION OF LINCOLN

Lincoln won the election of November, 1860. He did his work well, Douglas did his work well, the Southern dis-unionists did their work well, the self styled Conservative New England border states both did their work well. Everything worked so perfectly that Lincoln won by a surprising majority of electoral votes. Every faction of the Democracy helped Lincoln and he gave nothing to them in return but defeat. However, some facts cannot be excluded as character loving historians are prone to do, and leave the impression that Lincoln's victory was an overwhelming tribute to a man loved by everyone but Douglas and a group of slave beaters. Douglas, on the contrary, probably had more respect for Lincoln than most of the people who voted for him for he knew his capabilities and he knew him. Facts are indisputable and the election of 1860 produced many new and startling ones.

Milton in his analytical life of Douglas, The Eve of Conflict, has deduced some sound conclusions from the results of the presidential voting.

While Lincoln (writes Milton) had received a majority of the electoral votes and thus had won the Presidency, he had about a million fewer popular votes than his opponents combined.¹

¹ Milton, op. cit., 501; The popular votes were as follows: Lincoln, 1,857,610; Douglas, 1,365,967; Breckenridge, 847,963; Bell, 590,631; The electoral vote was: Lincoln, 180; Breckinridge, 72; Bell, 39; Douglas, 12.
An analysis of the returns however, indicates a general wish for Union and peace. Bell carried Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, while Douglas won Missouri and New Jersey. The two Conservatives (Breckinridge and Everett) received a majority of the votes in Georgia, Louisiana and Maryland, and in no Southern State, save Texas, was it less than forty percent. Douglas came within 12,000 votes of defeating Lincoln in Illinois, within 557 votes of topping him in California, and over the entire Northwestern group of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, he received forty three percent of the votes cast....

All of which would indicate that the public temper was in Constitutional and compromising mood. The "to be or not to be" attitude of Lincoln was by no means the opinion of most men as we are led to believe. The vacillating position of Lincoln on the extension or permanency of slavery was carried in what was presumably supposed to be "solid districts" only by the queer tricks of an outworn electoral system. The issues of state sovereignty and the decisions of the Supreme Court had been undeniably attached to Douglas from four to ten years. When men thought of Douglas they immediately thought of the issues which he advocated. The voters had a long time to know him and love him and hate him. Lincoln, on the other hand, was only the name of an Illinoisian whose fancy, by skillful managing, had taken hold of a minority of voters. He was not seriously connected with issues but still his duplicitous remarks were capable of many interpretations. "The House Divided Doctrine" could mean one thing to a Boston Abolitionist and yet another to a New England textile manufacturer; the farmer of the Northwest could argue, on its duplicity, a very fine case with the slaves owners of Kentucky; the Wall Street politician might differ entirely with the Washington politician as to its ultimate effect. Such was not the case with any of the issues as

presented by Douglas and Bell.

To continue Milton's analysis:

The South, too, did not vote for secession. Fifty-four percent of the Border State voters preferred a National to a sectional candidate as did forty-six percent of those of the Cotton States, indicating that the people of the South were by no means unanimously willing to breach the Union for an abstraction. The outcome could, indeed, mean that about half of the Southern voters preferred the Union with eventual emancipation of slavery, rather than slavery without the Union. ³

Probably the summation that was set down in the New York Herald gives us the best thought that existed in that day on the "why" of the election. Anyway it is a post-mortem that is worth taking into consideration:

All or nearly all of the preexisting landmarks of our presidential parties have been broken down in the last campaign, and it is not surprising that all of the figures of our preceding Presidential campaigns were rendered comparatively worthless in the matter of anticipating probable results of this election. The disruption of the great Democratic party, and the division of its forces into a Northern and Southern faction, as hostile against each other as against the common enemy, substantially in June last, settled the question of the final issue. The dullest comprehension could understand that if the united democracy of 1856 with the powerful American party to help them, narrowly escaped a crushing defeat there could be no hope in 1860 with a divided democracy, with the bulk of the North American party of 1856 amalgamated with the republican organization. The disruption of the democratic party has elected the republican Presidential ticket. With the revolutionary dissolution of the democracy at Baltimore this result was a fore-gone conclusion, looking at the Northern election from 1856 to 1860. Hence the tremendous northern majorities for Lincoln. Outside New York and New Jersey all the appearances of a coalition of forces opposed to him are lost. In the New England States the conservatives were so disheartened that they did not bring up their reserves to the polls but allowed the election to go by default. In Pennsylvania the disgraceful demoralization of the democratic element, and the
weakness of the Bell-Everett party, produced a popular rush to the republican camp which was really astounding.

In fact, from Maine to Missouri the hopeless division and dissension among the anti-republican factions, and the moral certainty of Lincoln's election, operated in every way to strengthen his party and weaken his adversaries. The floating material of all our old defunct parties, casting about for the spoils and plunder, were quick to discover the winner. Again while in one State, Douglas men preferred Lincoln to Breckinridge, aided the republican party, in another the Breckinridge faction, to weaken the cause of Douglas strengthened the hand of Lincoln. To a very great extent, North and South, the fight between the two democratic factions was for the ascendancy in the general party camp in 1864, and for nothing else. In this way Lincoln secured four electoral votes even in New Jersey, while Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee have been turned over to Bell. But the fallacy of this fictitious warfare to the Douglas wing and the Breckinridge wing of the democracy must now be apparent in reference to the reunion and control of the democracy for the campaign of 1864. That which has been estimated to be only a temporary division of the camp, like that of 1848, has proved to be a vast and far reaching revolution, in the presence of which all of the presidential parties opposed to Lincoln are already submerged, and before which the republican party itself, in the hour of its first great triumph, must assume a new shape or be swept away by the waves of an angry sea. Contemplating the results of this late Presidential struggle in a more comprehensive view than that of the mere party vote to the several tickets concerned, we find that, notwithstanding the overwhelming party majorities of Lincoln, he stands in the vote of the whole Union, in a popular minority of nearly one million votes. Taking Mr. Breckinridge as a Southern disunion candidate, the popular vote of the Southern States against him would be highly encouraging, but for the great change that has taken place throughout the South since the election of Lincoln. And thus the Union is in danger. South

Carolina threatens to secede. The general belief is that she will secede from the Union on the third of next March. The universal excitement of her people has spread like a quick contagion to Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Mississippi. They may go on the same day. Meanwhile we find the statistics of our election table highly favorable to the preservation of the Union. Let us weather the crisis of disunion, and we have the materials of the Conservative vote of the country, including the conservative element of the republican party camp to re-establish the union and concord between the North and the South on a firm and enduring basis. 4

Many of the leading men of the day laid the party defeat to Buchanan and his administration. John Sherman writes:

The chief virtue of Republican success was its condemnation of the narrow sectionalism of Buchanan's administration and the corruption by which he attempted to maintain its policy...It was his infernal policy in Kansas...that drove off Douglas and led to the division of the Democratic party and the consequent election of Lincoln. 5

August Belmont shared the same opinion: "We owe the election of Lincoln only to the misrule of the present administration." 6

The election results did not greatly change the attitude of the press in its likes or dislikes of the elected candidates. Few great newspapers heralded the election of Lincoln and the victory of Republicanism since most of the potent editors of the day had difficulty in viewing the victor or his party as a potent threat for some time to come. Those people for Lincoln were rabid in their views; those against him were equally intolerant. Few were softened to any great extent.

4. Editorial, Nov. 18, 1860.
Joseph Medill's Chicago Tribune was vitriolic and misleading as usual;

The conservative journals of the South began to speak out very plainly against the traitors who talk and plot disunion. It is evident that the reaction has begun, even before the results of the election are positively known and sooner or later it will whelm in political destruction the whole fire-eating tribe. There will be no destruction - not even a single state. South Carolina will stop before it reaches a point from which retreat is impossible. A few impotent howls after the results of the election shall have been known and the disunion forces will be permanently withdrawn from the Southern bond.7

Subsequent events proved how misleading were the opinions of Mr. Medill.

The New York Advertiser risked the loss of a few subscribers when it stated on November 7:

His election settles all the issues that have entered into the contest, slavery extension, secession, and what just now is still more vital, the equal rights of the Free with the Slave States to share the Administration.8

A fair weather Lincoln backer, the New York Times, kept on selling the victorious candidate to the people when it stated:

We know of no public man of the day who evinces greater qualities of fairmindedness, of mental as well as moral integrity, and of a sincere and profound conviction of the justice of his opinions, in a higher degree than Mr. Lincoln.9

The victorious candidate received advice from all sources, the nature of which would lead one to surmise that the issues upon which Mr. Lincoln sought

election were not yet quite clear in the general mind and that some of the leading formulators of public opinion in the nation were attracted by the candidate and the party but not the platform, if there was a definite one on the vital issues. The Cincinnati Daily Journal, in an editorial, warned the Republican party that it

\[\ldots\] has now to encounter the greatest peril that befalls a party and that is the peril of success; the integrity of the sentiment upon which it is built, and the truth and justice of the purpose of its leaders, will be put to the crucial test in the next eighteen months.\]

The next day the same press informed its subscribers that their enthusiastic backing of the Republican candidates may have been somewhat misunderstood for

\[\ldots\] negroes of this city yesterday were greatly exhilarated by the election of Mr. Lincoln.... They seem to understand that it was emphatically their triumph and all believe it is the harbinger of abolition in the South and negro equality in the North.\]

Thus were many of the citizenry misled as to the true issues of the election. However, Cincinnati was not the only city in which the people were carried into exuberance by the victory of Lincoln and Hamlin. The Republicans with their torch bearers, the Wide-Awakes, celebrated with gay gusto and not a small amount of drunkenness in many of the smaller cities throughout the Northwest. The center of activities of that nature were in Iowa, Illinois and Indiana.

It would appear that the soundest leadership came from the New York Herald, a Bennett press that was poison to "black Republicanism," when it

10. Editorial, Nov. 8, 1860.
stated in an editorial:

Now that the smoke and dust of election are cleared away, it behooves all good citizens to settle down to their occupation and to discharge the duty they owe to their families. 13

The Boston Evening Transcript was unusually calm but still a bit vitriolic in its post-election statement:

The result (election) will be hailed with joy by the Republicans and will not we think be the cause of much regret among the moderate Bell and Everett followers.14

In the West, the leading middle sized city paper and Lincoln's mouthpiece, the Springfield State Register, was for once a bit solemn and instead of the crow of victory we hear the plea of unity:

We think it is the duty of every Democrat to give to his (Lincoln's) Administration (not his party) every aid and support that government can constitutionally expect of Citizens, and if in the exercise of the high duties of his office, the arm of treason be raised it will be the duty of every Democrat when called upon, to aid the government in all Constitutional measures, to put down treason, punish the traitors, and protect the American Union. 15

Such thought as that expressed by the Springfield State Register was farthest from the minds of most of the Northern Democrats for even in the border states the voters, who were undeniably opposed to Lincoln, were for the Union. The best thought on the subject was expressed by the Louisville Journal:

We are glad to be able to infer from the rather elaborate article in the Courier (Louisville) of yesterday that the editor of that paper is not at present in favor of dissolution of the Union on

15. Editorial, Nov. 8, 1860.
account of Mr. Lincoln's election. We hope that he and all of the Breckinridge editors will firmly and heartily be with us in endeavoring to maintain the integrity of the Republic....16

The election of Lincoln did little to change the attitude of those men who had opposed his election. In Boston the feeling against Republicanism ran high and several days following the election a mob broke into the Republican Wigwam of that city, destroyed the furniture, broke the windows and stole the uniforms of the "Wide-Awakes" stored there. 17 The press of the nation did very little to alleviate the frenzied condition that still held the people. About all that can be said is that the editors specialized in a series of inflammatory statements heaped high with brutal insults. Bennett's New York Herald, the New York Express, the New York Journal of Commerce, the Boston Post, the Washington Union, the Intelligencer (Washington), the New York Times and the Philadelphia Ledger did not lose a moment in their effort to hold the people away from the president-elect. No words of congratulations, at least for public consumption emanated from their editorial rooms; only phrases of regret and pale advice. Bennett was more cantankerous than ever when his New York Herald proclaimed editorially:

An an independent organ of public opinion... this journal is free to say that if the President-elect shall measure his steps by the land marks of the Constitution, and for the harmony of the country, we expect to stand by him...should he be led astray by the false lights of 'irrepressible conflict,' we shall stick to him as we stuck to poor Pierce...18

17. News account, Boston Transcript, Nov. 8, 1860.
18. Editorial, Nov. 8, 1860.
The day following the election the New York *Express* deplored:

...this departure from the character of Washington and from the spirit of the Federal Constitution... is deplorable, and yet as good citizens it is our duty to make the best of it, as under the forms, if not under the spirit and intent of the Constitution.

The optimism of pre-election talk was replaced by a hang dog pessimism when the New York *Journal of Commerce* proclaimed:

We have nothing to do but to submit with the best graces we can... One consolation remains to us as conservative men, viz., that we have both Houses of Congress. That will check any way-ward fancies that may seize the Executive, under the pressure of his abolition advisers or otherwise. Let us hope for the best. 20

Bostonians received some good advice and a misinterpreted attitude from the Post of that city when it stated:

The patriotic men of the country have but to stand by the Constitution and the Union; and to respect the will of the majority... and their triumph in the National field is but a matter of date. It will be sure to come when the sectional party that has now triumphed must disband and cease to menace the harmony and existence of the Union. 21

President Buchanan's editorial mouthpiece, the Washington *Union*, struck the same discordant key as the Boston Journal, the *Post*, for it flayed away at the Republicans:

The crisis is come, a sectional minority of the North have pronounced judgment.... To ignore the danger is to resist the evidence of our senses. To mis-state or rather underestimate the issue is to mislead public opinion. 22

Post-election let downs in business gave the New York 
Herald an opportunity

to regale the Lincoln supporters and inflame the laboring men when it went

into an editorial discussion of the pamphlet, An Appeal to Business Men,
published by a number of Wall Street Republicans urging the election of

Lincoln "so the peace of the nation would not be endangered." 23

Quoting

from the Appeal:

The only way, then, to forestall a winter of
disaster, and secure political tranquility, is to
give a little aid that is now needed to secure his
(Lincoln's) success. 24

The Herald was in a crowing mood:


Now we ask... what they think of the 'peace
not panic' which the election of their candidate
has brought upon the country. What do they think
of the political affairs in the South and financial
affairs in the North. Are they not convinced that
a fusion ticket would have been the milder of the
two evils? 25

Possibly the fact that transactions in Wall Street were not large and that

the market had been in a steady decline since October 10 had a tendency to
give the Herald's comments more power. 26

Several days later the same editor proclaimed in his press:


...a state of domestic servitude is the wisest
condition in which a large negro population can
live in a community with the white race. 27

The attitude of the leaders of the country who were at the opposite pole

from the Republicans was one of apprehension over Lincoln's success. Ex-Moyer

Swan of Baltimore best epitomized this spirit when he recommended "a coalition

23. Editorial, Nov.14, 1860
27. Editorials, Ibid., Nov.15, 1860.
of conservative men of our country for the preservation of the Union" in an address at the Young Men's club of New York. The New York Times offered the victors and the nation a bit of fancy advice when it commented that the cure for black republicanism is "simply to provide by law the paying to the slaveholders the value of their fugitive slaves instead of restoring them." Probably the most potent and fiery comment from the opponents of Lincoln came in an editorial in the New York Herald three days after the election. The style is unmistakably that of its editor, Bennett:

The political revolution and the commercial revulsion that was so completely foreshadowed before the election of Lincoln are now on us and it is time for the people of the North to awake to the conviction that the South is in earnest in resisting, as they have been in supporting the black republican party and its infamous proclamation of 'irrepressible conflict'... Today the nine Southern States...are compelled to look upon the incoming federal administration as a hostile government and to take measures for self defense. Six other States -- Tennessee, Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and Missouri -- every one of which has exhibited in the recent popular suffrage an almost unanimous feeling -- nearly so unanimous, in fact, that we are warranted in calling it so, against the idea and policy that animates the black republican party which has elected Mr. Lincoln...and a good policy seems to consul that they should remain for awhile within the Northern Confederacy; in order to serve as a shield for their brethren. He (Lincoln) should recognize these facts; That he has been elected by the votes of not more than one third of the people; that in the seceding states he has not a single supporter; that in the state bordering on those threatening to secede are unanimous against the party policy by which he had been elected, and that these circumstances make it impossible that an effort to coerce the South can be successful and will only involve both sections in a ruinous civil war. Recognizing these truths, he should at once give to the world the program of the policy he will pursue as

President, and that policy should be one of conciliation and peace. He should fling aside the revolutionary and destructive ideas which the fanatic portion of his partisans have proclaimed and give substantial evidence that he will be a national and not a party President. If this be done, we may be saved from impending disaster; if it is not done, we must prepare for a year of commercial panic and industrial ruin for the thousands upon thousands of discharged laborers in our midst, and for a period of public agitation such as has never before been witnessed in the world, save when "France got drunk with blood to vomit crime." 30

After the press and the public minded citizens finally realized that Lincoln was elected and that anything they had to say concerning the results of the election would have little or no effect upon the country as a whole it was decided, or so it would appear from the results, that the next thing to be accomplished was to see if the President-elect could be smoked out of his quiescence and be made to announce some of his policies. The opportunity was present. With the State of South Carolina on the verge of secession great numbers thought that "Old Abe" should make some pronouncement as to his attitude on the question of slavery, for it must be remembered that the people, even those who voted for him, were still vague on his slave policy. The fact that he had repeatedly said that he would stand by the platform of the new party evidently placed him, or so he thought, in a rather secure position. But the catch in it all seems to be that very few actually could interpret the meaning which that plank of the platform meant. So the press was pro and con on Lincoln clarifying the situation. Probably the fact that Lincoln was comfortably living in Springfield and keeping very quiet rankled the breast of the keepers of public thought. It would appear that for a man

30. Editorial, Nov. 9, 1860
to be news that he must be very active in some respect, but on the other hand, inactivity will often effect on public opinion as activity.

While the people were still in a quandary as to anything definite on the state of the Union some of the leading citizens of New Orleans, shortly after the election, asked Douglas to speak in that city evidently with the intent of getting his views on the election and for the purpose of seeking his advice on the perplexing and blazing question of secession. If the latter was their intent then they were to be satisfied. His answer to the people of that city, in the form of a public letter, shows very clearly the patriotic attitude of the spirited men of the democracy. After Douglas declared that he deeply deplored the election of Lincoln to the Presidency he went on to say:

I am bound as a good citizen and a law abiding man to declare my conscientious conviction that the mere election of any man to the Presidency by the American people, in accordance with the Constitution and the laws, does not of itself furnish any just cause or reasonable grounds for dissolving the Union.

For which Douglas was denounced by friends of Lincoln as "a graceless exhibition of morbid jealousy." As usual the Chicago Tribune took a peculiar and decisive stand and one that was not in all probability favored by the majority of the Republican politicians but that would, it was hoped, solidify action in the minds of the people following that journal. The Tribune stated:

But this much we do know that if Mr. Lincoln is committed to anything it is to the policy of treating slavery as being wrong with due regards to the difficulty of getting rid of it in a peaceful way.

Then followed a terrific tirade against the "renegade Douglas" for breaking up the Democracy and now attempting to destroy all confidence in the newly elected chief executive.

The same day the Chicago Tribune editor came through with a brilliant plan in which the Republicans would be able to get off to a good start when "Abe" was inaugurated. The idea was to let the southern states secede as

...to keep disunion Senators and Representatives away from Washington long enough to permit the Republicans, who would be in the majority, to inaugurate their distinctive measures and thus secure to the country the advantages of a Republican Administration from the beginning of Lincoln's term.

In conclusion it stated that "we know of no greater good than this." And the Daily Tribune was not alone in hammering down the persistent clamor for some declaration of definite policy on the part of Lincoln. The Cincinnati Gazette, a strong Republican press, did nobly in one of its defensive editorials:

To ask Mr. Lincoln to declare now in advance of his inaugural, and in the presence of continued threats of Secession, some milk and water opinions which may act as an answer to the Southern Cerebus, is alike to ask what would be alike unmanly and dishonest. It is to ask him to either modify or deny opinions that he has put on record in every possible form and which no decently informed man can be ignorant. It is more. It is to ask the Republican Party, through Mr. Lincoln, to apologize for what it may have done! It is to undo the great work of November 6. That was, no doubt, a revolution in the political tendencies of government, but a revolution constitutionally accomplished, and will be constitutionally carried out. This revolution might be

33. Editorials, Nov.12,1860.
34. Editorial, Nov.2, 1860.
transient—it might give way to some new dogmas
of parties—Mr. Lincoln might be the mere instrument
in the hands of a dominant faction, if it were not
for a known and obvious fact—that it is a revolution
occasioned by the permanent conviction of the American
people. Such revolutions never go backwards. No
pro-slavery party can ever again be successful in the
United States. It has had its day. For it there is
no revival. It is opposed to all of the moral and
intellectual tendencies of the age. Shall the Repub­
lican party apologize for doing this noble work? Shall
Mr. Lincoln represent them in undoing what they have
just done? We rather think not. Mr. Lincoln is not
the man, nor are the Republicans the men to take back
steps in this matter.35

A Jacksonian policy was advocated by the Sandusky Register when writing that
it was Lincoln’s duty to "announce that he stands by the Jacksonian doctrine
of uncompromising hostility to secession...." Henry Ward Beecher, divine
par excellence, crossed over from Brooklyn to admonish a vast assemblage at
Cooper Union in New York, that he had faith in Mr. Lincoln to "guide the
ship of State safely through the perils which encompass her." He received a
great ovation at the conclusion of his discourse. The Illinois State
Journal got behind the winner when it advised the people of central Illinois
as follows:

We would be false to our duty if we did not urge
Republicans to stand unflinchingly behind the principles
on which they elected Mr. Lincoln to Presidency.

Evidently it was their impression that there was little hope in converting
the Douglasites to assist Lincoln.

38. Editorial, Nov.20, 1860
The calm which prevailed in the West had evidently not yet worked its way Eastward for a dispatch from Baltimore to the New York Herald states that "public feeling is still feverish...business of all kind is interrupted, but the Union sentiment is strengthening." The nation, as a whole, wanted some word from Lincoln as to the course that would follow upon his inauguration. But they waited in vain. Cantankerous Bennett was at the apex of sarcastic journalism on the morning of November 16 when he raked Mr. Lincoln and his party mates for their apathetic attitude and closed mouth policy.

All accounts from Springfield (stated Bennett's mouthpiece) concur in representing "honest Abe Lincoln" as an oracle which gives no sign nor sound touching on the policy of the incoming administration. In reply to all suggestions that have been thrown out by the conservative journals of the North in behalf of some public declaration at this crisis, from the power that is to be, of what this power will be, we are told that Mr. Lincoln's Illinois speeches are before the county, and that they embody the views of Mr. Lincoln...Now we would like to have the views of 'Honest Abe' that 'a house divided against itself cannot stand'. (Then the Herald decided to air Mr. Bennett's views on Lincoln's speeches.) We take up then,(stated the editorial) the volumes of Mr. Lincoln's speeches delivered in the Illinois campaign of 1858, as the competitor of Mr. Douglas for his seat in the Senate; but what do we find? In one speech we find Mr. Lincoln in advance of the Rochester manifesto proclaiming the identical 'irrepressible conflict' of Mr. Seward, that 'a house divided against itself cannot stand;' that the 'government cannot endure half slave and half free,' but that 'it will become all one thing or the other.' In another speech we find Mr. Lincoln declaring frankly his submission to the fugitive Slave Law; that if the people of a free territory should adopt a pro-slavery constitution he could see no alternative but to 'admit them into the Union;' and that he thought that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia could only be brought about by gradual steps, under the vote of the people concerned, and with the full compensation to the slave owners. In the same speech he expressed the same reserve and caution.

against Congress tampering with the slave trade between the states. Here then we have the record of Mr. Lincoln, the 'irrepressible conflict' of Seward, and the conservative anti-slavery view of Henry Clay -- opinions in unison with abolition radicals and next, in bold relief, the sentiment of the conservative wing of the Republican party. We can say that the radicals and the conservatives supported Mr. Lincoln in this late canvass with the same confidence and enthusiasm; but the question remains unanswered as to which wing of the camp his administration will attach itself to.\(^{40}\)

A succession of events so great in aspect that the nation was in a mad whirl from December to March had the effect of taking Lincoln somewhat out of the public eye for a short time. However, the citizenry, aroused and curious, awaited with apprehension the announcement from the President-elect of the men chosen to be in the Cabinet. With the news that Seward, Chase, Welles, and Smith would assist the President the press was hard on the heels of Mr. Lincoln. "Such of Lincoln's Cabinet," stated the New York Herald, "one prominent statesman, one clever man, hung up like Mohamet's coffin, between heaven and earth, and two old fogies, whom nobody objects to, because nobody knows anything about them, provided with portfolios....If he appoints people with no enemies, he must take old fogies or incapables."\(^{41}\) Another editorial appearing in the same press the same day was almost as pessimistic:

> The bitter end so long foreseen appears. The period has arrived to the country to pay for the treat of elevating anti-slavery republicanism to power in the country.\(^{42}\)

The Chicago Times was bitter: "His mocking manner is intensely humiliating to eight million of our people."\(^{43}\)

40. Editorial, Nov. 16, 1860.
41. Editorial, Jan. 15, 1861.
42. Editorial in New York Herald, Jan. 15, 1861.
43. Editorial, Feb. 15, 1861.
On February 13 the counting of the electoral votes took place in Washington. Buchanan, ever ready to listen to rumors and almost always ready to overlook the vital, evidently took to heart the threats that an uprising would take place in the capital and prevent the official count. Somehow or other, General Scott found the troops which he claimed were not available to defend Fort Sumter and had them transferred to Washington so that Buchanan would not be embarrassed if any unpleasantness arose. So we find that seven or eight companies of soldiers guarded Washington when no military was necessary.

Evidently it was Buchanan's and Seward's plan, for he was also a great alarmist and had put the idea of uprising into the President's head to make it appear that the nation was in a great state of turmoil.

Lincoln wasted no time in starting for Washington after he was legally declared President for he began his journey two days later. Since he had received numerous invitations to visit various cities the trip was stretched over a week. Then too, his presence was counted upon to win him many friends and allay some of the rumors that preceded him Eastward. From the former standpoint the journey was unsuccessful for Lincoln was never at his worst, as for the latter, it is always difficult to change an opinion engendered by political hatred. Excluding the farewell speech to the citizens of Springfield and the talk at Philadelphia his other oratorical attempts bordered upon the pathetic. His life was of the common place and at times he did not possess the knack of saying the graceful things. His sense of

44. Rhodes, op. cit., 245.
45. Ibid., 302.
46. Fredrick Seward, ed., Autobiography of William H. Seward (3 vols., Denby and
humor, as keen as it was, seemed to grate the senses of the more serious
minded men who had the affairs of the nation at heart. His actions were not
discreet for one bound upon such a serious duty and at a time when men were
torn with apprehension. A simple little incident, that of kissing a small
girl, was so completely misunderstood that the New York Daily Tribune, a
strong Lincoln press, headlined the account of it the following day with
"Old Abe Kissed by a Pretty Girl!"  

Medill's Chicago Tribune made a veritable Caesar, minus dictatorial
ideas, of him in its editorials:

The people hail him as a deliverer from
the anarchy and endless confusion from which the
the country is threatened.  

The New York Times was more loquacious in its praise than ever when one of
its correspondents wrote from the Albany:

There is more backbone today than I have seen
in weeks. The speech made by Mr. Lincoln at
Indianapolis has electrified the people. Today
they see plain enough just what should be done --
that we must 'enforce the laws,' and make the Cotton
States behave themselves.  

The Germans of Cincinnati were in a benevolent and patriotic mood.
Eighteen German industrial associations, numbering several thousand men,
marched to Lincoln's hotel in the evening, flags flying, bands playing, and
torches burning. They packed the street from curb to curb in front of the
hotel as close as men could stand. The spokesman delivered an address in

46. (continued) Miller, New York City, 1891), II, 497.
47. News account, Feb.18, 1861.
which he promised the President-elect their support if he should ever need it to preserve the Union.

It may be that Lincoln sought to allay the fears of the people in his speech at Pittsburg several days after the Cincinnati ovation or he was not aware of the gravity of the situation that presented itself to the Union or that when he was practicing some of his keen wit on the masses when he addressed the citizenry of that city in a most peculiar manner.

My intention (said Lincoln) is to give the subject proper consideration before speaking upon it. When I speak I hope to say nothing to disappoint the people generally. Notwithstanding the trouble in the South, there is no crisis, except an artificial one.51

Tremendous crowds greeted Lincoln along the route: 8,000 at Rochester; 10,000 at Syracuse; 15,000 at Albany, the home territory of the master politicians, Seward and Weed. The New York, Newark and Philadelphia throngs that turned out to see the "savior from the West" were of staggering proportions.52 The New York Herald and the Chicago Daily Tribune were at odds ends in regard to the New York reception for Lincoln. The Tribune correspondent seemed to indicate that all people regardless of party affiliations were along the line of march. The reception was stiff and formal with Mayor Woods giving Lincoln some practical advice in his speech of welcome that made a great hit with the multitude. Evidently he was not too elated that he had to act in an official capacity for the opening part of his address of welcome was so pointed with crudities that Lincoln was forced to almost admonish him

50. Cincinnati Dispatch, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 17, 1861
52. Press Dispatch, Chicago Tribune, Feb. 17 to 20, 1861.
in his reply. Wood began, "As Mayor of New York it becomes my duty to extend to you an official welcome on behalf of the corporation...." Lincoln's rejoinder was not lost for he was given a great cheer when he concluded his reply with the stinging rebuke:

The ship is no better than the passenger and the cargo -- the Union is no better than the great and undying principles upon which it was founded -- but we intend to save both the Union and the principles.53

The New York Herald had been preparing for over a week for the New York entry of the President-elect so its subscribers had been primed with some choice editorial remarks. Its comments upon the speeches made by Lincoln at Indianapolis and Pittsburg are worth noting.

We have never read such speeches as those made by 'Old Abe' on his journey from Springfield to the White House since General Scott ran for President, and then, indeed, we were regaled with some choice oratorical morsels....We expect to be very much amused when the angular features of the select of his people make their appearance in New York. What we want is a good Western anecdote, and we hope the natural modesty of Mr. Buchanan's successor will not prevent his giving us the deserved treat.54

It all depended upon one's political attitude as to what they thought of Lincoln's New York reception. The New York Herald was entirely out of line with the Chicago Tribune as to the enthusiasm of the greeting extended to the celebrated traveler. The Herald informs us that the masses did not turn out for the occasion. There was faint cheering as Mr. Lincoln entered his carriage at the railway depot, but that there was none of the spontaneous outbursts for which New Yorkers are famous. The pièce de resistance of the

graphic report, however, was that the crowd along Broadway was not much greater than on ordinary occasions.

It is evident that whatever the thinking people had in mind before Lincoln arrived in New York that after seeing him and hearing his utterances they were somewhat more sympathetic towards him. Even the bitter New York Herald was somewhat astounded by the charm of the Westerner for its comments on his speech were quite a change from its editorial of the preceding week.

On behalf of the Union (said the Bennett Press) after noting the improved tone of the little conventional speeches of this distinguished stranger from Buffalo to New York -- we do not despair of better things to come. It is apparent to us that Mr. Lincoln is beginning to feel and to appreciate the pressure of the conservative peace and Union sentiment in the North ... and that, by the time he reaches Washington he will comprehend pretty largely the fearful disorder of the country, the responsibilities of his position, and the dangers which are threatened from a rigid violent 'enforcement of the laws' against our revolutionary Southern brethren.56

As Lincoln approached the city of Washington the tension became greater in all parts of the country as far back as the later part of November the Democratic papers, both North and South, had boasted "that the President-elect could not travel safely through half of the nation."57 Since that time the failure of all efforts to compromise with the Southern states, the establishment of the Southern Confederacy, and the firing on the Union flag by the people of the state of South Carolina had raised the temper of the people to a disagreeable tenor. Also the boast that the inauguration would never be forthcoming had a somewhat peculiar reaction from nearly all of the people regardless of party. We find the Washington Intelligencer warning the

57. Editorial in the New York Courier, Nov. 28, 1861
people that the citizenry of Washington had a duty to perform in seeing that nothing was plotted to interfere with the inauguration. When the talk of such a plot began to filter into the West alarm was general and a warning was heard throughout the nation from both press and speaker.

If an attempt is made (quoted the Chicago Tribune) on the lives of Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Hamlin -- if indeed there is a probability to apprehend such an attempt -- it is assuredly their duty to provide a sufficient force to thwart the purpose of such assassins. 59

That the people of the nation thought such a course as to prevent the inauguration of a President repugnant is best typified in the hostile New York Herald:

...the mere rumor that the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln at Washington should be prevented had aroused both Democrats and Republicans alike to indignation.... 60

Evidently many thought that there was something to the rumor that Lincoln would be assassinated while he was passing through the city of Baltimore for just before he departed from Philadelphia he received a warning from General Scott to make the trip at night and incognito. Consequently, Lincoln, in the company of his body-guard, Ward H. Lamon, stole through the peace loving metropolis of the Chesapeake hiding his identity by a felt hat pulled well down over his eyes and a large shawl. The Chicago Tribune answered the ridicule heaped on Lincoln by the Democratic press for not stopping at Baltimore by claiming that he acted wisely and precisely as he ought.

58. News account, Jan 2, 1861.
59. Editorial, Jan.3, 1861
60. Editorial, Jan.6, 1861
Years later it was proved conclusively that the idea of a plot to take the life of Lincoln was the brainstorm of a group of railroad detectives headed by Allan Pinkerton and that as far as any one knew no attempt was planned on the life of the President-elect at that time. Bennett of the New York Herald evidently could not be misled by such a foolish yarn for he told his subscribers when the incident had blown over:

Some people laugh at this affair and think it all a joke. Indeed there are even those who think it was a practical joke of Old Abe himself, who has been all of his life engaged in joking; but there is no question about the fact that it was no joke at all, but a very serious reality; for have we not the authority of the republican journals for its veracity? And they must know their own business. 64

The day of the inaugural, March 4, was bleak and cold. Thousands had thronged into Washington from all sections of the nation. State delegations by the score, both Democrats and Republicans, swelled the restless throng. Commissioners of the seceded States were there to view the reaction of the inaugural address upon the populace. The situation was tense for the assemblage was unusual. General Scott had provided a heavy guard of troops, assisted by the militia from several of the neighboring States, to make certain nothing would mar the proceedings. Naturally the high point of the ceremony was the inaugural address for it was hoped by all thinking men that Lincoln would make some pronouncement of policy on slavery and secession. As to his ultimate success in this respect the people of the nation were badly divided after they had heard or read the President's message.

64. Editorial, Feb. 26, 1861.
The Democratic press, orators of the North and border states could find little of merit in Lincoln's speech for the Richmond Whig, Boston Herald, Boston Courier, New York Herald, New York Journal of Commerce, Chicago Times, Louisville Courier and numerous other leading presses expressed their disappointment and utter disgust at the President's effort to clarify the situation. Words of high praise and merit came from the Republican standard bearers. The Boston Transcript, New York Daily Tribune, New York World, New York Times, and the Chicago Tribune went into ecstasies at Lincoln's supposedly firm stand. Garrison and Phillips were terribly disappointed for they had expected a radical statement that slavery would be abolished without any hesitancy. With secession already a reality Medill in the Chicago Tribune was overjoyed but rather calm:

We are sure that no document can be found among American State papers embodying sounder wisdom and higher patriotism -- breathing kindlier feeling to all sections of the country, or stamped with firmer purpose to maintain the Union and the Constitution inviolate -- than the Inaugural Address of President Lincoln. 67

Horace Greeley's New York Daily Tribune was as usual pregnant with Lincolnian praise, for the publisher, despite the seriousness of the national situation was still afflicted with rose colored spectacles.

The almost universal satisfaction, (states Greeley,) with which the Inaugural Address of President Lincoln is received is the strongest evidence of the anxiety with which it was waited for, as well as the high character of the document itself. 68

The people of Boston were informed by the Boston Transcript of the worthiness 66. Editorial, Liberator (Boston), March 8, 1861. 67. Editorial, March 5, 1861. 68. Editorial, March 9, 1861.
of Lincoln's effort:

The address appeals alike to the judgment and the sympathies of the people.... The tone of hope, faith and insistence upon the truth, in the address is noteworthy. These qualities with the evident individuality of the document, will serve to concentrate public opinion strongly in favor of its author in the Free States.69

The attitude of a dozen other presses on the Inaugural Address can best be summed up in the excellent editorial that appeared in the New York World:

The President does not shirk from the full declaration of purpose to maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, but he indulges in no harsh or imperious tones; his language throughout is that of kindness, conciliation and peace.... No important man can for a moment imagine that its author means harm to any section of the country.... The inaugural seems to have been well received in Washington by all of the moderate people.... With time passion will subside, misapprehension disappear; and with time, too, the stupendous practical difficulties... of keeping up the government of the so styled 'Confederate States' will develop themselves, and will cause a revulsion of popular feeling that will give traitors a lesson for all times to come. In spite of the treachery of the old pilot, the ship has weathered the worst of the storm and doubled the cape. Under the new guidance, we hope soon we will be in smooth waters. 70

Douglas thought quite highly of Lincoln's first official pronouncement. Several days prior to the deliverance of the speech Lincoln had read portions of it to Douglas who expressed general satisfaction with the President-elect's attitude. Those seated close to Douglas on the speakers' platform at the Inaugural heard his quiet but enthusiastic utterances as Lincoln would bring out some point in his oration. 71 As soon as he had finished

69. Editorial, March 9, 1861.
70. Editorial, March 6, 1861.
71. Samuel Orth, Five American Politicians (The Burrows Bros. Co., Cleveland, Ohio, 1906), 212
Douglas rushed forward to congratulate Lincoln. Probably Douglas' keenness in analyzing the Southern political mind and the steadfast determination of the Ultras to force secession made him more aware of the impact of the president's message than those who were not so competent as the Illinois Senator to judge its real merit. In his speeches he was just as enthusiastic over the Inaugural Address for several days while addressing the Senate he declared: "It is a peace offering rather than a war message."

The Eastern Democratic press and spokesmen were indignant at the tenor of Lincoln's Inaugural pronouncement. Whether the resentment was sincere or the result of a press policy is dubious, but none the less, Lincoln or his speech were not spared the fierce attacks of the barbed pen or vicious tongue. Possibly the resentment was greatest in the East and in the border states. The Boston Herald, an avowed Douglas sheet, could not follow the dictates of the new political god, for in reference to the March 4 speech it was sarcastic.

On the whole, (stated the Herald), the Inaugural is all that could be expected from Mr. Lincoln and the party he represents....

A little later on, however, it gives some credit to the people of the nation for their love of liberty when it stated: "But he (Lincoln) will be sustained by the great masses of the people whose sentiments he has so truly reflected."

The neighboring Boston Courier, in a trickily worded editorial,

73. Congressional Globe, 37 Congress, Special Session, 1436.
74. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
75. Editorial, Ibid., March 5, 1861.
however, proclaimed in no mild verbage: "We are bound to say that the Address does not meet fairly and squarely the just expectations of the people." Bennett of the New York Herald, not deviating from his true Democratic policy was ruthless.

It would have been almost as instructive, (said the Herald), if President Lincoln had contented himself with telling his audience, yesterday, a funny story. His Inaugural is but a paraphrase of the vague generalities contained in his pilgrimage speeches, and show clearly, either that he had not made up his mind reflecting his future course, or else that he denies for the present to keep his intentions to himself...In a word the inaugural is not a crude performance - it abounds in traits of craft and cunning. It bears marks of indecision and yet of strong coercive proclivities, with serious doubt whether the government will be able to gratify them.

The Border State press was vitriolic and uncompromising. The Richmond Whig was sure that the policy of Mr. Lincoln "will meet with the stern and unyielding resistance of a united South." A neighboring paper, potent in its editorial strength, the Richmond Enquirer was sure of the border states' path when it said: "Civil War must come ... war with Lincoln or Davis is the choice left us." The most powerful press in that section of the nation, the Baltimore Daily Exchange, after reviewing Lincoln's speech took a sally into the future when it prophesied: "The measures of Mr. Lincoln mean war.

76. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
77. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
78. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
79. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
80. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
CHAPTER III

PRESIDENT JAMES BUCHANAN

Buchanan's responsibility... Buchanan's misinterpreted attitude of public opinion .... Opinion of Buchanan's cabinet .... Black's viewpoint .... Opinion of nation on Buchanan's early secession policy .... Effect of Buchanan's December 7th Address to Congress .... Buchanan and the South Carolina Commissioners .... Opinion on Buchanan's firm stand to preserve and protect Federal property .... General opinion on Buchanan's retirement.
CHAPTER III

PRESIDENT JAMES BUCHANAN

Probably the greatest single factor in the success of the southern states seceding from the Union was the inactivity of President James Buchanan. Even with the advice given to him by Andrew Jackson years earlier, "I met nullification at the threshold," seemed to have had little effect in arousing this man from his lethargy. That he had the ability and the power to prevent a dismemberment of the Union cannot be doubted. That the mass of the people would not have supported him is only a weak argument. All was in Buchanan's favor, yet he did nothing to alleviate the dangerous situation. The dead hand of the past rested heavily on the President's shoulder. Too much Southern Democratic advice, coupled with encouragement from northern men who had acquired their mental pattern decades earlier and could regard the present scene only in the light of the past, may account for the ineffective steps taken by Lincoln's immediate predecessor.

Such reports as the one received by Attorney General Black from Supreme Court Justice Woodward of Pennsylvania illustrates the point. In a letter to Black the justice stated that he believed "slavery a special blessing to the people of the United States," and that he "could not, in justice, condemn the South for withdrawing from the Union." When the Attorney General read

this letter to the cabinet it met with approbation and admiration, and the

2

president wanted to publish it to the world. Public men assumed a strange

attitude. T.H. Seymour in a letter to Ex-President Pierce stated:

The Union is gone already ... We have
defered cutting throats long enough ... I
should like to begin with the Abolitionists
at once. 3

Then we must consider that Buchanan was victimized to some extent by
the men he had as his closest political advisors — The Cabinet. Only three
of its members had well defined Unionist ideas; Cass, the Secretary of State;
Black, the Attorney General; and Holt, the Postmaster General. The rest,
Touchev, Cobb, Thompson and Floyd were to a great extent thorough going
Southern sympathizers, opposed to the use of force. 4 In addition there was
the period in which Buchanan lived. A slovenly laisser aller state of mind
in which few leaders except the fire eating secessionists, seemed to have
any definite views of any sort. Corruption was rampant in the government;
the army was weak and small; the navy, both ships and personnel was old and
worn out; there was no settled belief or opinion. 5

Buchanan vacillated between his duty and his friends which he thought
he could not afford to offend. Although General Scott was getting on in
years and to a point where flowery verbosity played a great part in his oral
and written discourses, he was, at least, a good strategist and commander in
some respects. His sentiment probably was that of most army men of the
north. Just prior to the election he laid before Buchanan an elaborate

2. Ibid., 506.
3. A letter by T.H. Seymour to Franklin Pierce, Hartford, Conn., December 5,
4. Chadwick, op. cit., 168; Milton op. cit., 507
report on the situation of military reserves in the South and recommended that Buchanan take immediate steps to strengthen particularly the coastal forts so that their seizure would be impossible in event of secession. For reasons political and not wishing to offend his Southern friends Buchanan disregarded Scott's advice. 7

Friendships spelt disaster for Buchanan. In such a time reason would dictate that his advisors should have been strong Union men and tolerant southerners. In this he was only half correct. Secretary Cass indicated that force should be used to hold the Union together. Attorney General Black was not quite so radical as his colleague, Cass, but he did advise the use of reinforcements to hold United States property from being confiscated. Secretaries Touchev and Holt sided with them. Secretary Cobb was continually advocating secession and viewed it as most desirable. Secretary Thompson carried the proverbial chip on his shoulder, "knock it off and Mississippi is out of the Union." Secretary Floyd was corrupt and traitorous having developed plans to sell 10,000 rifles to South Carolina. That Jefferson Davis played a great part in Buchanan's life cannot be denied. He ill advised Buchanan constantly on southern secession trends. 9

Buchanan was worried; he reflected his wavering position in the stupid attitude he assumed on many vital questions. The word coercion had a most

5. Chadwick, op. cit., 164.
8. Ibid., 507.
terrifying effect upon his vacillating spirit. Ever present in his writings and public comments was the sinister word - coercion. In the *Opinions of the Attorney General* we find Attorney General Black advising the President on his legal rights to prevent secession. Black, in a forceful opinion, stated that the Constitution neither sanctioned State secession nor a means by which a state could be coerced. But he did inform the President that it was his duty to enforce the laws. Even with the assurance of the Attorney General's opinion Buchanan sank deeper into a morass of groundless threats diffused by southern Congressmen.

Secession was the dominant problem that confronted the President and the nation. The attitude of the north in respect to Buchanan and his position on the subject has been well condensed in an editorial of the New York Times:

> The idea that a state can secede from the Union whenever a majority of its citizens see fit for any cause, or for no cause, and with the passive acquiescence of the Federal Government, is the strangest folly of the day...Mr. Buchanan, therefore, has no alternative but to enforce the laws, however, much he may regret the necessity of bringing the Federal Government in collision with those of any of the States. Mr. Lincoln will be precisely in the same predicament.

For the first several months following the election of Lincoln, Buchanan was a man guided by irresoluteness of purpose. Hoping to avert disaster he would take a stand and then temporize it with some spineless comment or act. His message to Congress on December 4 best illustrates his feebleness of purpose. In it he denies the right of secession, asserts that United States property must be defended and protected in a seceding state, and concludes

in a lengthy constitutional argument that the United States has not the authority to coerce a state. For his views he was both praised and condemned, loved and hated. The New York Commercial Advertiser in a despatch from Washington has no fault to find:

The impression made by the President's message is generally favorable here. The extreme anti-slavery men, however, do not approve of the proposed explanatory amendments to the Constitution because they say they would recognize slavery. But on the part of the Republican members generally the effort of the President to save the government from destruction is favorably regarded. The feeling among the southern men generally is one of confidence in the continuance of the Union much longer.12

The Advertiser correspondent must have missed something for the speech pleased few men; even Seward and Jefferson Davis agreed that it was a poor attempt to patch a bad leak. Seward was heard to reply after reading the Buchanan opus, when asked what he thought of it:

I think that the President has conclusively proved two things; 1) that no state has the right to secede unless it wishes to; and 2) that it is the President's duty to enforce the laws unless somebody opposes him.13

Jefferson Davis was dissatisfied for he stated the message was altered after Buchanan had showed him a copy of it. "So much so," he said, "that when it was read in the Senate I was reluctantly constrained to criticize it."14

Some of the press was vitriolic and bitter at Buchanan's wavering spirit. The Chicago Tribune, the New York Times, the Sandusky Register, the New York Weekly Tribune (Horace Greeley's) and numerous other agenda of opinion painted a fiery picture of Buchanan's incompetence and purpose. Even the

staunch supporter of Republicanism, Medill in the Chicago Daily Tribune, accused Buchanan of attempting "to engraft the Breckinridge platform upon the Federal Constitution." The next day it goes farther by stating that "the three explanatory amendments" proposed by Buchanan "are not likely to be accepted by the Republican or the Douglas men of the North." Northern Ohioians were overcome with the wavering attitude of the President for the Sandusky Register made note of it. "Some parts of it (the message) manifest vigor, firmness, and certainty of purpose and are creditable, but they are overwhelmed by the weakness, petty littleness and uncertainty and entire lack of vigor in other portions." The extraordinary contempt in which Buchanan was held by some of the people is best understood by a sarcastic editorial in Greeley's Weekly Tribune when it stated:

The late message of President (Buchanan) is as full of allusion to Divine Providence as the last dying speech and confession of a Newgate martyr...Deathbed repentances are not especially recommended...but we submit with modesty that the President has been an extraordinary offender and should be allowed to exhibit his remorse in an extraordinary way.

Following Buchanan's message James R. Lowell wrote of him in the Atlantic Monthly:

Buchanan knows no art to conjure the spirit of anarchy he has evoked but the shifts and evasions of a second rate attorney who has continued to evolve his country in the confusion of principle and the vacillation of judgment which have left him without a party and a friend.

The New York Times maintained a bitter and personal trend over Buchanan's
puniness and inconsistency and openly accused him of attempting to incite
rebellion.

The Message (stated the Times), in our
judgment, is an incendiary document, and will
tend still further to exasperate the sectional
differences of the day. It backs up the most
extravagant of the demands which have been made
by the south, indorses their menace of disunion
if their demands are not conceded and promises
the seceding States that the power of the Federal
Government shall not be used for their coercion.
The entire North will be made doubly indignant
by the flagrant dereliction of duty on the part
of the Executive of the Nation, while the
Disunionists of the South will be stimulated to
fresh exertions in the work of ruin on which they
have embarked. The country has to struggle through
three months more of this disgraceful imbecility
and disloyalty to the Constitution.20

Buchanan's failure to stem the tide of secession brought down the wrath
of the nation upon his unfortunate head. He was openly accused of senility
and imbecility and numerous other afflictions of the aged and the weak. The
Boston Transcript showered him with insult and ridicule. "Mr. Buchanan,
according to all reports," said the Boston Journal, "is so depressed in mind
as to be practically incompetent to perform the duties of his office. His
will is paralyzed....Imbecility of action in a great emergency like the
present, ranks with the worst of crimes." If Buchanan ever was popular his
position of inactivity now turned the people of the north from him. "Mean-
while the President," states the New York Weekly Tribune,"goes on his shamb-
ling course, while expressions of repro\ation of his conduct fill all circles."
A short time later we hear that "he is deep in the valley of humiliation."22

To have South Carolina leave the Union was painful to Mr. Buchanan but the uncovering of huge frauds in the Department of the Interior was so personal to the President that he was beside himself with grief. No press or spokesman in the nation spared him for it was something that he could have avoided. "Secession ... has...disturbed the country; but the gigantic fraud ...has astonished and electrified it." That the President should have demanded Secretary Floyd's resignation several years earlier could not be denied for at that time he was warned by Buchanan about irregularities in supply contracts but he never desisted from his fraudulent policy. Then, too, the attitude that Floyd had taken in the matter of secession had made him distasteful to Union sympathizers. The Chicago Tribune commenting upon his resignation seems to express pretty much of the northern consensus.

The country will feel a sense of relief in the resignation of John B. Floyd, Secretary of War. His administration from first to last has been notoriously corrupt and profligate. It commenced with a swindle of the most bare-faced description, and ended with a downright robbery. 24

Since South Carolina was not a "nation" the statesmen of the "new republic" felt that the state should take control of the United States property within her boundaries. Consequently along toward the last of December three commissioners from that State arrived in Washington to negotiate with weary Buchanan for the transfer of Federal property to the seceded state. Northerners were indignant at such affront of the United States government and openly accused Buchanan of treason for allowing such procedure.

"What shall we say," stated ultra-patriotic Medill, "of the hoary headed old traitor in the White House...." Douglas, however, knowing the Southern mind, worried that Buchanan would fail to receive the commissioners and thereby commit an overt act which would make the problem of compromise almost impossible.

Events broke rapidly between December 25 and January 3. Major Anderson, United States commander of the forts in the Charleston harbor, realizing that his position in Fort Moultris and Castle Pickney, two of the forts, was of no strategic value, moved his troops (December 26), to Fort Sumter, a powerful island fortress located in the center of the harbor. It appears that the South Carolina commissioners protested the removal to Buchanan for they claimed that he had promised no movement of troops without giving them notice of his intentions. At least that pledge was supposed to have been given to one of the southern Congressmen earlier in the month. The President was in a dilemma again. He did not want to be aggressive and begin conflict yet he had the duty of protecting the United States property devolving upon him. Spineless as usual, he was ready to accede to the request of the Commissioners by having Anderson remove to Fort Moultrie when his northern cabinet members, Holt, Black, and Stanton threatened to resign if he did not take a firm stand. Buchanan was almost apoplectic with apprehension but to his credit he did listen to his Secretaries and send a message to the Commissioners in which he maintained that the United States could do anything it saw fit to do with its troops and property. From that time on Buchanan seems to be a different man... somewhat more firm and statesmanlike. The

27. Rhodes, idem., 281.
New York Herald praised Buchanan warmly but overdid it slightly.

We are glad (spoke the paper) that our confidence in him as a statesman and a patriot are vindicated before the world. 28

The next day the same press even compared him to Washington and Jefferson.

Anderson's actions of transferring his troops from Moultrie to Sumter received almost universal approbation in the north. Reports from Chicago and Philadelphia tell us the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans was observed in about fifty of the principal towns and cities of the north by a salute to Major Anderson. The Atlantic Monthly, in expressing the views of its editor James R. Lowell states:

The feeling of the country has been unmistakably expressed in regard to Major Anderson, and that not merely because he showed prudence and courage, but because he was the first man holding a position of trust who did his duty to the nation. 31

Evidently Anderson's courage coupled with the stand of the President had its effect, for the New York Times correspondent in Washington noted: "The marked change in the Administration is felt in the air today." The Chicago Tribune was high in praise of Anderson when it stated that his "act has become historical" and that "he has stepped upon a pinnacle of Fame...." 33

On January 8, Buchanan sent a message to Congress confirming the new policy which was begun with his reply to the South Carolina Commissioners several weeks previous. It redounded much to the Chief Executive's credit and there was a general turnover of feeling in the north towards the President.

31. February, 1861, 239.
from that which had prevailed in November and December. The New York Herald felt boastful over his message for Bennett's editorial was smooth. It stated "Mr. Buchanan, in a solemn, earnest, and patriotic view of the dangers and difficulties to be overcome in behalf of the Union, submits the whole question to the immediate consideration of both Houses, and upon the basis of General Jackson's immortal ultimatum that 'the Union must be preserved.'"

The following day, January 9, really marks the occasion of the beginning of the Civil War. The United States supply steamer, "Star of the West," carrying supplies to Fort Sumter was fired upon by the guns of the State of South Carolina and forced to turn from its objective. A furor of resentment should have been expected from the entire North but such a thing never developed. The New York Herald calmly advised that "the present Administration can do no more towards pacifications" and then in an effort to white-wash Buchanan said:

The Executive having exhausted his Constitutional powers...it is the new administration which must accomplish the grand result.

One of the best observers of the period states:

I am surprised at the indifference, not to say apathy, with which the overtact of defiance to the federal authority and this positive insult to the federal flag have been received by the people of the North and West....

Few regretted the passing of Buchanan from office on March 4. Those opposed to him and who were not too much taken over with the induction of

34. Rhodes, op. cit., 249.
35. Editorial, Jan. 10, 1861.
36. Editorial, Jan.11, 1861.
the President-elect could not resist a parting shot. The Providence Journal, a leading New England press, rode hard with sharp spurs when it stated:

The crowning infamy of the Administration, however, is that all this intriguing and proscription, and corruption and stealing on the part of the man who really shaped its policy, has been made to subvert the cause of treason and to peril the very existence of the Union which Mr. Buchanan was under the most solemn oath to defend.38

The editors of the Chicago Tribune, Medill and others, were in ecstasy.

The Journal stated:

Thank God! This (Monday, March 4) is the day of deliverance...The government for the last forty years the creature of despotic institutions -- the machine for propagating human bondage -- is to be hereinafter on the side of human right and human liberty. The struggle has been long and fearful but this day repays all. Justice, Humanity, and their consequent Freedom, are in the ascendant. Better these than all else. They are an inheritance, to those who deserve it forever. Men of the North, shall it be surrendered?39

38. Editorial, March 3, 1861
39. Editorial, March 4, 1861
CHAPTER IV

SECESSION

Analysis of Southern viewpoint. . . Effect of Lincoln's
election in the South. . . Attitude of informed men in the North
on Secession. . . General opinion on cleavage. . . Opinion against
the action of South Carolina. . . Opinion favoring the course of
South Carolina. . . Opinion on the use of force to maintain the
Union. . . Viewpoint in the border states. . . Opinion in the East
. . . Opinion in the West. . . Peaceful secessionists. . . Opinion
on the plot of the southerners to seize control of the Govern-
ment. . . Opinion in Illinois and Chicago.
CHAPTER IV

SECESSION

It was a moment of peril in the history of the world. The union of the United States was to be destroyed. The Cotton South was planning to effect secession from the Industrial North. Slavery and cotton had developed the dissension in the Union that was to tear it apart. The North was tolerant but unsympathetic towards slavery, the South was irritable and impassioned at the concern of the North for its institutions. Lincoln's election was the long sought for opportunity to turn the dream of a confederation of States based on cotton and slavery into a reality. It was the occasion for action but not the cause.

An aristocracy of rich plantation owners, export and import merchants, and career politicians ruled all of the South. Their grievances were not to be subjugated after Lincoln's election. They were moved to action by the following factors: 1) The prospective development of a Republican party among the non-slave holding whites in the South who formed 19/20 of the white population; 2) The loss of sixty years monopoly of government, its military and civil offices, a loss that left much idle gentility of the South without resources; 3) The loss of prestige and power by the old political parties, and their humiliated leaders; 4) The humiliation of the insolent arrogance that is the legitimate fruit of slave-holding; 5) Blind and growing jealousy of the prosperity of the North; and 6) The gradual development of
the protective tariff to assist the Northern industrialists appeared to be discriminating.

Southern secession sentiment crystallized rapidly when it was apparent that Lincoln was the victorious candidate for the Presidency in 1860. The rapidity of solidification, however, was not accidental but apart of a well perfected plan to hurry along the process of cleavage. One reason for the swift action was to strengthen the hand of the Ultra-secessionists in certain parts of the South where there were several schools of philosophy among the State's Rights followers as to the method of procedure in regards to division. The "up and at them" Ultras, Immediate Secessionists, formed the best organized group. They expected no opposition from the Buchanan Administration, but feared a new Union party in the South would break their political grip. The abolition of slave-trading with Africa and the islands meant that the supply of free labors from the border states would be soon exhausted thus causing them to join forces with the North, so the lot of the Cotton States would then be extremely hopeless. These true Ultras, such as Davis, Toombs, Gist, Yancy, Hammond and Rhett, cared not a whit for anything that Congress might guarantee them. They were so much imbued with Calhoun's doctrine of concurrent majorities that only its principles would have been satisfactory. This they knew would never be guaranteed the South at any time. Some looked to the right of revolution to justify withdrawal, while others sought sanction in the Constitution's silence. The Ultras were opposed by the Co-operationists, who in turn were divided into those who wanted immediate separation of all of the Cotton States, those who would do nothing until the Federal Government had in some way offended the South, and

1. Editorial in New York Daily Tribune, March 9, 1861
those who would present the North with an ultimatum of their demands, with the hope that the North would accept them. The Co-operationists were strong but they were no match for the Ultras, who controlled enough of the local political machinery to effect unity of action for taking the States out of the Union as rapidly as possible. The effective interchange of State Commissioners kept this agitation for secession at a fever pitch in all of the Slave States so that within a month of Lincoln’s election the torch of revolution blazed throughout the "Deep South."

Secession was not brought about by a group of young hot-headed radicals but it was the work of a group of experienced, middle aged politicians and planters. The State of South Carolina, the first to breach the Union, was victimized by a political class that had controlled the State Government for years. Of the delegates at the Secession Convention at Charleston nearly half of them were over fifty. Many had had long experience in public office; four as senators; five as governors; nine as judges; eight as members of the nullification convention of 1832-33; and twenty-eight as members of the convention of 1852 which affirmed the right of a State to leave the Union peaceably. Political inexperience was no factor in the secession of South Carolina or any of the Cotton States.

The informed men of the North were not unaware of the South’s attitude towards a perfect Union with a strong central government long before 1860. Years of social intercourse, political contacts, and party affiliations had offered the opportunity for the men of the North to know and study the Southern viewpoint. The rancorous attitude of the South toward the Personal

Liberty laws and the efforts of the various Free State governments to protect the run-away slaves gave nearly all of the North the idea that the politicians south of the Ohio were bent on disunion. The memory of Calhoun in his defense of South Carolina during the Jackson incumbency, in which the doctrine of State's Rights, Secession, and Nullification were openly advocated and defended on the floor of the United States Senate, had not dimmed sufficiently in the minds of the wise to not suspect the South of violent action. The Compromise of 1850, the Wilmot Proviso, the immortal decision of Chief Justice Taney in the Dred Scott case, and the struggle in Kansas were but recent events that warned the intelligent statesmen, who understood the minds of the southerners, of the fanatical attitude of the slave-holders. No, those who were far-seeing feared the South, not so much because it was any particular section of the nation but because of the determined struggle that it had waged for years to preserve its institutions from the unfeeling North. Douglas, who knew the Southern political mind better than any living northerner, perceived the storm long before it broke. Speaking at a reception in Chicago on October 5, he mentioned in terms that could not be misunderstood and with words full of wisdom:

I'm no alarmist but I believe that this country is in more danger now than at any moment since I have known anything of public life. It is not personal ambition that induced me to take the stump this year. I say to you who know me that the Presidency has no charm for me. I do not believe it is my interest as an ambitious man to be President this year if I could; but I do love the Union. There is no sacrifice on earth that I would not make to preserve it.  

Later when he heard of the results of the Republican victory in Pennsylvania and Indiana, he remarked to his secretary: "Mr. Lincoln is the next President. We must try to save the Union. I will go South." Douglas knew the viciousness of the South for had not John Forsyth remarked to him at the Mobile reception on October 30:

I fear that we are in the midst of a revolution. The storm rages to such a madness that it is beyond control of those who raised it. Our people are becoming fanatic and what is to be done?  

The election of Lincoln, brought about some very definite action by the secessionists in the Cotton States and the Congressional delegates in Washington. The threats of impending cleavage were re-echoed throughout the North and soon opinions of varying degrees began to appear. The Detroit Free Press stated:

For our part we deny the right of Secession by one State or any number of States. The right of revolution is inherent in every people, and may rightly be taken when the evils of existing government are greater than the evils of revolution...Until the government which Lincoln will administer shall have committed wrongs to a state or section the remedy for which is revolution, secession will be unexcusable rebellion. We prefer that there be twenty years of war rather than that one state should be permitted to secede until the right of revolution has accrued.

The Chicago Tribune argued from no moral principle of government, but with typical Western aggressiveness waded into the slaveholders as follows:

5. Milton, op.cit., 496; Wilson, op.cit., II, 700
7. Editorial, Nov. 8, 1860.
...if the vital principle of American Democracy is to be trodden underfoot and the people of the North are to be held in subjugation by 350,000 slaveholders of the South and denied the legitimate right in public affairs, the Union is not worth preserving. It is a rope of sand that any child may break.

President Buchanan came in for no small amount of abuse for his latent attitude towards secession.

He must look at the movement (spoke the Boston Transcript) as simply a revolutionary movement; and the question of expediency of allowing it to proceed does not lie with him to decide. 9

The Baltimore Patriot derided the idea that the aggression lay with the North when it stated:

It is to be observed that all of this note of angry preparation which comes to us from some of the Southern States, is not all defensive. It is aggressive. 10

In Missouri, where Union sentiment was none too pronounced, we find the St. Louis Republican laying all of the secession guilt on South Carolina when it stated:

It is well to remember that it is a fallacy to say the South demands it, if by this equivocal term it is meant that the fifteen slaveholding states demand it. It is not true of three-fourths of these states at least, and only true of one of them, South Carolina. 11

The talk of the peaceful secession of South Carolina so bothered the editor of the New York Times that he was moved to comment: "Her talk about peaceful secession under the Constitution is blatant nonsense." 12

8. Editorial, Nov. 8, 1860.
11. Editorial, Nov. 11, 1860.
Numerous orators and presses were steadfast in their determination that the Union should not be divided. The attitude of the Western journals such as the Cincinnati Gazette, Milwaukee Journal, Sandusky Register, and the Springfield State Journal, may best be stated by quoting an excellent editorial from the Chicago Tribune labeled the "Feeling In the West."

It is hardly to be expected (spoke the Medill press) that upon so great a question as that involving the dissolution of the Union, there would be entire unanimity, even in the North, where loyalty to the Union is the first of political virtues; but we are all astonished to find everywhere that overwhelming preponderance of opinion in favor of maintaining the integrity of the government and the territory of the United States, at all hazards, which is everywhere breaking out. Our political opponents, with whom we have just fought a long and bitter contest, are, in this matter, side to side with the Republicans; and though there is nowhere any disposition to act rashly, or to press the South, now in an acknowledged minority, into conditions which she may not honorably comply with, there is no lack of quiet determination to permit dismemberment of the country, no partition of territory, no outrage against the Constitutional right. This determination does not exhibit itself in popular excitement, in furious speeches, in the organization of minute men, in the calling of State Conventions, nor in the miscellaneous rub-a-dubbing which comes to us from the rebellious States, but because moderate and undemonstrative, it is more to be feared. 13

Those who did favor the idea of secession which was engendered by South Carolina did it more in a spirit of disgust at the whole situation. The "good riddance" idea seemed to prevail. Lincoln's best supporter, Horace Greeley, campaigned in behalf of allowing South Carolina to take a peaceful exit. Shortly after Lincoln's election, Greely commented in his

...if the Cotton States shall become more satisfied that they can do better out of the Union than in it, we insist on letting them go in peace.14

A day later he commented in his *Weekly Tribune*:

If the secession of the Cotton States should serve to mend our National manners and render us a more tolerable neighbor and ally, we should hold it not the unmixed evil it is represented.15

Memories of South Carolina's antics in previous issues evidently motivated the Medill journal in Chicago when it wished that the State was never a part of our Union. The editorial was reeking with disgust. The Chicago *Tribune* stated:

Nobody, we take it, cares how soon South Carolina goes out of the Union. A convulsion of nature which would separate the pestilent little State from the body of the Republic, and open a deep channel, raise a barrier between her and the mainland would be a joyfully accepted solution of the quarrel she has continuously maintained with her peaceful and more enlightened neighbors of the North.16

The talk in many of the presses of using force in a fratricidal war to hold the Union together was not well received by some of the people in the East. James Bennett in an editorial in his press shunned the thought. Bennett wrote "A Union of sovereign states held together by force of arms is an anomaly that we cannot call into existence."17 Several days later the *Herald* again reiterated its justification of South Carolina.

On this (slavery) (said the press) the great conflict must be fought, and the states that retain it as a wise and necessary part of their social system must receive through the amendments to the Constitution guarantees...or the Union must be dissolved.18

For once in his life Greeley was in accord with Bennett on the use of force to maintain solidified nation. Greeley wrote in his New York Weekly Tribune:

We insist that the Union shall not be held together by force whenever it shall have ceased to cohere by mutual attraction of its parts; or whenever the Slave States or the Cotton States only shall unitedly say to the rest, 'We want to get out of the Union,' we shall urge their request be acceded to.19

Greeley may have dreaded the sight of blood or he may have been a prophet for he advised his followers:

Five million people, more than half of them of the dominant race, of whom at least one half a million are able and willing to shoulder muskets, can never be subdued while fighting round and over their own hearthstone.20

However, the things that Greeley gave the people for consumption may not have been his real belief for he stated about the first of December:

(that the) promoters of this secession policy pretend that they are ready and willing to form into a Southern Confederacy and that the formation of such a confederacy is the ultimate aim of their policy.21

The attitude of the doubtful states, Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, is best reflected in the press of some of those states. The most potent Democratic journal of Missouri, the Missouri Democrat, minced no

words in airing the views of many of the people of that state:

If the Cotton States should be permitted to secede tomorrow peaceably, a year would not elapse before Virginia, Kentucky and Maryland would be obliged to go to war with the Southern Confederacy...It would be extremely impolitic for the border States to tolerate secession... We must have an outlet for our surplus products (Negroes). 22

An avowed Breckinridge journal, the Wilmington (Del.) Gazette, blasted the hope of the Southerners for cooperation with its patriotic viewpoint. The journal stated: "Delaware will present a steadfast front to the Disunionists. It is against the entire Secession movement." 23

The Maryland sentiment, while somewhat reserved, was none the less whole hearted, for when William G. Brown, close friend of Governor Hicks of that state was sworn in as Mayor of Baltimore, he stated in his inaugural address that it was the true policy of Maryland to adhere to the Union, so long as it could do so with honor and safety. Washington, part of Maryland, and close to Virginia, showed its attitude to some extent when on December 1, the Douglas and Johnson Association and two thousand other citizens greeted Stephen A. Douglas on his return to Washington. He was wildly cheered and acclaimed when he urged his friends to forget the past and to unite for the preservation of the Union. He closed his stirring address with the words: "I have no enemies or foes except the foes of my country." 25

Messrs. Garrison and Phillips had a disquieting time in Boston at the Convention called at the Tremont Temple to commemorate the death of their

---

22. Editorial, December 6, 1860.
23. Editorial, December 1, 1860.
hero, John Brown. The question to be discussed, "How Can Slavery Be Abolished?" evidently did not meet with the approval of the citizenry for the convention was broken up by a diversified mob "composed mostly of North Street Aristocrats and Beacon Street roughs." 26 In a nearby state, Pennsylvania, a few days later a meeting of an entirely different nature convened at Philadelphia. The occasion was a great civic banquet attended by the prominent Republicans of the state, among whom were: Martin McMichael, Col. A. K. McClure, Governor-elect Curtin, William D. Kelley, Auditor-general T. E. Corcheran, and Members of Congress from that state. The sentiment expressed was worthy of the assemblage. Col. McClure produced great cheers with his remark: "There can be no disunion. We have no machinery in this government for secession." 27 The acclaim given Governor-elect Curtin was tremendous when he proclaimed:

We shall only be faithful to our history and our traditions to the fathers of our Constitution ... to our theory of government, to our instincts, our sentiments, our habits, when we assert that Pennsylvania, now and forever, will vindicate her rights, and will demand that every state, North and South, shall be faithful as herself to Constitutional obligations. 28

But Boston, always different from Philadelphia, gave vent to its feelings by mobbing Wendell Phillips after an address in that city. Fortunately or otherwise, Mr. Phillips escaped without serious injury.

17. The Sandusky Register was outspoken: "But despite all that has occurred and all that is occurring, Union sentiment is all powerful in the hearts of the people." Lincoln's journalistic mouthpiece, the Illinois State Journal explained Lincoln's idea of the secession in graphic words:

If South Carolina goes out of the Union on March 4, 1861, then it will be Mr. Lincoln's duty to execute the law. The President has no discretionary power. His duty is outlined in the Constitution. He will perform his duty. Disunion by armed force is treason, and treason must and will be put down at all hazards.

Central Illinois shuddered at the idea of secession of any of the States.

Senator Baker of Oregon, in an address at the City Hall in Springfield, Illinois, was warmly lauded when he stated the Union must and will be preserved and the Federal Laws executed in both the North and the South.

Greeley was gleeful at the secession of South Carolina but he still issued timely warnings to his subscribers as follows:

However, she is gone, and if she is gratified by the manner of her going, the gratification is one which nobody, we fancy, will grudge her.... Only let the State continue to pay her regular duties on imports, and keep her hands off the forts and she can secede as long as she pleases.

Regardless of what the New York Herald thought about the citizenry of Washington they still seemed to love the nation. In a news despatch to the Chicago Tribune from the national capital the correspondent maintains that Union sentiment never was so manifested as it was on the occasion of Buchanan's reply to the South Carolina Commissioners. Union flags flew from

every public building and from numerous private residences. Several weeks later a great crowd assembled before the home of Senator Crittenden to hear his views on the national crisis. His remarks that he expected his friends to uphold the Constitution and the Union, which had conferred great blessings on all of the citizens, both North and South, were wildly acclaimed.

Shortly after the leaders of several of the Cotton States had decided to take their States out of the Union they sent Commissioners to various of the doubtful States and the border states with an appeal for assistance by making common cause with them in the secession movement. The attitude of staunch patriotism and respect for the oath of office that manifested itself in the hearts of the governors of these states and numerous other public officials is edifying and worth noting. Maryland was enough South to lean with sympathy towards her southern brethren, yet it was enough North to feel the pull of attachment of a united nation. When Hon. A.H. Handy, Commissioner of Mississippi, appealed to Gov. Hicks of Maryland for cooperation with the State of Mississippi he gave a stinging refusal. Gov. Hicks pointed out that he thought that there was an adjustment for all grievance, however serious, and until all efforts had failed at an attempt at adjustment he would not participate in any revolution to dismember the Union. However, the refusal of Gov. Hicks to precipitate secession by no means stopped the clamoring of a radical element in that State. Leaders in authority kept at Hicks demanding that he call a convention to give the people an opportunity for self expression on the secession subject. To all of these entreaties

Hicks refused on the grounds that he could see no need for such action. The secession element of that State was quite expressive for at a meeting of the National Volunteers in Washington, January 11, the following resolution was passed with great cheering:

Resolved -- That we will act in the event of the withdrawal of Virginia and Maryland from the Union, in such a manner as will best secure ourselves and those states from the evils of a foreign and hostile government within and near this border. 37

That there were some grounds for fear of internal strife in Maryland and the threats of secession in some leaders were well founded can be substantiated by Gov. Hicks' reply to a committee of citizens of Talbot County who had called to petition the governor to convene the State Legislature to take up the question of secession. The governor stated that he was convinced that if he convened the Legislature that they would vote to secede and that if they did the city of Washington would be captured by 8,000 men organized for that purpose, and thus a civil war would be precipitated. 38 Maryland's governor had powerful support from numerous potent factors among which were the organized church groups of that State. The Episcopalian Bishop of Maryland, Rt. Rev. W.R. Wittingham, felicitated Hicks on his forceful stand in circumventing the efforts of some to get the State out of the Union. He expressed the opinion that, in resisting the pressure of immediate State action, the governor represented "A large majority of the people of Maryland, and a still more overwhelming preponderance of its property, intelligence and manly virtues." 39

As the course of the Cotton States began to show the decisive action that was plotted, the citizenry of the Chesapeake

State swung more and more towards the ideals of the North. At an immense Union Meeting held at Hagerstown resolutions were passed favoring the "Union first, last and always." Gov. Hicks' policy also received warm approval at the mass meeting. Not to be outdone in patriotic fervor, the historic city of Frederick staged a monstrous rally on February 26, which was addressed by leading citizens of that part of the State. Their remarks were wildly acclaimed and the mention of the flag, the Union, or Gov. Hicks was the signal for great cheers. A month later when there could be no doubt as to the design of the Southerners, the same city was again the scene of another great rally at which Andrew Johnson was the principal speaker. His patriotic message was warmly received by the populace. Following the speech strong Union resolutions met the acclaim of the patriotic gathering.

South of the Potomac in the Old Dominion secession was almost an assured event. On January 20, the Virginia Legislature passed a resolution which stated that in case a reconciliation could not be effected between the Union and the seceding States, that the honor and the interests of Virginia demanded her to unite with the South.

However, as was not the case in Maryland, the question of secession was submitted to the people in the form of choosing delegates to a State Convention to determine what course the State should steer. The complete returns on the choice of delegates showed that secession was the will of the

42. Richmond Dispatch, New York Herald, Jan. 21, 1861.
majority. West of the Blue Ridge, however, the vote indicated that the
citizenry was strongly opposed to breaching the Union. Following actual
severance of the State from the Union, the people in the western part of
Virginia broke from those of the East and organized the present State of
West Virginia.

The situation as it developed in the most westerly Border State,
Missouri, was decidedly different from that of Maryland. The governor,
Jackson, was a man with avowed secession tendencies so he did nothing to
hold Missouri in the Union. Delegates to the Democratic State Convention
which met early in January were outspoken in their views to the extent that
resolutions were passed favoring the making of common cause with South
Carolina in event that she was attacked by the authorities of the United
States. A little to the north and east, in St. Louis, at the February
election an unconditional Union ticket was elected by majorities ranging
from three to five thousand. "St. Louis had thus declared herself emphati-
cally for the Union," quoted the Missouri Democrat. Sentiment was badly
divided in Missouri so with little provocation the governor convened a
State Convention early in March to determine the course of the State in the
matter of breaking up the Union. The Convention was addressed by Commission-
er Green of Georgia who attempted to influence the delegates to vote a common
cause with the Cotton States. In this he must have been disappointed, for
the Convention, while it passed resolutions condemning coercion of any

43. Richmond Dispatch, Daily Globe, (Supplemental Edition), Dec.6, 1861;
Rhodes, op.cit., 436.
45. News account, Feb.16, 1861.
State, voted 89-1 that Missouri did not wish to share with Georgia the honors of secession.

The attempts of the Commissioners of South Carolina to talk President Buchanan out of the United States property in that State and the subsequent refusal of the Chief Executive to deal with the delegates caused a warm glow of Union sentiment throughout the North. A resolution introduced into the New York Legislature to tender the President of the United States the military of the State, to be used as he deemed best for the preservation of the Union was defeated on January 2. However, a week later, according to the New York World, when the news that the Federal relief and supply ship, Star of the West, had been fired on by the guns of South Carolina, an entirely different stand was taken by that body. The Legislature by a vote of 117-2 accorded the President whatever aid, money or men, he needed to enforce the Federal Laws. For which action the New York Herald was stinging and abusive.

If New York, Rhode Island, and Maine, (quoted the Bennett journal) would only undertake to do something practical to settle the difficulty which is hastening the country to civil war and destruction, as perhaps they might, it would be an act to be more thankful for than offering the military arm for the purposes of coercion with so much alacrity.

The leaders in Pennsylvania were at no time inclined to favor dismemberment of the Union. In his annual message to the State Legislature, the governor of the State, in a vindicative speech urged that body to take

steps to protect the commonwealth and the United States from the common enemy. To him no such a process as secession ever existed for to do so was rebellion. Two weeks later Governor Curtin was inducted into the office of Governor of Pennsylvania and in his inaugural address at that time he left little doubt in the minds of the citizens as to the course that he was to pursue in regard to secession. The New York Herald acclaimed his address as "frank and manly" and then went on to quote its most salient features:

No State or combination of States can secede (stated the Governor through the press) nor absolve themselves from the obligations of Union...It is the first duty of the Federal Government to stay the anarchy and enforce the laws...Pennsylvania will give the Government a united, honorable, and faithful support to the end....Pennsylvania will never acquiesce such a conspiracy, nor assent to a doctrine involving the destruction of the government.150

A month later, however, in view of the fact that a Southern Confederacy had already been organized and the Union severed, the Pennsylvania Democratic State Convention, on February 22, passed a resolution unanimously declaring in favor of State sovereignty attachment to the Union and "recognizing the right of the Southern States to secede."

Although Delaware could technically be termed a slave state there was never any doubt as to its ultimate destiny. The subject of secession was introduced when the Commission from Mississippi, Hon. S. Dickinson, asked leave to address the State Legislature on the subject of having Delaware make common cause with his state in resisting the authority of the United States. The day prior to his talk, January 3, an attempt was made at Wil-

50. Harrisburg Dispatch, New York Herald, Jan. 16, 1861
mington to stampede the people of that city into supporting the Southern Confederacy by raising a secession flag and holding a mass meeting to pass resolutions favoring cleavage. Little enthusiasm was shown in any of these proceedings and the mass meeting was disappointing for it had little effect in changing popular sentiment. The following day Dickinson addressed the legislature. He invited the State to join the Southern Confederacy which was about to be formed for mutual protection. As he progressed he claimed the right of a State to secede and went on to state that if secession was not allowed war was inevitable. This declaration was received by the legislators with mingled applause and hisses. The spirit of Caesar Rodney evidently permeated the old State house that day for, following the speech of the Commissioner of Mississippi, the following resolution, in which the Senate concurred by a majority was passed:

Resolved, that we have extended to Hon. S. Dickinson, the Commissioner of Mississippi, the courtesy due him as the representative of a sovereign state of the Confederacy, as well as the State he represents, and we deem it proper and due to ourselves and the State of Delaware, to express our unqualified disapproval of the remedy for existing difficulties suggested by the resolutions of the Legislature of Mississippi.

The inaugurations of the governors of the States of Illinois, Ohio and Massachusetts portrayed a united front against the secession movement.

While Southern Illinois was opposed to abolition it is doubtful if they favored secession. The hurley-burley semi-mountaineers of "little Egypt" were a violent type that attached the words abolition and Republican with a hyphen. The pastime of stoning Abolition speakers and Republican politicians

53. Ibid., Jan. 4, 1861
had a tendency to confuse and lead one to believe that the southern part of the State was for secession. However, such was not the case, but the populace of that section was quite violent in its treatment of certain classes for their efforts to sow the seed of abolition. The Rev. J.M.West, a divine of that region, who openly advocated abolition, was attacked in his home by a mob, and barely escaped with his life. Leaders of the county, it seemed, blamed the disturbance on a mob of disunionists. In all probability they should have laid the blame, if any, with the pro-slavery group. What hope Southern Illinois ever had of helping the cause of secession was rudely dashed with the inauguration of Gov. Yates in January, 1861. At that time the new Governor stated that Illinois stood squarely against secession and would aid the Union in any emergency with men and money. Governor Andrews of Massachusetts, in his inaugural speech, defied the Boston mobs and came out clearly against the action of South Carolina in seeking a remedy for her ills by breaking up the Union. He recommended an increase in the State militia so that Massachusetts could contribute her share in case of public danger. The words of the immortal Jackson served as the concluding sentence of his utterances, that is, "the Federal Union must be preserved." Governor Dennison of Ohio expressed the same sentiment as did Yates of Illinois and Andrews of Massachusetts in his message to the State Legislature in January of the same year. His views were temperate and firm in his presentiment of the national crisis as it affected Ohio. He recommended the repeal of the Personal Liberty Laws, the Fugitive Slave Law

and that the militia be increased to protect the State and the Union from attack. The following week the Ohio Legislature passed a resolution commending President Buchanan for his firm stand and patriotic message to Congress in which he suggested a compromise, and pledged to him the resources of the entire State to be used for the maintenance of the Constitution and the Federal Laws. 

When the nature of events began to interpret themselves Union sentiment was rampant all through the North. The people were expressive and followed the advice of their leaders in pledging fealty to the Constitution. The citizens of Trenton, New Jersey, Democrats and Republicans alike of New Hampshire, held great meetings at which resolutions were passed condemning the Cotton States for their traitorous acts and pledging support to the President of the United States in his effort to maintain the Federal Law. At the Democratic State Convention of New Hampshire a salute of two hundred thirty two guns was given for the flag, the President and the Union.

On the occasion of the raising of a flag over the new State Capitol at Indianapolis, Governor Morton was wildly cheered for his remarks concerning secession: "Our Flag, may it ever wave over a free and united people, who will ask nothing but what is right, and yield to nothing that is wrong." Strangely enough the immense audience had no forboding of evil when the pole and flag, due to a structural inaccuracy, crashed to the ground a few minutes later.

60. Indianapolis Dispatch, Chicago Tribune, Jan.30, 1861.
Far off California was even aware of the intense drama which was being played in the East. At a great meeting held in San Francisco in February, at which twenty two thousand people were in attendance, resolutions were passed repudiating the right of secession and expressing unalterable attachment to the Union. So keenly aware of the need for unity were those hardy adventurers and pioneers that a Republican and Democrat coalition chose as United States Senator a man opposed to secession and compromise.

Throughout the East expressions of mob anger were misinterpreted as sentiment in favor of disunion. The fact that Republicans and Abolitionists were put in the same category by many had much to do with this misunderstanding. Abolitionists at the best were never popular, and at this particular junction of our national life a great portion of the population blamed the South Carolina debacle onto the work of the Abolitionists for their advocacy of freeing the slaves. Naturally many Abolitionists, among them Wendell Phillips, Garrison and Henry Ward Beecher, Brooklyn divine, were attacked and threatened by various mobs. The Chicago Tribune was quick to sympathize with such Abolitionists and recommended that a bit of Napoleonic action be the reward for such lawlessness.

Now there is just one thing needed to stop all of this business (spoke the Medill mouthpiece), and that is, when the next attempt is made to mob a man for the expression of his opinion any subject whatever, to call out a military company, and after only one warning, to pour a volley of musket balls into the crowd that set itself up as the guardian of men's tongues. 62

Such fanatics as those already mentioned were extremely unpopular for other

reasons than their advocacy of abolition and that was their open defense of the right of South Carolina to leave the Union. Bennett's New York Herald included a host of others besides Phillips and Garrison as disruptionists per se in a scathing editorial on their attempt to disturb the equilibrium of the nation. That press stated:

If then the dissolution of the Union shall be the results of the present crisis, the blame will rest on others, not us....
Mainly to the Massachusetts school of politics of which Wendell Phillips, Garrison, Sumner and Greeley are the chiefs, and to which Seward, Wilson and Lincoln, and others are affiliated, in principles, that will govern his course in Washington. 64

Public temper in regard to the Abolitionists is best indicated by the people of peace loving Albany on the occasion of the opening of the New York Anti-Slavery Convention in that city. The first meeting was met with hisses and disorderly conduct so that it was finally broken up. Only the entreaties of the mayor of the metropolis were successful in finally causing the disrupting crowds to disperse.

Shortly after the first of the year (1861) Greeley began to see the light and to realize that the South was deadly in earnest in its secession movement. He then began to split hairs to vindicate his stupid position of several months earlier. By January 5 he was able to reiterate that any State had the right "to hate the Union and seek its disruption" but that "it cannot dissolve the Union....by the passage of so many State Ordinances or Resolutions." On the same day the New York World warned the South that

64. Editorial, Jan. 30, 1861.
65. Albany Dispatch, Daily Globe (Supplement), Feb. 6, 1861.
an attempt to break up the Union would meet with universal resistance in the North. "Attempt it," said the journal, "and you will see around the capitol a half million men of the North in arms."

Public men of the East denounced the efforts of the secessionists. Even the courts were not exempt along this line. In New York, United States Circuit Judge Smalley, in charging a grand jury, declared that South Carolina by her acts was guilty of high treason against the Federal Government. So great did Bishop McClosky, Catholic bishop of Albany, think the crisis that he made public announcement that he would celebrate High Mass and offer prayers for the preservation of the Union and that he would talk on the national situation on the Sunday following January 4. The Philadelphia Press correspondent in Washington in an article to his paper on January 5, stated:

I learn that letters are being received by the new Secretary of War and the old Secretary of the Navy from distinguished officers in both branches of the public service, assuring those functionaries of their determination to stand by the Union at all hazards.

Bennett's New York Herald, while advocating compromise with the South, did much to awaken the more serious minded men to the national crisis. Its famous expose of a plot to seize control of the National capitol and the Federal Government made many Northerners who felt sorry for the plight of poor South Carolina do an about face. The expose editorial was brief and pointed:

1. Secession from the Union of the Slave State including Maryland and Virginia, 2. The Coup d'etat of a seizure and occupation by a

Southern armed force of the city of Washington, including public buildings, archives, for the purpose of a Southern Confederacy, 3. The expulsion (coup d'etat) by a force of arms of the existing Federal Government, including the present and incoming administration on the 3rd and 4th of March, 4. Establishment of the general government of the Southern Confederacy in Washington and its proclamation to all of the world as the government which had superseded the ejected government of the United States.

That the Herald had conclusive proof of such a plot can hardly be doubted for it named the Richmond Enquirer as the advocate and the editor of the Washington Constitution as one of the conspirators.

The East stood firmly for the Union. The press, orator and public meetings attest to that fact. The Sandusky Register stated:

Let the secessionists understand it... thousands of men will defend the Union... peaceably if they can, forcibly if they must.

On January 5, Chicago staged its greatest anti-secession mass meeting at Bryan Hall. The occasion was to draw up and pass resolutions of protest at the action of the Slave States in their cleavage movement and to pledge loyalty to the Union. Political enmities were cast aside -- Democrats and Republicans alike were there -- leaders in social and industrial life attended, those of high and low station jammed the assembly hall to the very doors and spilled out into the street. All were enthusiastic and hopeful and determined. The feeling of unity permeated to the rafters. Speaker after speaker was cheered, the flag was cheered, the Union was cheered and even President Buchanan received his share of acclaim.

70. Washington Dispatch, Jan. 5, 1861.
71. Editorial, Jan. 15, 1861.
73. News account, Chicago Tribune.
The resolutions passed were noteworthy:

Resolved, that as citizens of the State of Illinois we firmly adhere and abide by the Union and the Constitution, as our fathers made them, and to their preservation we pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. Resolved, that while we disapprove and denounce legislative or individual action calculated to infringe of impair upon the Constitutional rights of the people of any section of the Union, we have neither compromise nor concession to offer disunionists arrayed in open rebellion to the government, or to their aiders or abettors. Resolved, that the present crisis demands the prompt execution of all Constitutional laws in all sections of the Union. Resolved, that we approve and adopt the sentiment of Senator Douglas in his speech at Norfolk, Virginia, 'that the election of any man to the Presidency of the United States would not justify an attempt at dissolving this glorious confederacy,' and, 'that the President of the United States should treat attempts to break up the Union as Old Hickory did in '32.' Resolved, that as citizens of the loyal state of Illinois, we accept the verdict of three-fourths of the voters of the Nation against the legalization, by any branch of the Federal Government, of slavery in the Territories, and all propositions or compromises which in spirit or in letter which embody doctrines contrary to this expression of the will of the sovereign people, meet with unqualified disapproval. 74

Several days later, the Mayor of Chicago, John Wentworth, issued a proclamation to the people of the metropolis in which all of the citizens were asked to close places of business and to assemble at various halls to draw up testimonials favoring the Union. Mayor Wentworth also ordered a salute of thirty three guns at sunrise for the Union, fifty five guns at noon for Major Anderson, and in the evening a salute of one hundred guns for General Jackson. Wentworth also recommended that the young men of the city

73 (continued)

74. News account, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 8, 1861.
meet in groups to form themselves into military companies for the defense of the nation. The young men of Chicago wasted no time in following the mayor's advice and suggestions, for they held two great meetings on January 25 and 29 in the Metropolitan. At both meetings resolutions favoring the Union were passed and a demand was made on the United States Government "to retake from the secessionists and traitors the forts of our country, and if the army and navy are not sufficient for that purpose to call on the State for volunteers."

75. News account, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 7, 1861.
CHAPTER V

ATTEMPTS AT COMPROMISE

Three categories of Republicans on Compromise ....
First general opinions for and against Compromise ....
Congressional attempts at Compromise .... Committee of
Thirty Three .... Committee of Thirteen .... Opinion on
Congressional attempts to Compromise .... The Crittenden
Amendments .... Opinion on Crittenden plan .... Lincoln’s
efforts in defeating Compromise .... General swing of
opinion for some type of Compromise .... Opinion on the
Peace Convention.
CHAPTER V

ATTEMPTS AT COMPROMISE

That the thinking men of the North knew what to expect of the South in the event of Lincoln's election cannot be denied. Every Southern delegate to the Congress had predicted a divided Union if the "black Republicans" were victorious in the national election of 1860. Stephen A. Douglas, who understood the Southern viewpoint better than any Northerner, had predicted secession of the Cotton States if the voters insisted on placing a Republican in the White House. But talk was of no avail. Douglas' ideas were looked upon by many in the North, and nearly all Republicans, as an attempt to stampede the voters to support his candidacy for the Presidency. Those who did not believe Douglas's warning must have been shocked when it became apparent that the Senator from Illinois's forecast was no idle boast.

Republicanism was badly split on Secession, compromise and steadfastness to party platform. Three categories developed among them.

The first group were still skeptical of the South's plans and in a spirit of boastfulness openly advocated Secession. They actually invited the Cotton States to be on their way with the thought of being well rid of a troublesome issue. It may have been that these were pacifists and abhored the sight of blood. No Union was better than one cemented together with the blood of brothers seemed to be their idea. Among this category
was changeable Horace Greeley, who openly advocated that "they be permitted to go in peace." Most of the Abolitionists were in the "peaceable secession" class. The Brooklyn parson, Henry Ward Beecher, was arm in arm with Greeley in opposing bloodshed and compromise. Asked if he thought the South would secede, the Brooklyn minister replied: "I don't believe they will; and I don't care if they do." In the beginning they were opposed to everything that resembled armed force.

The second class of Republicans were those who favored a type of compromise to maintain the Union without war. Weed, the great politician and journalist, was in this group. For his efforts to compromise the issue he was roundly denounced by his political brethren as a traitor to his party. Seward in stupid manner was also a compromiser of the one sided variety, that is, all for the North and nothing for the South.

The third element of Republicanism was the category that eventually defeated all hopes of an anxious Nation to avoid conflict by some type of a compromise. They would not depart one iota from the principle of the Chicago platform or yield an inch to the entreaties of the beleaguered Nation for assistance in preventing a disrupted Union. Their idea was aptly expressed by their leader, Lincoln, when he wrote:

Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regards to the extension of slavery .... The tug has to come and better now than later .... You know I think the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution ought to be forced -- to put in its mildest form, ought not to be resisted.  

Associated with the President-elect in the ultra non-compromising group were Wilson, Wade, Grimes, Thaddeus Stevens and Sumner. With them and the ultra-secessionists of the South rests the blame for our Civil War.

South Carolina's defiant attitude shortly after the election of Lincoln gave reason for the thinking men of the North to realize that the Union was in actual danger of dismemberment. As yet little had been said or done in compromising the issues that existed between the North and the South. The idea that something must be accomplished soon to prevent cleavage began to crystallize in the public mind when the press and orator began to speak openly and freely upon the subject. Up to November 6 nothing really definite had been proposed, but from then on the leaders of the nation began to give vent to their attitude upon the situation. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote to the promoters of a mass meeting at Haverhill, Massachusetts:

We must be firm but not defiant: we are too strong in the right .... We can afford to be moderate and generous. With slavery in the States we have no right to interfere....

For once the Chicago Tribune was almost conciliatory:

It will be wise and discreet for the Republicans to avoid all cause of additional irritation, and to convince the people of the South by words and acts that we are not half as fierce as has been represented.

This attitude was short lived, however, for when it became apparent that compromise was the only solution for the nation to avoid war Medill very definitely stated the Chicago Tribune's position about a month later. The

Republicans were in the saddle and nothing was to deviate them from their vowed intention of humiliating the South. The Tribune stated:

"Others may do as they please but this journal stands where it has always stood. It concedes nothing that weakens the worth of the great triumph over the infernally despotic institution which has debauched the national conscience...We surrender no inch of ground... Standing solidly on the Constitution and laws...."

The New York Times expressed much the same opinion as the Tribune in its editorial of November 20.

"We must not budge from this position (no secession or compromise) and whatever evil may follow, we may be sure it will be more easily rectified... than the great evils... from any weak concession...."

Numerous other journals sided with the Times in their views at this particular phase of compromise talk but later when the gravity of the secession movement became apparent a change of editorial policy was noted in many of the presses.

Real efforts at compromise began when a Committee of Thirty Three was appointed in the House of Representatives and a Committee of Thirteen was designated by the presiding officer of the Senate "to inquire into the present conditions of the country and report concerning the grievances existing between the slave-holding and the non-slave-holding states." In the House every Republican delegate voted against the formation of such a committee. The personnel of the Committee of Thirty Three was quite remarkable since Pennington, the Republican Speaker, made sure in his appointments that it could be nothing but ineffective and inefficient. Corwin of Ohio,

the Chairman, was an avowed anti-slavery proponent. So rank was the make-up of that committee that the members of Congress from several of the Southern States refused to serve on it.

In the Senate the spirit of compromise may have been a little more pronounced. The Committee of Thirteen was composed of five Republicans - Seward, Wade, Collemer, Doolittle and Grimes; Douglas, Rice and Bigler represented the Northern Democrats. Crittenden, Powell, Hunter, Toombs, and Davis were named for the South.

Neither the Committee of Thirteen nor the Committee of Thirty Three accomplished anything because of the non-conciliatory and uncompromising attitude of the Republican members.

The appointment of compromise committees was lauded and condemned by the press. The New York Times heartedly reiterated:

"It may as well be understood, first as last, that this one sided affair (North surrender all and South nothing) cannot prosper. The Republicans...are not prepared to abandon principles for which they have contended, and surrender at the discretion of the party they have just expelled from office."10

Greeley's Weekly Tribune was willing to listen to such thoughts of compromise but was suspicious. Greeley stated:

"Though we take no part and base no hopes upon the new Compromise which certain "Conservatives" are now inaugurating we must insist that they betray no superfluous hypocrisy."11

Oratorical outbursts were numerous in the Senate over the appointment of a compromise committee. The Republicans were defiant and stubborn and let

it be known that they would concede nothing that would jeopardize their position as outlined in the Chicago platform. Little could be expected of any of them in this crisis. Senator Wade in a fiery philippic in the Senate on December 17 quite frankly outlined the thoughts of the Republican delegates in Congress. Wade said:

I tell you that in that platform we did lay it down that we would, if we had the power, prohibit slavery from another inch of free territory under the government. I stand on that position today; ... on the other hand our authoritative platform repudiates the idea that we have any right or any intention to invade your peculiar institutions in your own states... We held to no doctrine that can possibly work you any inconvenience.  

Closely weighing Wade's words the uncompromising attitude of the minority is apparent. The speech received favorable comments from the Republican journals, and their attitude in turn reflects the unconciliatory sentiment of the followers of the party. Upon the speech the Cleveland Herald said:

The speech sends a thrill of joy through every Republican breast. It is high time the Seccessionist should know ... the Republican party is no Abolition party, and it only wars against the extension of slavery.

Another Ohio paper was equally pleased at the Republican stand, for the Sandusky Register stated: "We think Mr. Wade's speech will meet with universal approbation."

The day following Wade's outburst the first real basis for a satisfactory compromise between the dissatisfied groups was laid before the Senate by

12. Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 2 Sess., 102
Senator Crittenden in the form of a series of amendments to the Constitution and resolution to be adopted by Congress. The plan of compromise was to settle that status of slavery in the Territories. It would extend the line of the Missouri Compromise, 36°30 North Latitude, to the border of California; all North of that line to be forever free and to the South of it slavery was to be protected by Congressional legislation. When a territory entered Statehood it was to be slave or free as the voters directed. The Compromise would deny to Congress the right to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia so long as it existed in Virginia and Maryland, nor without compensation to those who did not consent. Inter-state slave traffic was not to be interfered with. The United States was to pay the owner the full value of a fugitive when arrest should be prevented by force or rescue made. Finally no future amendment should be made giving Congress power to interfere with slavery in any of the States. The resolutions which accompanied the amendments would have Congress request the various States to eliminate from the Personal Liberty laws and the Fugitive Slave law those parts which were objectionable. 15

Opinion on the Crittenden Amendments was at first fairly well divided. The New York Times stated that "we have very little hope that anything substantial will be accomplished by these amendments of Mr. Crittenden." 16 In the West, Chicago's Republican journal, the Tribune, was bitter and yet triumphant that the amendments would not be adopted by the Committee of Thirteen. The journal stated: "It ought never to have been organized and we

15. Chadwick, op.cit., 170 et seq.
do not regret that its efforts to tinker with the Constitution have come to naught." In New York, Bennett, in his New York Herald, was sensible:

We are in favor of Mr. Crittenden's plan of Compromise or any other plan of compromise by which a settlement of the dangerous position which now menaces the peace of the country can be effected.16

The apparent danger that was slowly engulfing the nation brought the farsighted men of the North to the realization that some plan of peace must be effected if the Union was to remain intact. Edward Everett, the Massachusetts orator, said in a letter to Senator Crittenden:

There is nothing in your resolutions for which I would not cheerfully vote if their adoption as amendments of the Constitution would save us from disunion, and, what I consider its necessary consequences, civil war, anarchy, desolation at home, the loss of all respectability abroad, and finally, military despotism.19

John A. Dix, of New York, felt "a strong confidence that we could carry three-fourths of the States in favor of it as amendments to the Constitution." Amos A. Lawrence's letter to Senator Crittenden on December 29 is interesting and pointed, "We are all watching with interest," wrote Lawrence, "your patriotic and vigorous efforts for pacifications." 21

The best that the Crittenden proposals could get from the Committee of Thirteen was the "death sentence." The stubborn unyielding stand of Seward and his colleagues defeated them almost without a qualm. Milton sums their nefarious work quite accurately:

The restoration of the Missouri Line was the keystone of the whole structure (Crittenden

Amendments). Every southern member, including Davis and Toombs, representing the Cotton States, declared that providing the Republicans would 'tender and sustain it, they would accept it; but when the five Republicans flatly refused, the two Cotton States Senators went with them because it would merely deceive the country for the Committee to adopt a proposal the Republicans unitedly opposed. The Republicans voted favorably only upon Crittenden's plank for changing such sections of the Fugitive Slave Act as offended the North. Thus the Republicans on the Committee killed the Compromise.22

Other proposals met with as little success in the Committee. Douglas's plan of compromise which would give an assurance of permanent peace between the divergent sections met the same fate as did Crittenden's. However, the Douglas plan of compromise was even better than was Crittendens. Under it Congress would have no right to legislate on slavery in any territory; the existing status as to each present territory was to remain unchanged until it reached a population of fifty thousand when it would be allowed to control its own domestic institutions. When it reached that population it would automatically become a state. The Illinois Senators' plan made mandatory a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the Houses of Congress before new territory could be acquired.23 This last suggestion completely answered Lincoln's objection to the territories acquired South of 36°30 in that soon the South would want to acquire Cuba and Mexico so that they might introduce human servitude. Evidently hypocrisy was the keynote of Republicanism for Douglas' proposals were voted into oblivion. Medill of Chicago still held Douglas in

23. Ibid., 524.
utter contempt for of his proposals he wrote in the Chicago Tribune:

The same obscurity which permitted a double construction of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, marks and poisons the most important of these propositions. 24

Seward brought the Republican plan for compromise before the Committee of Thirteen. It touched upon many of the same points as did the Crittenden proposals except in the main one. This was slavery in the territories. Naturally, since on that issue was involved the main differences between the North and the South, it was acceptable to no one but the Republican members of the Committee. Just before the first of the year (Dec. 23) the Committee of Thirteen reported to the Senate that it was unable to reach a Compromise so the ineffective group was dissolved. A few days earlier the Committee of Thirty Three had admitted its failure to the House.

However the Crittenden Compromise did not become a dead issue.

Two of the keenest historians of the period, Milton and Rhodes, lay the responsibility for the defeat of the Crittenden proposals in the Committee of Thirteen squarely at the feet of the five Republican members of the group. 26 Rhodes goes even farther and states that "the influence of Lincoln was the most potent." 27 If the plan had been adopted it is doubtful if any Southern States would have seceded except South Carolina. In view of the Republican refusal to be conciliatory it is argued by some of the historians that upon them rests the responsibility for the forthcoming Civil War.

The failure of the Senate Committee of Thirteen to agree was followed by an insistent effort of persistent Senator Crittenden to bring forward in

another form his plan of compromise. On January 3 he asked that provisions "be made by law, without delay, for taking the census of the people and submitting to vote" the propositions which were in substance those which had been placed before the select committee. His efforts came to naught for the Republican Senators had pledged themselves to no conciliation. Senator Clark, delegate from New Hampshire, blasted effective compromise out of the upper House by introducing and securing passage of a resolution which insisted that the provisions of the Constitution were ample to preserve the Union.

Lincoln, the titular head of the Republican party, was opposed to any form of Compromise. The cry that the Crittenden proposals was only another attempt to engraft the Breckinridge platform upon the Republican Administration was echoed by the Radical Republican leaders and the press. Such subterfuge portrays realistically the selfish attitude upon which the new party leaders planned to maintain themselves in power. Lincoln took an active part in defeating all compromise schemes, and his followers were not slow to let the nation know how he stood upon the subject. While the Crittenden Amendments were yet new Greeley stated in the New York Daily Tribune on December 22, 1860:

We are enabled to state in the most positive terms that Mr. Lincoln is utterly opposed to any concession or compromise that yields one iota of the position occupied by the Republican party on the subject of slavery in the territories, and that he stands now as in May last, when he accepted the nomination for the presidency, squarely upon the Chicago platform.

29. Ibid., 409
So that the nation would not doubt the President-elect's attitude the Springfield State Journal, often referred to as Lincoln's journalistic mouthpiece, stated:

The country may rest assured that Lincoln is a Republican President and one who will give a Republican administration. Mr. Lincoln is not committed to the Border States' compromise, nor any part of it. He will stand on his own platform and will not counsel his friends to acquiesce to any compromise.

In addition to what has already been stated on Lincoln's views there is stillmore evidence of his non-conciliatory perspective. In a letter to Thurlow Weed on December 17, Lincoln notes:

The Missouri line extended or Douglas' and Eli Thayer's popular sovereignty, would lose us everything we gain by the election; that filibustering for all south of us and making slave states of it would follow, in spite of us, in either case.

Evidently Weed could not believe that Lincoln would take such an uncompromising defensive so he visited him in Springfield at the insistence of Senator Seward. The result of the conference was highly unsatisfactory for the compromising Weed, for when the Albanyite showed the President-elect that numerous Conservative Republicans favored the Crittenden plan, he received the peculiar reply that "it would do some good or much mischief."

All through Lincoln's correspondence we find evidence of his unflinching attitude to take any steps to preserve the Union. He wrote to Elihu Washburn:

"Hold firm as a chain of steel against propositions for compromise of any kind on slavery extension."  

To Senator Trumbell Lincoln was pointed and blunt when he wrote: "I do not desire any amendment to the Constitution!" and then added that the right to amend the organic law belonged to the people. On Douglas' effort to offer a compromise the comment of the "Great Emancipator" was: "Douglas is again trying to bring in his popular sovereignty. Have none of it." In Lincoln's reply to an emissary sent to him by Senator Crittenden to suggest that he should attempt to organize a national and representative cabinet to patch the sectional differences, the President-elect clearly brings out his political philosophy and his small regard for the great masses of the people. "Does any man think," he said, "that I will take to my bosom an enemy?"

While Lincoln was cajoling, advising and influencing the Republicans in Congress and the radical leaders of the nation to have no part of compromise the masses of the people seemed to have an entirely different attitude. Governor Washburn of Maine in his inaugural address recommended "Conciliation and forbearance, fidelity to the Constitution and the repeal of the personal liberty laws if found unconstitutional." The thought of the people of his State must have been reflected in his speech for on the last of January an

33. Milton, op.cit., 526, citing from Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln III, 259
34. Milton, op.cit., 526 citing from Lincoln Works, IV, 87 et seq.
immense mass meeting was held in Portland to adopt compromise resolutions. Speakers of both political parties addressed the throng on the national crisis and the need for conciliation. Resolutions were passed in which it was stated "that we will tender every suitable measure of conciliation to meet the present difficulties." The immense throng was enthusiastic. Michigan somewhat echoed the sentiment of Maine a week later. At a large meeting in Detroit, at which the Mayor of Detroit presided, and both Democrats and Republicans made speeches, numerous resolutions were accepted by the people with great acclaim. Amongst the resolutions were those which favored the admission of States south of the line of 36° 30 with or without slavery and numerous other conciliatory measures. However, whatever may have been the sentiment of the citizenry on compromise it was evidently not the view of the Michigan State Senate for a few days after the Detroit mass meeting in which the people expressed themselves as being for compromise, it rejected the plan to send delegates to the Compromise Convention in Washington.

The great State of New York stood out strongly for the Crittenden plan of compromise or for that matter, any plan that would avert Civil War. Bennett's press worked overtime to bring the people to the view that compromise was necessary to save the Union. The Herald was sure that there "never was a time when the conservative element of the land was more strong than it is now." An allegedly Republican press, the New York World, stated:

There can be no mistake about the intention of New York to go as far as any Northern state towards honorable reconciliation with men that are yet true. 41

The same day Bennett in his journal brought a salient point in the New York Herald:

That the Union can be saved even now is doubtful; but if not now, never. Nine-tenths of them (people) would vote tomorrow for the proposition of Mr. Crittenden if they had the opportunity. 42

In upstate New York, Thurlow Weed saw that the apparently suicidal course adopted by the Republicans in favoring no concession would divide the nation. He came out for compromise in his Albany Journal when he stated that the "question must have violent or peaceful solution," and urged his Republican brothers to accept as a settlement of the dispute regarding territories which was practically the plan proposed by Mr. Crittenden. 43 Two New York presses, the Times and the Courier and Express, advocated Weed's plan of peaceful compromise although they were known Republican journals. 44

Petitions begging for compromise, containing thousands of names of people from the Empire State began to pour into Congress. The World informs us that one containing the signatures of twenty-five thousand was offered in the United States Senate on January 23. Later Seward presented to the Senate petitions signed by sixty-three thousand voters from New York asking for some form of conciliation. Horatio Seymour in a letter to Crittenden states: "I feel perfect confidence that New York would give one hundred fifty thousand for this measure." 47 Probably the best summation on the attitude of the people of New York on conciliation is made by editor Greeley

---

42. Editorial in New York Herald, Jan.12, 1861.
in his recollections:

If a popular vote could have been had on the Crittenden Compromise, it would have prevailed by an overwhelming majority. Very few Republicans would have voted for it, but very many would have refrained from voting at all; while their adversaries would have brought there every man to the polls in its support and carried by hundreds of thousands. 48

Pennsylvania was almost as vehement as New York in declaring for compromise. Philadelphians, in a large union meeting at a hall in that city of brotherly love, left no doubt in even the minds of the skeptical concerning their opinion on the Crittenden Compromise. Resolutions were adopted favoring conciliation and not coercion and recommended that Congress place its stamp of approval on some plan of compromise. Several weeks later the Pennsylvania State Senate passed by a decisive majority a resolution appointing commissioners to attend the Peace Convention to be held in Washington. The backbone of the state, labor, was not silent during the crisis. In Pittsburg the Workingmen's Committee dispatched a delegation to present to Congress resolutions favoring the Crittenden plan. A great throng of laborers accompanied the delegation to the depot. At Philadelphia a committee representing the working men of eastern Pennsylvania called on Senators Crittenden and Cameron and expressed their devotion to the Union and their wish for the adoption of the Crittenden plan. 52

47. Coleman, op.cit., II, 254
convention convened at Philadelphia on February 22. Delegates from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee and Ohio were in attendance. Resolutions stating that the fifty-two thousand men they represented would be satisfied with nothing but the Crittenden Compromise as a settlement of the national difficulties. 53 The presentation of a petition signed by three thousand to the United States Senate by Senator Cameron is the best indication of Pennsylvania's attitude. In the presentation speech Senator Cameron said:

If the names of the individual members of the firms who have signed it could be counted, it is estimated to be signed by over five thousand names of citizens of Philadelphia, all of whom represent themselves as having voted for Lincoln and Hamlin. Many of them employ large numbers of workingmen. Some of them from one thousand to one thousand five hundred. They represent some thirty to forty thousand working people of Philadelphia. They desire the adoption of the Crittenden-Bigles proposition, for the purpose they say, of saving the country from its present perilous condition. 54

The home-state of the President-elect, Illinois, represented a varied pattern of expression on the all-absorbing topic of compromise. The Springfield State Journal, a Lincoln editorially controlled press, let the people of the State know the "Sage of Springfield" opinion again when it stated:

Away with compromise! Let us first establish the fact that we have a government - a Government able to protect itself and punish traitors. 55

55. Editorial, Feb.9, 1861.
A great mass-meeting held in Bryan Hall was Chicago's largest demonstration during the period. So great was the feeling expressed by the citizenry that twice as many people were turned away as were able to crowd into the auditorium. Fiery speakers from both political parties painted a graphic picture of patriotism for their listeners. The Committee of Resolutions was composed of influential citizens with varied political beliefs. Throughout the meeting no sentiments were expressed which did not look to adherence to the Jacksonian declaration that "The Union must and will be preserved," and to the peaceable settlement of the sectional difficulties. The Tribune ends its account of the meeting by stating: "Let it be known far and wide that Chicago is a unit for the integrity of the Government and the Constitution, as our fathers made it." The leading industrialists and meat packers of Chicago, knowing the effect that a new Republic to the South would have on their enterprises were for some type of compromise. That the industrialists of Illinois brought pressure to bear on Governor Yates to assist in healing the national differences is indicated by the fact that though opposed by the leaders of the party, Yates did appoint Commissioners to the Peace Conference. The Tribune, commenting on Yates' appointments, noted:
"Illinois is a Republican State - and she is a loyal state, devoted to the Constitution as it is, to the Union, and to the enforcement of the laws."

56. News Account, Chicago Times and Herald, Jan. 7, 1861; Chicago Tribune, Jan. 7, 8, 1861; Chicago Tribune, Jan. 7, 1861
57. News Account, Chicago Tribune, Jan. 9, 1861.
The stubborn attitude of the radical Republicans of Illinois and Chicago in particular, almost led to a party split. The conservative Republicans wanted some type of conciliation effected between the North and the South. Even the silly and impotent suggestions presented by Seward and Kellog would have been satisfactory. Several meetings were convened and resolutions of endorsement of the Seward plan were adopted along with bitterly worded resolutions denouncing the Chicago Tribune for its radical viewpoint. 60 Lincoln's Springfield Press about this time gave forth another blast on the President-elect's viewpoint, for on February 5 it carried a leader denouncing any proposition for a compromise and declaring that it was impossible for Republicans to support such suggestions. The article closed by denying any statements that the Republicans ever were in favor of any form of compromise. 61

Despite the Garrisons, the Adamses, and the Summers, Massachusetts and the rest of New England apparently were willing to compromise the nation's sectional differences. Three great mass meetings give a cross cut opinion. The first was at Charleston, Massachusetts where Edward Everett of the silver tongue addressed the swelling throng. All of his references to compromise were greeted with great cheers of approbation. Resolutions in favor of the Crittenden Compromise were adopted and expressions in concurrence with Senator Seward's opinions that "the question of slavery is not to be taken into account," but "we are to save the Union first, and we will then save all that is worth saving." 62 Several days later, Fanueil Hall, the

cradle of liberty reverberated with the echoing of a shouting throng which had gathered to express its opinion on compromise. All parties were represented. The socialites and the non-socialites were there by the hundreds, and the great throng spread to the surrounding streets. A letter from Edward Everett who was in Washington pleading the cause of compromise, was read:

Members are bound by party ties and the only alternatives are Union or bloody strife. Let the cry ring out from Faneuil Hall. The Union must be preserved!

Resolutions expressing fealty to the Union were adopted, appeals were made to Virginia and other States to remain loyal to the Union, and the Crittenden Resolution met with the approval of the assembled throng. On February 18 the working men of Boston met to express their sentiments on the national crisis. Resolutions of a conciliatory nature were adopted in which men of all parties were asked to lay aside factional strife and symbols and unite in an effort to save the Union. Also Senator Crittenden was thanked "for the eloquence with which he vindicated the twenty-three thousand working men of Massachusetts, who signed the memorial in favor of the resolutions" and respectfully requested him to act for the people of Massachusetts as well as for Kentucky.

What a hopeful attitude the people of the North assumed when it became apparent that the Nation was being torn to pieces by radical politicians in both the North and the South. Great mass meetings were held in all sections of the Union petitioning for compromise; memorials flooded Congress; the orators and the writers were sincere in their demands that the Union be held

---

64. Boston Dispatch, Ibid., Feb.23, 1861.
together. In Baltimore and Cumberland, Maryland, thousands of people in conventions requested compromise, concession, and conciliation.

Missouri, ever doubtful, sent massive petitions to Congress and by popular assemblage prayed to the National Legislature for peace between the sections of the Nation. The State Convention of Missouri, in a striking set of resolutions, stated that the Missourians had no cause for leaving the Union and that the State would labor to effect a compromise between the States for the adjustment of the existing troubles. The Legislature of Indiana passed resolutions favoring a National Convention to revamp the Constitution so the South would not leave the Union. Milwaukee, the city of peace loving Germans, was the scene of a great meeting of the citizenry of that city at the Academy of Music where the crowd went on record as being favorably disposed to grant the South almost anything to keep it from alienating itself from the North. In New Jersey the State Legislature, by an overwhelming vote, went on record as being in favor of the Crittenden plan of compromise. Yet despite this great outpouring of sentiment the Republicans and the radical Southern Democrats would not allow a just compromise to avert a national calamity.

The greater presses of the nation re-echoed the opinions of the masses. Thurlow Weed, Seward's manager and dearest friend, stated in his paper, the

65. Baltimore Dispatch, Ibid., Jan.18, 1861 for meeting in Cumberland, Md.
   Baltimore Dispatch, New York Herald, Jan.11, 1861, for Baltimore meeting.
66. St. Louis Dispatch, New York World, Feb.5, 1861, for petitions sent to Congress; St.Louis Dispatch, Daily Globe, Feb.5, 1861, for mass meetings in St. Louis.
68. Indianapolis Dispatch, Ibid., March 18, 1861.
Albany Evening Journal: "But the Crittenden propositions are the most direct and simple and therefore to be preferred." Patriotic Bennett hammered away in his New York Herald:

We have appealed to the President-elect and his appointed Premier (Mr. Seward) to come forward to the rescue of the country. They have responded in vague promises of conciliation...and hints of coercion in which we find little hope or encouragement.

Greeley up to almost the end was hopeful of some kind of national relief, but towards the close of January he became almost pessimistic. His press, the New York Weekly Tribune stated:

Little by little the scheme of compromising our national difficulties seems to recede, until it has just about reached a vanishing point. 'Yet effort is not abandoned.'

In Washington the Daily Globe, a press not given over to the opinions for the rule, sent a fervent prayer to heaven to avoid a Civil War: "May Heaven save us from it and may it so move the hearts of our people that they will recoil from the imperious contest...and form once more a sacred alliance of friendship." Seward's speech in the Senate on his compromise plan, in which the Nation expected a panacea for the ills which beset her but received nothing but an oratorical masterpiece, elicited the statement from the Boston Transcript that "on the position he has taken may depend the question whether the present difficulties will be compromise or war." In the West the Chicago Tribune was more adamant than at any time since the compromise

72. Editorial, Jan.16, 1861.
73. Editorial, Jan.26, 1861.
74. Editorial, Jan.9, 1861.
75. News Account, Jan.12, 1861.
issue began:

We are in favor of the Constitution as it is. Mr. Crittenden's proposition is not a compromise. It is a scheme to insert the Breckinridge platform into the Constitution of the United States..."We are satisfied with the Constitution... and we say to those who want to put something into it...Hands Off!"

As has been stated the House Committee of Thirty Three, which was to look for a satisfactory basis of compromise, was unable to agree on much of anything worth while. It brought before the House seven minority reports signed by fourteen members; and as the members from the slave States had withdrawn on the failure of the committee to pass resolutions declaring it the duty to protect slavery both on land and on sea, the report was in effect a minority. The resolutions covered every phase of slavery and slave extension from the Fugitive Slave laws to unamendable amendments to the Constitution. However, the main features of the Corwin Compromise, so named since Corwin was the Chairman of the Committee of Thirty Three, were a constitutional amendment safeguarding slavery of the States; recommendation for the repeal of the Personal Liberty Laws, and the admission of New Mexico as a state with or without slavery so as to be made another slave State. This passed the House, February 28, by a vote of 133 to 65, and the Senate, March 2, by a vote of 24 to 12. It was the sole compromise of the session. However, in the upheaval to come it received no attention from any of the States.

76. Editorial, Jan.15, 1861.
77. Chadwick, op.cit., 178
78. Rhodes, op.cit., 267.
Corwin, Chairman of the Committee of Thirty Three, wrote a bitter but enlightening letter to Lincoln on the work of the House compromise committee. In part it reads:

If the States are no more harmonious in their feelings and opinions than those thirty three representative men, then, appalling as the idea is, we must dissolve and a long and bloody civil war must follow. I cannot comprehend the madness of the times. Southern men are theoretically crazy. Extreme Northern men are practical fools. The latter are really quite as mad as the former. Treason is in the air around us everywhere. It goes by the name of patriotism.\(^ {80} \)

Upon the initiative of Virginia a convention, later known as the Peace Convention, was convened at Washington early in February to attempt to arrive at some type of compromise. Delegates from nearly all of the Northern and border states were present so that at least two-thirds of the States of the Nation were represented.\(^ {81} \) The convention, if the character of the delegates could be taken as a criterion, was worthy of the impressiveness and the importance of its object. But the very terms of its call, the instructions given to the delegates by the legislature of the various States, and the heterogeneous view of the delegates' success was an impossibility. The idea of a peace-conference having originated in Virginia had its effect upon the people of the North, for they immediately became suspicious of some southern trickery. Opinion was badly divided as to its worthiness. The Chicago Tribune assumed a spokesman-like attitude on the Convention:

We believe we correctly represent the sentiment and purpose of the Representatives of the Northwest when we state that they not only repudiate every plan of compromise that

\(^ {80} \) Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln,III, 218, cited by Chadwick,\( \text{op.cit.}, 180 \)
\(^ {81} \) Chadwick, \( \text{op.cit.}, 270; \) Rhodes, \( \text{op.cit.}, \) II, 291, et. seq.
has been or may hereafter be presented, but that no earthly power will ever be able to compel them to accept any adjustment of existing difficulties than such as the Constitution affords. 82

However, in the East the battering rams of the press were by no means as fanatical as the Chicago Tribune, but they could see little hope of success in the venture. The New York Herald, after comment on the failure of some of the states to send delegates to the Peace Conference stated:

This circumstance alone would render any plan that may be adopted unsatisfactory to the South; but if the convention should agree upon good measures, they will be voted down or laid on the shelf by the present infuriated Congress. The Compromise Conference, therefore, can do nothing to save the Union. 83

Horace Greeley stated with almost prophetic vision in his New York Daily Tribune "That the Border State Compromise Convention, now in session...may be set down...as certain to result in no substantial good." 84 The New York World was not quite so pessimistic as was Greeley's press:

The Convention may accomplish some good if it honestly strives to ascertain and adopt itself to the sentiment and temper of the people; otherwise it will be a miserable failure. 85

The fact that the proceedings of the convention were secret so infuriated editor Bennett that he commented that "at the best we can only regard it as a mutual admiration society." 86

While the Nation was hopeful little was expected from the Convention so the results of the Compromise Conference were not so disappointing to the masses. The Convention agreed upon the so-called Guthrie plan which provided
for a Constitutional amendment to deal with the question of slavery extension. The plan being less favorable to the South than the Crittenden Compromise, and in turn being opposed by the Republicans, went to the Congress with no real force behind it. Consequently after passing the House it was voted down in the Senate by an overwhelming majority. Among the seven Senators who voted for the Guthrie plan were Douglas of Illinois and Crittenden of Kentucky. The New York Herald blamed the failure of the Congress to get behind the recommendation of the Peace Conference on Seward for not whipping the Republicans into line. Greeley did a complete "about face" and stated in his press that "neither philosophy nor statesmanship can defend the policy of Compromise" and then argued a case against compromise with such vigor and imagination that he was almost as vindictive upon the subject as his party leader, Lincoln. Apparently the New York World was not worried about anything but results when it stated:

It is to be earnestly hoped that the Senate, like the House, will take favorable action upon the proposition to amend the Constitution so as to preclude any future amendments empowering Congress to interfere as it exists in the States ...

82. Editorial, Feb. 4, 1861 (from p.122)
83. Editorial, Feb. 4, 1861 (" ")
84. Editorial, Feb. 9, 1861 (" ")
85. Editorial, Feb. 5, 1861 (" ")
86. Editorial in New York Herald, Feb. 7, 1861 (from p.122)
88. Rhodes, op. cit., II, 306; Chadwick, op. cit., 73; Milton, op. cit., 545.
89. Editorial, March 1, 1861.
91. Editorial, March 2, 1861.
And so on March fourth it all ended. For the non-compromisers' viewpoint the Chicago Tribune is enlightening:

Let the earth be glad! Congress has adjourned without any degrading compromise. It comes to its legal end. It had reached its prime conclusion. It is functus officio; and the grand old Constitution is unspotted with pro-slavery amendments. 92

For the compromisers the viewpoint of the New York Herald, the Nation's leading journal, is expressive:

If the Crittenden Amendments to the Constitution had been adopted by Congress a few weeks ago, instant stop would have been put to the progress of disunion contagion then in the South. 93

92. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
93. Editorial, March 5, 1861.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Government Publications

Congressional Globe.


Newspapers and Magazines

Albany Atlas and Argus
Albany Evening Journal
Atlantic Monthly
Baltimore Daily Exchange
Baltimore Patriot
Binghamton, New York, Democrat
Boston Post
Boston Evening Transcript
Boston Courier
Buffalo Daily Courier
Chicago Times and Herald
Chicago Tribune
Chicago Post
Chicago Inter-ocean
Chicago Times
Cleveland Herald
Cincinnati Gazette
Cincinnati Daily Journal
Charleston Mercury
Detroit Press
DeBow's Review (New Orleans and Washington)
The Hartford Press (Connecticut)
Harpers' Weekly
Illinois State Register (Springfield)
Illinois State Journal (Springfield)
Louisville Courier
Boston, Liberator
Milwaukee Journal
Missouri Democrat (St. Joseph)
New York Commercial Advertiser
New York Courier and Enquirer
New York Weekly Tribune
New York Evening Post
New York Express
New York Advertiser
New York Herald
New York Journal of Commerce
New York Times
New York Daily Tribune
New York World
New Haven Palladium
National Intelligencer (Washington)
Philadelphia Ledger
Philadelphia Press
Providence Journal
Richmond Whig
Richmond Enquirer
Rochester Advertiser (New York)
St. Louis Republican
Sandusky Register (Ohio)
Syracuse Standard
Utica Morning Herald
Washington Constitution
Washington Union
Washington Daily Globe
Wilmington Gazette (Delaware)

BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS, AND WRITINGS OF PUBLIC MEN


Clark, Leon Pierce, Lincoln: A Psycho-biography. Scribner's Sons, New York City, 1933.


Lusk, D.W., Eighty Years of Illinois, H.W. Bokker, Springfield, Ill, 1889.


OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES

Halsted, Marat, Causes of 1860. Follet, Foster and Co., Columbus, Ohio, 1860.
Lincoln and Douglas Debates. Follet, Foster and Co., Columbus, Ohio, 1859.
GENERAL HISTORIES

Auchampaug, Philipp G., James Buchanan and His Cabinet on the Eve of Rebellion, Private Printing, Lancaster, Pa., 1926.


Snead, Thomas L., The Fight for Missouri From the Election of Lincoln to the Death of Lyon C. Scribner's Sons, New York City, 1886.


MISCELLANEOUS


Parkhurst, John, Ed. and pub., Proceedings of the Charleston and Baltimore Conventions. Democratic National Committee, Nevin's Print, Cleveland, Ohio, 1861.


The thesis, "Public Opinion in the North Following the Election of Lincoln," written by Michael J. Cleary, has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Paul Kiniery, Ph.D. June, 1938

Rev. Joseph Roubik, S.J. June, 1938