

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

OF 1860

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By

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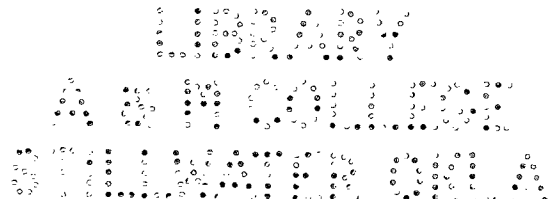
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PREFACE

The primary aim of this thesis is to present as clearly and as comprehensively as possible the results of the election of 1860. The events leading to the division of thought on the question of slavery have been briefly and chronologically presented. There are, perhaps, some gaps in the history of the election which are not due to lack of information but for brevity's sake.

The political conditions throughout the United States at this particular time are discussed briefly. To have treated the subject fully would have meant much study and research resulting in a book of hundreds of pages.

With the great number of sources of information available, I have found it necessary to select only those most authoritative. Those sources used have been selected on the basis of their exactness and the thoroughness of the data they contained.

It is my sincere wish that readers of this thesis might be enlightened through my efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This thesis owes a great deal to the older friends of my parents. Having heard the many discussions of conditions before "The War," during "The War," and, after "The War" among the older folk, I resolved to know for myself what those conditions were.

The securing of data, of a primary source, was made possible only through the cooperation of the efficient and untiring library assistants in the Document Library supervised by the very able Miss Grace Campbell.

To Dr. T. H. Reynolds, professor of History, I am indebted for valuable suggestions from time to time, reading and criticizing of the thesis. I should like to express my grateful appreciation for the willing assistance given by Mr. G. C. Anderson, Dr. O. E. Hooley, Miss Emily B. Smith of the History Department, and to my wife, Evelyn.

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CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860

This is not intended to be a study of the personalities involved in the famous campaign and election of 1860, but rather an analysis of the motives which inspired the candidates and their parties to react as they did. It is significant to note that this election was based on issues instead of personalities.¹

Because of the important position this campaign has assumed in our history, this study will be confined solely to the historical background of the Presidential election of 1860, the party conventions, the campaign and election, and the immediate reactions in the North and South. An attempt to present the outstanding movements leading up to this crucial year is essential to treat the subject with the attention it deserves.

There were many factors which tended to sectionalize the nation, and bring well defined boundaries between the states. These factors determined the trend of measures passed by the several states as well as the National Congress. New sectional alliances were formed, new political parties grew out of the combinations of old parties.² It would be practically impossible to discuss every factor involved, but a brief discussion is given of the most dominant ones.

¹Emerson David Fite, The Presidential Campaign of 1860, p. 98.

²Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, Vol. II, p. 4-7.

The unrest which accompanied the campaign of 1860 was a sign that the American nation was reaching her maturity and was impatient to demonstrate her capabilities. The preservation of unity, through compromise and gradual changes, had hitherto been necessary in order to keep the young nation from floundering in the uncharted sea of democracy. When the Constitution had been drawn up and ratified by the different states there are many, "both in this and foreign countries, who predicted a brief existence of the nation thus consolidated."³ Until the United States was accepted as an equal in the concert of powers, she found it necessary to pursue a policy that would impress the older powers with her abilities. Therefore, the policy of the first generation of statesmen, in whose hands had been placed the guidance of the affairs of state, had been one of compromise; of yielding to the pressure in order to present a united front. Now, however, the nation cast aside her youthful cloak of compromise and obedience, for she had attained the qualities of budding maturity, idealism, confidence, and an unyielding determination to maintain these beliefs.⁴

The statesmen of the past, who had led this young nation through its first trying years, had all passed on, and in their places stood young men who were just beginning "to teethe on the ring of politics." All the compromises of the past were discarded for a more direct path

³Thomas P. Kettle, History of the Great Rebellion, p. 18.

⁴Ibid., p. 19.

toward the source which these immature politicians thought vital for the welfare of their nation. When these diplomatic methods of their fathers had been summarily discarded, there arose from the deep stream of nationhood, undercurrents which had never before surged to the surface, emotionalism, sectionalism, and the resulting hatreds they caused. This upsurge nearly wrecked the nation before it was forced back into the depths of the stream once again.

Perhaps statesmanship and diplomacy could have guided the "Ship of State" safely past the shoals on which she floundered. With wiser guidance she might not have been so bruised and torn and very nearly wrecked. However, one author holds that

...the great struggle in which we are engaged was the unavoidable result of antagonism imbedded in the very nature of her heterogeneous institutions; that ours was indeed an irrepressible conflict which might have been precipitated or postponed, but could by no means have been prevented; that the successive 'compromises', whereby it was so long put off, . . . deplorable mistakes, detrimental to our National character. . . had the majority stood firm, they would have precluded the waste of millions of treasure and rivers of generous blood.⁵

It was this very lack of diplomacy that encouraged the rise of emotionalism and sectionalism. The latter feeling was intensified by quarrels over the slavery question. The policy of the United States had always been to repress slavery, and when the Constitution was adopted, its framers thought the institution would soon die out. With the invention of the cotton gin, however, cotton cultivation expanded into such a large enterprise that slave labor became even

⁵Horace Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, ix.

more necessary.

With the increase in the number of slaves, feeling against the institution arose. One authority says:

...at first the interests of the great body of the Northern people, especially the manufacturing and mercantile classes, were so fully identified with the South, that they were little inclined to tolerate any condemnation of slavery...⁶

Northern men supported Southern measures for the preservation of slavery.

Most of the territorial expansion of the United States since 1800 had been looked upon by Southern statesmen as an opportunity for the increase of Southern power by the creation of more slave states. The lands acquired by the Louisiana and Florida purchases were envisioned as joining the agrarian slave block.

The Missouri question first made its appearance in the Fifteenth Congress, March 16, 1818.⁷ No definite action was taken on the petition for Missouri's admission during the first session of the Fifteenth Congress.⁸ The bill made its next appearance in the second session of the same Congress on November 16, 1818.⁹ Failure of the House and Senate to agree on the Talmadge amendment, the bill was lost in a deadlock between the Senate and the House of Representatives.¹⁰ The Talmadge amendment which was to (1) prohibit

⁶Kettle, op. cit., p. 30.

⁷Annals of Congress, 15 Cong. 1 sess., Vol. II, p. 1391.

⁸Ibid., p. 1672.

⁹Annals of Congress, 15 Cong. 2 sess., Vol. I, p. 418.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 1437-1438.

the further introduction of slavery into the state of Missouri; (2) to gradually emancipate the slaves already there; aroused the people to bitter feeling both in the North and South. It stirred the country from one end to the other. It was ably supported in the North by hundreds of resolutions adopted by mass meetings and state legislation. The South, filled with alarm, declared that the said amendment was an outrageous violation of the Constitutional rights of the states.¹¹

Howell Cobb, Congressman from the state of Georgia, warned the members of Congress that the passage of the bill as amended by James Talmadge, would mean the dissolution of the Union. He believed it was kindling a fire which all the waters of the ocean could not extinguish, "a fire which could be extinguished only by blood."¹²

On the Missouri question, Thomas Jefferson said in a letter written to John Adams, dated December 10, 1819:

From the battle of Bunker Hill to the Treaty of Paris, we never had so ominous a question. I thank God that I shall not live to witness its issue.¹³

He stated further that he believed the question would cause enough internal strife and discord as to lead to a separation of the Union, and the throwing away of the fruits of the fathers of the Constitution and rendering desperate the experiment which was to

¹¹Henry J. Carman, Social and Economic History of the United States, Vol. II, p. 485.

¹²Annals of Congress, op. cit., p. 1437-1438.

¹³Andrew A. Lipscomb, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. XV, p. 233.

determine ultimately whether man is capable of self government.¹⁴

The final passage of the Maine Bill occurred on March 3, 1820, with the President's approval.¹⁵

During the first session of the Sixteenth Congress the Missouri Compromise Bill was passed on March 6, 1820.¹⁶

The continued agitation of the protectionist led, in 1828, to the passage of a tariff bill, commonly known as the "Tariff of abomination."¹⁷ The South Carolina delegation in Congress threatened to leave Congress at once and not to return until ordered to do so by their constituents, but they were induced to remain by the more influential members of their adherents.¹⁸ Calhoun's, South Carolina Exposition, was South Carolinas reaction regarding the Tariff Law, the chief analysis of which was; that the tax imposed by the tariff of 1828 would virtually ruin the entire South, accompanied by a threat of nullification.¹⁹ There was a lull in the tariff excitement as the election of 1828 took shape. South Carolina

¹⁴Ibid., p. 247-248.

¹⁵United States Statutes at Large, Vol. III, p. 548.

¹⁶Annals of Congress, 16 Cong., 1 sess. Vol. I, p. 390.

¹⁷United States Tariff Commission, Dictionary of Tariff Information, 1924, p. 752.

¹⁸Frederick Bancroft, Calhoun and the South Carolina Nullification Movement, p. 32-33.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 47-49.

voted for Jackson-Calhoun and waited to see what action Jackson would take when Congress assembled in December.

While the different sections were thus engaged in arguments over the tariff, another element appeared to add to the controversy. This new element was the debate between Hayne, of South Carolina and Webster, of Massachusetts which occurred in the Senate, in January, 1830. It was a resolution relating to Western land sales. Hayne in his first speech made an attack on New England which drew out Webster in vindication, and then when the South Carolinian replied, he boldly and broadly set forth the nullification theory which his state had accepted from the sophistical brain of John C. Calhoun. This theory received its reputation then and there, in Webster's final speech.²⁰ The immediate effect of this speech upon the country is not easy for us to measure. The principal newspapers of the country had given it entirely to their readers. The popular verdict throughout the Northern, Western and many Southern States was decisive.²¹

Following the Webster-Hayne debate the nation was shocked by an uprising of slaves under the leadership of Nat Turner which occurred in Southhampton County, Virginia, in August, 1831. It was, however, quickly subdued, but cost the lives of sixty-one white persons, mostly women and children. The excitement throughout the

²⁰Congressional Debate, Vol. VI, Pt. 1, pp. 35-39.

²¹George Tickner Curtis, Life of Daniel Webster, Vol. I, p. 137.

entire South and especially in Virginia and the states contiguous to it, was out of all proportions with the number of victims and the extent of the conspiracy.²²

The tariff question was resumed on November 19, 1832. A Convention met at Charleston, South Carolina to protest against the tariff acts of 1828 and 1832. The members went on record as declaring these acts null and void, not binding upon the state of South Carolina nor its officers and citizens. Every officer of the state of South Carolina was required to take an oath to obey the resolutions. In case of interference by the Federal government South Carolina threatened to withdraw from the Union.²³ The convention sent President Jackson a pamphlet containing its proceedings in the latter part of November. In answer to the pamphlet Jackson issued a proclamation warning any state that any resistance by force to any laws passed by Congress would be met by the combined powers of the Federal Army and Navy.²⁴

To retaliate, Congress passed the Force Bill on January 21, which gave the Federal government full powers in collection of tariff revenues. This incident came to a close by the passage of Henry Clay's Compromise Tariff of 1833, March 2.²⁵ This act provided

²²Herman Eduard Von Holst, Constitutional History of the United States, Vol. II, p. 223.

²³James D. Richardson, comp., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Vol. II, pp. 340-341.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 641-56

²⁵United States Statutes at Large, Vol. IV, pp. 623-34.

for the gradual reduction of ad valorem duty to twenty percent by 1842, as of the act of 1832.²⁶

Slavery again became a national issue when Texas sought admission. The South desired that Texas be annexed to the United States, but the North was just as insistent in its opposition. It appears from a study of the "Congressional Globe" the question at issue was not forced by either side for fear of a loss, and thereby a political suicide. On December 22, 1845 the House passed a joint resolution for the admission of Texas into the Union, the Senate passed the same resolution on the same day and sent it to President Polk who signed it immediately.²⁷ Thus a great state was added to the United States after being kept out of the Union for almost nine years as the result of the sectional attitude toward slavery. Its admission as a slave state was a blow to the Abolitionists, but none except the extremist thought of Texas as coming into the Union otherwise.²⁸

The Wilmot Proviso embodied the opposition to the extension of slavery into the territories. Upon this proviso the modern Republican Party was formed eight years later; upon it fourteen years later, Abraham Lincoln was chosen President; and upon it began the

²⁶Ibid., pp. 629-31.

²⁷Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 2.

²⁸George P. Garrison, "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas," American Historical Association Annual Report for 1907, Vol. II, Pt. 1, pp. 260-261.

war of Rebellion, out of whose throes came the vastly grander and unsought beneficence of complete emancipation.²⁹ David Wilmot the originator of the proviso was a Democratic member of Congress from Pennsylvania. In 1846 a bill was pending to appropriate three million dollars for use by the president in a purchase of territory from Mexico as a part of peace. Wilmot proposed an amendment that slavery should be excluded from any territory so acquired. All the Democratic members, as well as the Whigs from New York supported the proviso. It passed the House but was rejected by the Senate. It marks the turning point in the history of slavery, for although it failed to pass both houses of Congress, it announced a policy that was soon to be victorious. In point of fact, no new slave state was admitted after Texas.³⁰

The conclusion of the war with Mexico in July, 1848, brought utterance to the question of the extension of slavery into the territory acquired by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. When the Thirty-First Congress, First Session, met in December, 1849, arguments and heated debates immediately arose and it seemed certain that the fate of the Union rested in the hands of that body. Henry Clay, after an absence of more than seven years, had been elected to the Senate by the Legislature of Kentucky. It was he who came

²⁹John Fiske, History of the United States, p. 340.

³⁰Appendix to the Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXII, Pt. I, pp. 256-257.

forward at this time with a plan for the settlement of all pending issues arising from slavery. On January 29, 1850, Clay presented his comprehensive plan of adjustment in eight resolutions.³¹ Numerous debates were made in the Senate on these resolutions. Some of the most notable were: Clay on February 5-6, 1850 in the Senate appealed to both sections of the country to accept the compromise measures, thereby averting war and destruction. He said he was directly opposed to any purpose of secession or separation.³²

W. F. Mangum, Senator from North Carolina said:

The South is on the defensive and they ask for nothing but 'hands off' in regard to extension of slavery.³³

Jefferson Davis, leader of the States Rights group in the Senate, addressed the Senate in behalf of the South. He maintained steadfastly that slaves, being personal property, and so recognized by the Constitution, a slaveholder had a right to go anywhere with his property unless he were forbidden by some foreign power.³⁴ He argued mainly for the extension of the line of the Missouri Compromise to the Pacific Ocean.³⁵ On March 4, 1850, John C. Calhoun, who was at that time in a weakened and fevered condition, requested Senator Mason, of South Carolina to read his speech, which in part said:

³¹Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXI, p. 244.

³²Ibid., p. 127.

³³Ibid., pp. 300-301.

³⁴Ibid., p. 269.

³⁵Ibid., p. 299.

The immediate cause of the present danger to this Union is due to: the universal discontent of the South, which has arisen from the agitation of the slavery question. This has led to the belief that this section can no longer remain in the Union as things are now. The equilibrium between the two sections in the Government has left the South without any adequate means of protecting itself against the North's encroachments and oppressions.

He prophesied division as the inevitable result of the continuation of slavery agitation.³⁶ He declared that the Union could not be saved by eulogies, however splendid or numerous; that the South found much in the history of George Washington to warrant the action they were about to take in the protection of their rights as citizens of the United States.³⁷

Webster pleaded for the preservation of the Union through a suppression of the slavery question. He held that slavery was already excluded from said territory by a law superior to the law that sanctioned it in the state of Texas... the law of nature.

California and New Mexico were destined to be free. The seventh of March speech affected the North and the New England states like a thunderbolt. It demoralized the abolitionists and Free Soilers of both sections; therefore, it was chiefly through the efforts of Webster that the Compromise measures were accepted by the nation as the only logical plan of settlement.³⁸ The Southern States at this time made a gesture toward secession in a Convention which met at Nashville, Tennessee, June 3, 1850. The movement never became

³⁶Ibid., p. 452.

³⁷Ibid., p. 572

³⁸Henry Cabot Lodge, Daniel Webster, pp. 323-324.

popular and came to a sudden end.³⁹ The Compromise measures were passed in final form September 9, 1850.⁴⁰

Another crisis in our history was passed. The great pacificator had triumphed again. The fugitive Slave Act met with the most violent denunciation throughout the entire North. The people of Massachusetts blamed Webster. People of the North demanded immediate repeal.⁴¹ This Compromise of 1850 had revoked the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

Of the literary forces that aided in bringing about the immense revolution in public sentiment between 1852 and 1860 the most weighty was Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin", which was first published in 1851 as a serial in the 'National Era', an anti-slavery newspaper at Washington. It attracted little attention then, but after it was given to the world in book form in March, 1852, it proved the most popular novel ever written. The author felt deeply that the Fugitive Slave Law was unjust, and that there was cruelty in its execution; this inspired her to pour out her soul in a protest against slavery. Longfellow wrote that it was one of the greatest triumphs in literary history, but its moral effect was a higher triumph still.⁴² Within a year Uncle Tom's Cabin was scattered all over the world. Translations were made into all principal languages,

³⁹Franklin, Jameson, "Correspondence of John C. Calhoun," American Historical Association, Annual Report of 1899, Vol. II, p. 1206.

⁴⁰Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXI, p. 1808.

⁴¹Henry Wilson, Rise and Fall of Slave Power in America, Vol. I, pp. 304-8.

⁴²James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States, Vol. I, pp. 278-80.

and into several obscure dialects. The publication of this book gave a united resistance in the North to the Fugitive Slave Law and was one of the causes of the formation of the Republican Party. In the South it was one of the causes of secession.⁴³

The next political movement toward the parting of the ways was the enactment of the "Kansas-Nebraska Bill", introduced by Senator Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, January 23, 1854.⁴⁴ Provisions of this bill provided for, (1) organization of the two territories of Kansas and Nebraska, (2) slavery in said territory to be left entirely to the vote of the people, (3) that the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had been abrogated by the Compromise Measures of 1850 and was thus inoperative.

In a signed publication Mr. Douglas was accused by Senator Solomon Chase, of Ohio, and Senator Charles Sumner, of Massachusetts, of having been guilty of betrayal of his trust, guilty of an act of bad faith, and engaged in the atrocious plot against the cause of free government.⁴⁵

The bill became a law by the signature of the President May 30, 1854.⁴⁶

⁴³French Ensor Chadwick, Causes of the Civil War, 1859-1861, A. B. Hart, ed., The American Nation; A History, Vol. XIX, p. 59.

⁴⁴Congressional Globe, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXIII, pp. 221-222.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 275.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 1321.

From a study of the "Congressional Globe" it is apparent that the sectional feeling was growing stronger. The debates in Congress were much more heated and personal than in previous contests on sectional subjects. The wrath was waxing warmer as Douglas and his followers won the day. Of this act a prominent authority said:

No act more fateful in character ever passed the Congress of the United States, for it set in motion the train of political changes which led straight to the election of Lincoln and the Civil War. It was the direct cause of a radical alternation of Northern political feeling, of the total failure of the Compromise of 1850 or Union policy of 1850, and of the destruction of both the national parties.... And the members of Congress who passed it realized, when the session finally ended in August, that they had begun a political revolution whose end no man could foresee.⁴⁷

The Anti-Slavery movement, which humanitarians fostered with fanatical zeal, was the most powerful influence in the many factored movement that brought about the birth of the Republican Party. The Anti-Nebraska movement was to receive its first impetus from the organization of a society designed to unite the disintegrated forces of the Whig party, the Free Soilers and Abolitionists into a single forceful unit whose chief function was to keep the slavery question before the people. To Michigan, however, was given the honor of holding the assembly that gave birth to the Republican Party. This assembly met at Jackson, Michigan, July 6, 1854 and nominated a mixed ticket of former Whigs, Democrats and Free Soilers. The first platform of the Republican Party was declared. Its chief plank was based on Anti-Slavery, which declared slavery a moral, social and political evil. To the platform was added a statement condemning the

⁴⁷Theodore Clark Smith, "Parties and Slavery", A. B. Hart, ed., The American Nation; A History, Vol. XVIII, pp. 107-108.

Kansas-Nebraska Act, and Fugitive Slave Law.⁴⁸

With the growth of sectionalism, there arose a wave of emotionalism. The latter feeling was fanned and kept burning by the fiery orations and prejudiced literature of the abolitionists, who could not or would not see what disaster might result. Hinton Rowen Helper, of North Carolina, dedicates his book "...to the non-slaveholding whites of the South generally, whether at home or abroad..."⁴⁹ Although he said that he did not write from narrow doctrine of economy, or from prejudice acquired from his early education, he wrote so strongly in favor of the abolition of slavery that he might be accused of ranting. Not content with the attitude of Free Soilers, he spurred his readers to a stronger Abolitionist activity.

Once and forever... the infernal question of slavery must be disposed of... a speedy and perfect abolishment of the whole institution...⁵⁰

The effect of the publication of this book was felt when the thirty-sixth Congress assembled on Monday, December 5, 1859. A contest for Speaker was inevitable. In the course of this contest an exciting resolution was introduced by Representative Clark of Missouri. The resolution stated that no representative who had endorsed and recommended the insurrectionary book, Helper's "Impending Crisis", was fit to be speaker of the House.⁵¹

⁴⁸Howard K. Beale, "The Diary of Edward Bates," American Historical Association Annual Report 1930, Vol. IV, p. 43.

⁴⁹Hinton Rowan Helper, The Impending Crisis, iii.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 121.

⁵¹Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, p. 304.

Representative John Sherman, of Ohio and Grow of Pennsylvania, Republican candidates for the Speakership had given their written approval of the book along with other Republican members of Congress.⁵² As seven out of ten voters in the Slave States were non-slaveholding whites the fear of the political consequence infuriated the Southern Congressmen.

An angry colloquy between Republican and Democratic members in the House followed, climaxed by a verbal war between Crawford of Georgia and Stevens of Pennsylvania. The House was in an uproar. The Speaker was powerless to preserve order. Members left their seats and crowded down into the area, and a physical collision between the Northern and Southern members was narrowly averted.⁵³

From such incidents followed naturally the threat to dissolve the Union in case the Republicans elected a President.

The Dred Scott Case which was decided by the United States Supreme Court on March 6, 1857, was purely a political test case. Standing out beyond the merits of the case and all other points involved, two questions of vast importance were suggested by the facts: (1) could a negro whose ancestors had been sold as slaves become a citizen of one of the states of the Union? (2) Was the Missouri Compromise Constitutional? The Supreme Court ruled:

Upon the whole, therefore, it is the judgement of this court, that it appears by the record before us that the plaintiff in error is not a citizen of Missouri, in the sense

⁵²Ibid., p. 304.

⁵³Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXIX, Pt. 1, pp. 163-164.

in which the word is used in the Constitution; and that the Circuit Court of the United States, for that reason, has no jurisdiction in the case, and could give no judgement in it. Its judgement for the defendant must, consequently, be reversed, and a mandate issued, directing the suit to be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.⁵⁴

This decision was one which the North could not accept wholeheartedly. If it stood, the purpose for which the Republican Party had been organized was lost. The Southern Democrats hailed the decision in high glee. The issue which all politicians had striven to keep out of sight was presented in its most startling form.

The Senatorial term of Stephen A. Douglas expiring, the choice of his successor became an issue which controlled the election of members of the Illinois legislature in the fall of 1858. Mr. Douglas received an endorsement at the hands of the Democratic State Convention, in April, which virtually nominated him for re-election. Abraham Lincoln, who had come markedly to the front in his state during the Kansas decision, was the man already chosen in the hearts of the Republicans of Illinois for the same office, and therefore with single appropriateness they passed at their Springfield convention on June 16, the nomination of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln thinking that the adroit and plausible Douglas could be better answered if they spoke from the same platform issued a challenge which was accepted and arrangements were made for seven meetings.⁵⁵ Of these debates the one at Freeport, Illinois,

⁵⁴Stephen K. Williams, ed., Supreme Court Reports, Lawyers Edition, Vol. XV-XVI, p. 721.

⁵⁵James G. Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, Vol. I, pp. 146-147.

August 27, is of special importance. In this debate Douglas was asked by Lincoln,

If the people of a territory can, in any lawful way, against the wishes of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a State Constitution?

Douglas replied:

Regardless of the opinion of the Supreme Court, the people of a territory have the lawful means to introduce or exclude slavery as they choose, for the reason that slavery cannot exist supported by local police regulations. These police regulations can only be established by the local legislature, and, if the people are opposed to slavery, they will, by the unfriendly legislation effectually prevent its introduction.⁵⁶

The result of the answer by Douglas gave him the Senatorial contest in Illinois, but lost for him the support of the Southern Democrats in the future.⁵⁷

The struggle in Kansas must be considered since it shows the decided progress of sectional rivalry. Emigrant societies of the North had urged colonies of settlers to enter Kansas in order to make it a free state. The slave holders of Missouri entered and participated in the elections in a determined effort to make the state pro-slave.⁵⁸

An illegal Pro-slavery Convention meeting at Leocompton, in early September, 1858 drafted a proposed State Constitution which was submitted to the people, but only votes 'for the Constitution with slavery,' or, 'for the Constitution without slavery,' were to be

⁵⁶John G. Nicolay and John Hay, ed., Abraham Lincoln Complete Works, Vol. I, p. 308.

⁵⁷Blaine, op. cit., p. 149.

⁵⁸Wilson, Rise and Fall of Slave Power in America, Vol. I, pp. 464-465.

received. Not being permitted in either event to vote against the Constitution, the Free-State settlers refused to vote at all, and the Lecompton Constitution with slavery received a six thousand majority.⁵⁹ The New Territorial Legislature, however, ordered an election at which the people could vote either for or against the Lecompton Constitution and a majority of ten thousand was cast against it.⁶⁰ President Buchanan, on February 2, 1858, sent a message to Congress in which he argued in favor of receiving Kansas as a state under the Lecompton Constitution with slavery, on the grounds that the delegates had been chosen to form a state Constitution, and were not obliged to submit it to the people at all.⁶¹ This view was supported by the Southern members of Congress and opposed by the Republicans and by a part of the Democrats headed by Senator Douglas of Illinois.

The House voted to admit Kansas with the Lecompton Constitution by a vote of 112 with 103 opposing. The bill when brought to a vote in the Senate on the same day carried by a vote of 33 to 25.⁶² The acceptance by Congress of the bill as passed ended the struggle which had lasted for five months as far as Congress and the administration

⁵⁹Blaine, op. cit., p. 139.

⁶⁰Greeley, op. cit., p. 249.

⁶¹Richardson, comp., Messages and Papers of the Presidents
Vol. v, pp. 449-454.

⁶²Blaine, op. cit., p. 142.

were concerned, but the victory was short lived, as the people of Kansas rejected the Constitution as submitted to Congress by more than ten thousand.⁶³

The significance of this incident lies in its political aftermath. The attempt to admit Kansas, under the Lecompton Constitution, proved disastrous to the Democratic Party. The first decided break was that of Senator Douglas. He refused to sustain the iniquity.⁶⁴ The Davis Resolutions introduced in the United States Senate in 1859 was nothing more than a proclamation of Southern Democratic leaders reading Douglas out of the party.⁶⁵ This may be noted as a parting of the ways.

On October 17, 1859, this country was bewildered and astounded while the fifteen slave states were convulsed with fear, rage, and hate by telegraphic dispatches from Baltimore and Washington, announcing the outbreak at Harpers Ferry, as a conspiracy of abolitionists and negroes, having for its object the devastation and ruin of the South, and the massacre of its white inhabitants.⁶⁶

What caused Virginia's consternation was not John Brown and his hand full of men, but the shadows which their excited imagination

⁶³Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, p. 250.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 250.

⁶⁵Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXIX, Pt. 1, p. 424.

⁶⁶Rhodes, History of the United States, Vol. I, p. 394.

saw standing behind them.

On November 2, 1859, Brown was sentenced to death by hanging on December 2.⁶⁷

The South charged the John Brown outrage to the mechanism of the Republican Party. The November elections were pending, the Northern Democrats were alive to the injury their opponents would sustain could it be shown that Seward, Chase, Sumner and Hale had in any way been engaged in the conspiracy. This charge only tended to strengthen the Republicans in the North.⁶⁸

The significance of these related incidents lies in the precedent they set. Due to these occurrences bitter hatreds arose between the people of the North and South. These hatreds were evidenced in the Convention and caucuses of the next Presidential Campaign.

⁶⁷Greeley, The American Conflict, p. 297.

⁶⁸Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, Vol. I, pp. 155-156.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL NOMINATING CONVENTIONS OF 1860

Feeling ran high in 1860 and the whole nation awaited anxiously the assembling of the Democratic convention at Charleston, South Carolina. This location had been chosen four years before when the party was more peaceful, with Stephen A. Douglas as its favorite. But now the Southern wing of the party was determined to "rule or ruin" in its fight to protect its property, the slave.¹ Slaveholders feared that should this section lose control of the government, its opponents would ruin the South by dethroning "King Cotton" and limiting or destroying its most profitable institution, slavery.²

When the Northern delegates arrived at Charleston, they were shocked at seeing, for the first time, a slave auction. Not being accustomed to the formal dress and grandiloquence of the Southerners, they were at first a bit embarrassed.³

On Monday, April 23, 1860, the National Convention assembled with delegates from all the thirty-three states of the Union. The whole number of votes was three hundred and three. After the example of former Democratic Conventions it adopted the two-thirds

¹Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, Vol. I, p. 257.

²William E. Dodd, The Cotton Kingdom, p. 144.

³Murat Halstead, Caucases of 1860, p. 13.

rule, with two hundred and two votes necessary to nominate the President and Vice-President.⁴

The greatest source of antagonism was between the West and the "Cotton South" delegates. The Freeport Doctrine was the chief bone of contention. The West was solidly behind Douglas and his ideas, while the "Cotton South" was just as strongly opposed to him. His supporters realized that Douglas could carry more Union votes than any other Democrat, but they were against "squatter sovereignty" as facing both ways on an important issue.⁵ One authority says:

...The South makes it a point of honor that the platform shall not be one of a double construction, but shall be one which cannot be fairly interpreted to mean anything short of "sound Southern doctrine", that is, the protection of slave property in the Territories... The Northern delegates don't care so much about the honor of the matter... Their political existence depends absolutely upon their ability to construe the platform to mean "popular sovereignty."⁶

While the delegates were deliberating, abolitionist preachers in the North were openly praying for a split in the convention,⁷ while the Clergy of the South were giving prayers for harmony,⁸ the lack of which, all knew, meant defeat for the Democrats in the coming election.

⁴Fite, The Presidential Campaign of 1860, p. 106.

⁵Ibid., pp. 98-99.

⁶Halstead, op. cit., p. 32.

⁷Rhodes, History of the United States, Vol. I, pp. 444-445.

⁸Ibid., p. 445.

Douglas had a majority of the delegates, but the "Fire Eaters" had, due to the unexpected support of California and Oregon, control of the majority of the states, seventeen out of the thirty-three represented. In this manner they ruled the committee and elected Caleb Cushing, their favorite, as the presiding officer. The credit for what unity the Convention possessed must go to his presiding genius.⁹

The "Two-thirds Rule", peculiar to the Democratic conventions, played an important part in blocking progress. This rule had originated in the Convention of 1831, when Jackson influenced its passage in order to insure the nomination of Martin Van Buren, his choice for Vice-President. Some historians assert that this rule "wrecked the Democratic Party in 1860."¹⁰ It is doubtful, however, if this technicality was chiefly responsible for the schism which followed. Division was inevitable, for slavery, secession, and Union demands had become more imperative than political organization. "...Principles were subordinated to passion, with judgement displaced by a desire for revenge."¹¹

After five strenuous days, the Committee on Resolutions reported its inability to agree. The Southern group, using the Dred Scott decision as its guide, demanded legislation permitting

⁹Greeley, A Political Textbook of 1860, p. 28.

¹⁰Stuart Lewis, Party Principles and Practical Politics, p. 216.

¹¹Blaine, op. cit., p. 153.

slavery in all the territories, thus supporting Jefferson Davis' stand in the Senate.¹² However, the Western faction insisted on following the Freeport Doctrine and the platform of 1856.

Payne, of Ohio, on the fifth day of the convention, presented the separate report. This consisted, in effect, of the Cincinnati platform of 1856, and defended arguments of the Northern Democrats. He was immediately answered by Yancey in an oration which was received with great enthusiasm by the Southern Delegates.¹³ Mr. Davis, in a speech made in the Senate later, said of this speech:

It was decidedly the strongest argument I have heard on his side of the question.¹⁴

Yancey presented the majority report which was essentially as follows:

- (1) No legislature in the United States has the power to limit slavery in territorial possessions,
- (2) Repeal personal liberty laws,
- (3) The government is duty bound to protect its citizens property in the territories or on the high seas,
- (4) The government must protect naturalized citizens at home and abroad,
- (5) Cuba should be annexed and a railroad built connecting the Mississippi and the Pacific.¹⁵

Senator Pugh of Ohio, defending the minority report, replied to William Yancey, and announced formal refusal to submit to the

¹²Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXIX, Pt. 111, p. 1682.

¹³Greeley, A Political Textbook of 1860, p. 30.

¹⁴Congressional Globe, op. cit., p. 2144.

¹⁵Thomas V. Cooper, American Politics, p. 81.

Davis doctrine. G. E. Pugh's prophetic words in this speech were,

Gentlemen of the South, you mistake us...we will not do it,
we will not do it.¹⁶

The following is the report of the minority, made by B. M. Samuels of Iowa. After reaffirming the Cincinnati platform by the first resolution, it proceeded:

Since differences exist in the Democratic Party over slavery in the territories, Resolved: That the Democratic Party will abide by the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States upon the questions of Constitutional Law.¹⁷

B. M. Samuels, of Iowa, moved the adoption of the minority report which gave rise to earnest and impassioned debate. The vote was then taken, and by its count, the minority report was submitted for that of the majority by a vote of 165 to 138.¹⁸

The next great act that followed was the withdrawal of the Alabama delegates from the Convention as instructed by their constituents.¹⁹ Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, Arkansas and Georgia followed. Men looked at each other with tears in their eyes, as much as to say, this is the fatal step, not only toward the disruption of the party, but toward the dissolution of the Union.²⁰ The delegates retired from the House in the order in

¹⁶Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Greeley, A Political Textbook of 1860, p. 33.

¹⁹Appendix to the Congressional Globe, 34 Cong., 1 sess., p. 475.

²⁰Rhodes, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 451.

which their states seceded. The leave taking was not undignified. There was no defiance, no indulgence in bravado.²¹

This action brought the Convention to an impasse. The Northern Democrats agreed on Tuesday, the Eighth day of the Convention, to adjourn and to meet again in Baltimore on June 18.

The seceding delegates met at St. Andrews Hall in Charleston, on April 30, with Bayard of Delaware presiding. They agreed to meet on June 11, to complete their work. It is interesting to note here the impressions of one historian who wrote his book soon after this period. He stated:

They made no nomination for President. Their aim was to so paralyze the Democratic Party as to insure the election of the Republican candidate, and thereby unite and arouse the South.²²

At the Richmond meeting, the delegates met and adjourned each day as a formality, awaiting the action of the Convention at Baltimore. They finally met at the Maryland Institute on June 28, with delegates present from twenty-one states. W. W. Avery of North Carolina, submitted his Charleston platform, which was unanimously adopted. A resolution was passed setting Philadelphia for the meeting of the next National Convention.

Mr. Loring, of Massachusetts, proposed the name of John C. Breckenridge, of Kentucky, as Presidential candidate. He received

²¹Elaine, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 234.

²²John W. Draper, *The American Civil War*, Vol. I, p. 502.

81 of the 105 votes cast, and when Dickerson's supporters withdrew in his favor, the vote was unanimous. Demands came for William Yancey, of Alabama for Vice-President, but Mr. Green of North Carolina, nominated Joseph Lane. On the first ballot he received all 105 votes.²³

The Breckenridge Democrats took the stand that, as the Constitution recognized property in slaves, Congress was bound to protect such property in all public lands; that any slave owner may migrate into any United States Territory and take his human property with him, nor has the people of the Territorial Legislature any right to exclude slavery by laws.²⁴ After the nominations the secessionists at Baltimore adopted the candidates and platform of the Breckenridge party. They then adjourned to meet at Baltimore.²⁵

Caleb Cushing presided over the meeting at Baltimore on June 18, in which the "regulars" again met dessension. It took three days to admit the delegates; Arkansas sent Douglas delegates by a vote of 28 to 52, but Georgia and Alabama sent conflicting delegates. There were no delegates from Florida. The minority opposed the admittance of delegates from these states, and a split again occurred. Douglas

²³Fite, op. cit., p. 109.

²⁴Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, p. 319.

²⁵Greeley, A Political Textbook of 1860, p. 42.

delegates were favored in consideration of credentials which precipitated another secession consisting of Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon, Kentucky and Massachusetts delegates and some from the North. Cushing was replaced in the Regular Convention by Governor Todd of Ohio.²⁷

On the first ballot the votes were distributed as follows:

Stephen A. Douglas	Illinois	145½
Robert M. T. Turner	Virginia	42
James Guthrie	Kentucky	35
Andrew Johnson	Tennessee	12
Daniel L. Dickenson	New York	7
Joseph Lane	Oregon	6
Isaac Toucey	Connecticut	2½
Jefferson Davis	Mississippi	1½
Franklin Pierce	New Hampshire	1

With the next ballot Douglas gained 147 votes, and continued to gain slowly until the thirty-second ballot when he received 152½ votes. This gave him the nomination.

Benjamin Fitzpatrick, Senator from Alabama, was named for Vice-President, but he declined, and two days after the convention adjourned, Herschell V. Johnson of Georgia was chosen by a national committee as Douglas' running mate.²⁸

The Douglas Democrats took the stand that Congress had nothing to do with slavery in the territories; that the people of the territories had the sole right to decide the question for themselves, thus, that slavery, or a law against slavery in the territories, must

²⁷Edward Stanwood, History of the Presidency, Vol. I, p. 285.

²⁸Cooper, op. cit., p. 86.

be left to the majority of its white citizens to decide.²⁹

Douglas had already expressed his views on this platform in a letter written the previous July, and later in the course of a Senate debate where his Freeport Doctrine was attacked by Clay of Alabama and Davis of Mississippi.³⁰ He said that he was not seeking a nomination, but would accept one at the Convention, provided he could stand on principles he believed to be sound. Should a platform be adopted that he could not conscientiously carry out, he would not be a candidate.³¹

Slavery and secession were the rocks on which the party split. Only Pennsylvania and New Jersey were unconcerned with these issues; here tariff was emphasized by a determined stand on free trade. If both sides had been willing to compromise, or to modify their stand on certain issues, the catastrophe might have been avoided.

In 1860 the dissatisfied faction of the Old Whig and Know-Nothing Party met in Baltimore on May 9, to form the Constitutional Union Party. The old line Whigs were represented in this meeting by such men as John Bell of Tennessee, and John J. Crittendon of Kentucky. Both of these men believed in the Constitution with its slavery guarantees and the Union never to be dissolved. The New England conservatives were represented by Edward Everett and Rufus Chote,

²⁹Blaine, *op. cit.*, p. 170

³⁰Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. XXIX. Pt. 1, p. 424.

³¹Ibid., p. 426.

both of Massachusetts. They believed in Webster's Seventh of March speech as being the formula for solving the sectional difficulties. In the main the delegates to this convention were men of a former generation, equally distrustful of the old Democracy and the new Republicanism.³² There was no platform adopted, but the convention went on record with a statement of its assured support of the Constitution, of the Union, and rigid law enforcement.³³ There had been talk of nominating Sam Houston, of Texas, as their candidate, but in case of a doubt in his strength, John Bell with Everett as a running mate was to be chosen.³⁴ The outcome of the convention was the selection of Bell and Everett on the second ballot.³⁵

The Republican National Convention met in Chicago, Illinois, on Wednesday, May 16. There were delegates present from all the Free States, and also from Missouri, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Kentucky, the District of Columbia, and the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska. A delegation claiming to represent Texas was present, but was soon discovered to be fraudulent.³⁶ George Ashmun, of Massachusetts was chosen President of the Convention and the usual

³²George Fort Milton, The Eve of Conflict, p. 451.

³³Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, p. 317.

³⁴Rhodes, op. cit., p. 410.

³⁵Greeley, op. cit., p. 319.

³⁶Greeley, A Political Textbook of 1860, p. 27.

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committees were appointed. A committee consisting of a member from each State and Territory represented was appointed to draw up a platform.

On the following day a debate arose concerning the number of votes necessary to nominate a candidate. A proposition, synonymous with the Democratic rule of a vote of a two-thirds majority, was rejected by a vote of 331 to 130. It was decided that only a majority of those present would be required for nomination of candidates.³⁷

On this same day the Platform Committee submitted a declaration containing seventeen planks, and this was adopted by the delegates. The following are the most important and controversial points:

- (2) The equality of man as stated in the Declaration of Independence was affirmed.
- (3) Disunion was held in abhorrence.
- (5) Denied the right of Congress, a Territory, or any individual to give legal existence to slavery in Territories.
- (6) Denounced extravagance of Democratic administrations.
- (7) The claim that the Constitution carries slavery into the Territories is heresy.
- (9) Branded reappearance of the African slave trade as a "crime against humanity."
- (10) Denounced "squatter sovereignty."
- (11) Demanded immediate admission of Kansas under the Wyandotte Constitution.
- (12) A protective tariff needed.
- (13) Passage of a homestead act.
- (17) "We invite the cooperation, of all citizens, however differing on other questions, who substantially agree with us in their affirmance and support."

³⁷Ibid., p. 26.

No mention was made of the Dred Scott Decision, the Fugitive Slave Law, or the personal liberty laws denounced by the Democrats.³⁸

The chief pre-convention contenders for the nomination were William H. Seward, of New York, whom the new party's vitality had convinced; Simon Cameron, one of Pennsylvania's most devious and unscrupulous machine bosses; the humorless Salmon P. Chase, who divided the Ohio delegation with Ben Wade; Edward Bates, of Missouri who appealed to the more conservative opponents of Governor Seward; and then Abraham Lincoln, of Illinois, Douglas' opponent in the Senate race in 1858.³⁹

Seward, the party's most conspicuous statesman, was expected to be an easy victor. The leading party politicians from most of the Northern States were for him. He had the able support of William M. Evarts, Carl Schurz, Austin Blair, and that 'Prince of Politicians', Thurlow Weed, as campaign manager.⁴⁰

There were, however, many objectionable features to Seward's candidacy. It was felt by many Republican leaders that he could not carry the doubtful states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, and Illinois. Pennsylvania and one of the others would have to be carried to insure a Republican victory. His Irrepressible Conflict speech had placed him in a position of disfavor to the more

³⁸Ibid., p. 27.

³⁹Halstead, Caucuses of 1860, p. 134.

⁴⁰Rhodes, op. cit., p. 460.

conservative element in the party. He was especially objectionable in Pennsylvania due to his outspoken opposition to the Know-Nothing Party, which had been strong in the state. Still others were averse to him because of his political associations.⁴¹

Abraham Lincoln had a claim upon the new party, for he shared with Seward the credit for contriving the formulae which had given it continued life. His House Divided Speech of June 16, 1858, had fit the Northern theory of Territorial slavery like a glove, and given the new Republican Party a new lease on life.⁴² His sensationally successful Cooper Union speech and his subsequent appearance in New England had increased his chances in the East.

Republican opinion at the "Wigwam" soon acknowledged that the chance of Senator Chase was resigned to fate. Cameron and Bates gathered no respectable strength outside of their respective states.⁴³ The Anti-Seward chiefs saw clearly that they must unite on a single candidate. Judge David Davis, of Illinois, whom Lincoln had put in charge of his convention interests, sensed the opportunity to concentrate the opposition about Illinois' favorite son, and therefore, with Horace Greeley initiated secret negotiations. Greeley, on the night of May 17, sent the following dispatch to his New York Tribune:

⁴¹Halstead, op. cit., pp. 132-137.

⁴²Nicolay and Hay, ed., Abraham Lincoln Complete Works, Vol. I, p. 240.

⁴³Greeley, The American Conflict, p. 320.

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.⁴⁴

On Friday morning, May 18, the Chair announced that the naming of candidates was in order. William Evarts, of New York, named W. H. Seward; N. B. Judd, of Illinois, named Abraham Lincoln; Paul Dudley, of New Jersey, nominated William Dayton; Governor A. H. Reeder, of Pennsylvania proposed the name of Simon Cameron; D. K. Carter, of Ohio, named Salmon P. Chase, and, Francis P. Blaire, of Maryland, nominated Edward Bates, from Missouri.⁴⁵ At the conclusion of this procedure, voting was begun. The whole number of votes to be cast was 465, with 233 necessary for a choice. These were the results of the first ballot:

Seward	173½	McClellan	12
Lincoln	102	Collamer	10
Cameron	50½	Wade	3
Chase	49	Read	1
Bates	48	Fremont	1
Dayton	14	Sumner	1

On the second ballot, Seward gained only 11 votes, having a total of 184½. Lincoln nearly matched him with 181 to his credit. With intense excitement the third ballot was taken, each vote being awaited with breathless expectancy. As the balloting progressed, the delegates became more silent. When the final results of the third ballot was announced, Seward had lost 4½ votes, and Lincoln had been given the total of 231½ with only 2½ more votes necessary

⁴⁴Ralph Ray Fahrney, Horace Greeley and the Tribune, p. 35.

⁴⁵Halstead, op. cit., p. 134.

for nomination. Several of the states suddenly announced a change of vote. Ohio, Maine, Missouri, Iowa, Connecticut, Kentucky and Minnesota gave Lincoln enough votes to raise his total to 354. Then William M. Evarts, of New York, rose and made a motion seconded by Mr. Andrew, of Massachusetts, that the vote be considered unanimous. He also expressed the melancholy regret that Mr. Seward had not received the nomination.⁴⁶

Hanibal Hamlin, former Democrat of Maine, was chosen as Vice-Presidential candidate on the second ballot with a total of 367 votes to 99 for all the others.⁴⁷

Joshua R. Giddings, of Ohio, moved as follows:

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with those men who had been driven, some from their native states and others from the states of their adoption, and now are in exile from their homes on account of their opinions; and we hold the Democratic party responsible for the gross violations of that clause of the Constitution which declares that citizens of each state shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens of the several states.⁴⁸

After a concluding speech by the President, Mr. Ashmun, the Convention adjourned, with nine hearty cheers for the ticket.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 150.

⁴⁷Greeley, The American Conflict, p. 321.

⁴⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER III
THE CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION

There was no lapse of time from the nomination of candidates until the beginning of the campaign. The four candidates were officially notified of their nomination immediately after the various conventions had adjourned. Lincoln was notified by a committee headed by George Ashmun, presiding officer of Republican Convention, the day following the adjournment of the Convention;¹ Douglas was given authentic evidence of his nomination upon adjournment of the Baltimore convention; Bell and Breckenridge were notified equally as soon after being nominated as were Lincoln and Douglas.²

Lincoln and Douglas both declared that they did not seek to be presidential nominees, but as their followers had nominated them they each thought it their duty to accept the honor bestowed upon them.

The Campaign of 1860 was an unusual one. Never before or since has there been three presidential candidates running on the Democratic ticket; nor had there been in the history of the nation a political movement in which the purely moral motive was so strong -- indeed so dominant and decisive.³

¹Don Carlos Seitz, Lincoln the Politician, p. 182.

²Milton, Eve of Conflict, p. 480.

³Carl Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, Vol. II, pp. 192-193.

The Wigwam was turned into a place of jollification and speech-making following the conclusion of the labors of the delegates of the Convention. Among the principal speakers were, Joshua Giddings of Ohio, a noted abolitionist; Andrew G. Curtin of Pennsylvania; L. B. Wyman of Boston; and O. H. Browning and Carl Schurz, two of Lincoln's personal friends. There were bonfires, processions, fireworks, torchlights and merrymaking throughout Chicago. The name of Lincoln was on every lip.⁴

A brief summary of the lives of the four presidential candidates in the 1860 Campaign is appropriate at this time.

Douglas was incontestably the greatest figure on the contemporary political stage, the true giant of the times; more attention was given to him by the Campaign speakers and newspapers than to any of the other candidates. He was forty-seven years of age, in the prime of his physical manhood, and of uncommon native power of intellect. He represented the vigor of will and the pushing restlessness of the typical American of the time. Short of stature, with a broad chest, massive head and a face lined with care and thought together with a severe expression, and a voice loud and clear, he was a campaign speaker second to none. His wit was shrewd, his tongue ready to cut to the bone or to caress as a mother to her babe as the situation demanded, while his good nature extended even to recklessness.

⁴Seitz, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

Although of no general culture, he could master a subject quickly; he was always able to command his knowledge and remarkable clearness of statement characterized his every word. Personal magnetism radiated from him to every person in his audiences, but his tastes were common and his mannerisms were vulgar, and both in Washington and his home state his companions were the habitués of the barroom. He did not for one minute consider the moral element in politics and made no appeals to it. He was trusted by few men, and few if any shed tears over his defeats. He was known as a trickster, and none knew in advance what his next move would be or where or when. His lack of sense and value of morals contributed largely to his supreme defeat.⁵

John Bell, the candidate of the Constitutional Union Wing of the Democratic Party, was sixty-three years of age and a native of Tennessee. For fourteen years, 1827-1844, he had been a member of Congress. He strongly opposed the South Carolina Nullification Acts. He had favored the United States Bank, but deserted the Democratic party and became Speaker of the House in 1834. In 1841, he was made Secretary of War in President Harrison's Cabinet, but resigned with his colleagues when Harrison's successor came into office. He was then elected to the United States Senate. Bell

⁵Fite, The Presidential Campaign of 1860, pp. 205-206.

was a politician of unblemished character, and a gentleman of the highest type.⁶

John C. Breckenridge, the youngest candidate, was thirty-nine years of age when nominated for the Presidency. Born near Lexington, Kentucky, January 21, 1821 of a distinguished old southern family he was given every advantage. He received his education from Centre College, Kentucky. President Pierce was so impressed by the attractive manners and distinguished personality of Breckenridge that he offered him the position of Minister to Spain. This honor was declined by Breckenridge who was more interested in the internal affairs of the nation. Throughout the controversies which rocked the nation from 1837 to 1861 Breckenridge presided over the Senate with conspicuous fairness and impartiality. His honest and sincere bearings plus his poised judgment and conciliatory temperment made him respected by all his colleagues.

The least nationally known candidate of the four was Lincoln. He was fifty-one years of age at the time of his nomination. His name was mentioned in the newspapers once where that of Douglas was mentioned hundreds of times.⁷ Lincoln was little known outside of his home state, Illinois

⁶Albert Shaw, Abraham Lincoln, pp. 31-32.

⁷Fite, op. cit., p. 209.

until the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates took place. Even then he was not a prominent man from a national standpoint. His many friends in Illinois knew his ability as a lawyer and speaker; knew him as being honest, fearless and a man competent to fill public positions with credit to himself and his friends.⁸ Lincoln was a self-made man, a son of frontier parents, self-educated; a pioneer who in his youth had labored in field as well as forest, he appealed to the voters of the backwoods and thinly populated areas. He disliked slavery and frankly said so; but he was not an abolitionist and saw no manner in which the slavery evils could be uprooted. On the contrary he favored enforcing the fugitive slave law and was not prepared to urge the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. His declaration of a house divided against itself could not stand had been counter balanced by an assertion that the country would soon become all free or all slave -- a creed which any southern planter or slave holder could heartily endorse.⁹

The platforms of the various candidates differed on many points. The Douglas platform contained eight points or planks, of which the more important ones were squatter sovereignty; acquiring of Cuba; enforcement of federal laws in regard to slavery; and, the construction of a railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific

⁸Ida M. Tarbell, The Life of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. I, pp. 335-337.

⁹Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, Vol. II, pp. 32-33.

Coast. The platform on which Bell ran was merely one which implored the voters to obey the Constitution of the United States and to do all things necessary to preserve the Union. The Republican platform contained seventeen divisions, ranging from the condemning of Buchanans administration to a plea to preserve the Union. The tariff plank was inserted to appease the coal and iron states; declared for admission of a free Kansas; denounced the Dred Scott decision; allowed states to control their domestic institutions; and favored a homestead bill for those who were homeless. The Breckenridge faction of Democrats advocated that the citizens of any state might take slaves to any territory or state with perfect freedom. The platform in general coincided with the majority report made in the Charleston Convention.¹⁰

Douglas opened the Campaign with great spirit and vigor; he spoke in nearly every free state and most of the slave states in the course of the summer and autumn.¹¹ The activities of Douglas were lessened through the inability of his campaign chairman, August Belmont of New York, to raise sufficient funds to continue with newspaper articles and employ able speakers to aid in making a national wide canvass. The important merchants in the North were afraid to contribute toward the success of Douglas for fear the merchants of the South might turn their business elsewhere.

¹⁰Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, pp. 310-322.

¹¹Ibid., p. 323.

The lack of money was equally as great in the Northwestern states, as H. H. Sibley, Douglas' leader in that section, reported the people were too poor to make contributions, the federal patronage was not in harmony and the Douglas forces were expecting outside money to finance the campaign.

The Breckenridge campaign had its unofficial headquarters in Washington, in the White House. The Administration party machinery went into action with great processions of meetings; issuing resolutions and pronouncements by party leaders. Great pride was taken in the fact that Caleb Cushing had been presiding when Breckenridge was nominated, and that 231 regularly elected delegates from nineteen states had participated in his choice as a presidential candidate.¹² The forces at work in the behalf of Breckenridge, not satisfied with their strength in the South, insisted on organizing in and dividing the Democratic strength of the Free states also. In several of these states — Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, California and Oregon, the leaders of the Democratic party in former elections were mainly found to be in the camp of Breckenridge; while enough followers of the Southern platform were found to organize a party and nominate a state ticket, rendering the choice of the Douglas electors in these states hardly possible.¹³

¹²Milton, op. cit., p. 485.

¹³Gresley, Ibid., p. 223-224.

The Bell faction composed mainly of young patricians put out countless flags and ran up and down streets carrying small tinkling bells to attract the attention of voters. Able and conservative speakers composed mainly of admirers of Webster and Clay, who had sternly opposed nullification on grounds of principle. Among these Bell followers were such men as William Gaston of North Carolina, Sergeant S. Prentiss of Mississippi, Bates of Missouri, George Summers of Virginia, John J. Crittendon of Kentucky, and James L. Pettigru of South Carolina. These men were exponents of the principle of an individual Union, and had supported Bell in the nominating convention on the platform which had proclaimed fidelity to the Union, the Constitution of the United States and the rigid abeyance and enforcement of the national laws. This party or group meant to support the Constitution and Union at all hazards and under all circumstances, and to insist that the laws should be enforced throughout every state and territory. The party was a distinct and well organized one, which had a definite existence and an organization in every Slave State except South Carolina. It had polled a strong vote in 1840, 1848 and 1856 in the South and its followers owned most of the land in the Slave area, and more than its share of intelligence and respect of the planters.¹⁴

Soon after the party organization was perfected, to carry on the

¹⁴Greeley, Ibid., pp. 325-326.

campaign, in May some of the leaders drafted a scheme to withdraw the names of Bell and Everett and let the entire party support Douglas, as they thought Douglas to be the only man who could save the Union. The scheme proved fruitless chiefly because the rank and file of the Constitutional Union party, old line Whigs and native Americans, had definite contrary ideas to the Democrats in general and to Douglas in particular. Throughout the country there was a cordial feeling between the young Bell and Douglas followers. Both groups felt that Buchanan was insincere in his protestations of love and devotion for the Union; the old scoundrel would rather destroy the Union than to see either Bell or Douglas in the White House as chief executive, was talked by some of the Unionists. The talk of a coalition composed of Buchanan, Davis, and Breckenridge to control all the Slave States and the Pacific States of Oregon and California tended to stimulate a cooperation between the Bell and Douglas factions.¹⁵ The first test of this cooperation came in the August state election in Kentucky, North Carolina and Missouri. The results were satisfactory to both Douglas and Bell and their supporters, as the Breckenridge party was completely overwhelmed. Belmont was jubilant, declaring that with such a start even if they could only carry New York, either Bell or Douglas would be elected.¹⁶

¹⁵Milton, op. cit., pp. 484-485.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 485.

The Republicans found the campaign in full sway, with Bell, Douglas and Breckenridge supporters very noisy and equally as active when Lincoln wrote his letter of acceptance of the Presidential nomination. Lincoln's position on the slavery question was that slavery could only exist by virtue of municipal law; and there was no such law in the territories and no power to enact one. He went further to the point that Congress could not establish or legalize slavery anywhere, but was obligated to prohibit or exclude the evil from every Federal territory.¹⁷

The Republican campaign was managed and carried on without the aid of Lincoln, as he remained at home and spent most every day on his front porch discussing current problems with his personal and political friends. There was an abundance of campaign literature spread throughout the nation. John L. Scripps wrote an authorized biography of Lincoln and many others tried their pens on the same subject. A weekly newspaper, "The Rail-Splitter" was begun in Cincinnati, to boom the cause. There were countless cartoons issued to depict every favorable situation in Lincoln's life to interest the voter in casting his ballot for the Republican ticket.¹⁸

With the three candidates running on split tickets the outlook for a Republican victory was very bright, the lack of a common enemy, who took the same form and advocated the same principles,

¹⁷Seitz, Lincoln the Politician, p. 185.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 482-483.

deprived the campaign of the life and excitement that prevails when a definite line is drawn sharply between two political parties on one decided issue. In the New England States, except Connecticut, and the Northwest, the contest was between Lincoln and Douglas. The names of Bell and Breckenridge were seldom mentioned and as Douglas had no chance whatever of being elected the contest could not be called a warm one.¹⁹

The Republicans used considerably more political machinery in this campaign than they did in 1856. Office seekers had been present in large numbers at the Convention in Chicago, but as the prospect of success increased their number grew and they were on hand at every meeting and were to be found around local and state headquarters ready to do any work needed by the party organization. The Wide-Awakes in their shiny caps and capes, and bearing torches formed processions and parades at every Republican meeting. The early occupation of Lincoln was glorified, and men bearing fence-rails were seen in every political demonstration. In Boston, a significant feature of a parade was a rail-splitters procession composed of men averaging more than six feet in height. In Portland a company of negroes known as the Sumner Blues marched in parade through the area, as it was not overlooked that the results of the election might affect the lives of a great number of negroes. Lincoln meetings large and small, were addressed by men of ability and character such

¹⁹Ibid.

as Fessenden, Hale, Wilson, Seward, Chase, Trumbull, Adams, Corwin, Sherman, Stevens, Smith and Schurz. These were features of the summer and autumn; in every hamlet, village, town, and city in the North and Northwest. The Lincoln-Douglas debates were published and distributed by the thousands to the voters who read them with interest and effect. The religious element did not enter this campaign with such vigor as that four years previous; but in some of the New England towns the ministers delivered sermons favoring the success of the Republican party. Henry Ward Beecher delivered a political speech from his pulpit on Sunday preceeding the election. The young men and first time voters studied the slavery question and took a vital interest in the campaign. Seward said that the Republican party was one of young men. Each year would find more of them aligned with the party. Northern school teachers under the inspiration of the moral issue at stake impressed upon their students that a great question fought with weal and woe was to be decided upon. The writers of literature of the day were on the side of Lincoln. Among them were the names of Holmes, Whittier, Bryant, Curtis and Lowell.²⁰

The Congress did its part in creating new issues for the campaign. The lower house, with its Republican majority, passed a bill to admit Kansas as a free state, repealed the New Mexico Slave

²⁰Rhodes, History of the United States, Vol. I, pp. 483-487.

Code, passed the Homestead bill, and attempted to pass a bill to increase the tariff. These acts were motivated by the Senate with the consent and direction of the President, but they did not pass both houses of Congress. The chief political campaign ammunition furnished by Congress, however, was that of the House Committee report of the investigation into the patronage activities of President Buchanan and his cabinet. The committee led by John Cavode, a Pennsylvania ex-Democrat, caused Buchanan to suffer all forms of humiliation. The evidence obtained showed how executive patronage and contracts, especially for governmental printing, had been used to influence newspapers, Senate and House votes, and political elections. Particularly had this been the case in the struggle of the Leocompton election. One of those on the inside, Cornelius Wendell, former owner of a newspaper, "The Washington Union," and also a Buchanan contributor had been dismissed and was ready to tell all he knew about the alleged frauds. He claimed that from 1854 to 1860 there had been \$3,500,000 of public printing done at a profit of at least \$1,750,000, most of which had gone to Buchanan's newspapers and election expenses. Matters relating to Navy Yard contracts were equally as scandalous. The lengths to which Buchanan had gone through the power of the government to oppose Douglas in the campaign were thoroughly exposed. No resolutions of impeachment of the President resulted, but a hundred thousand copies of the Covode report were printed and distributed so that every Anti-Buchanan voter had access to one.²¹

²¹House Reports, 36 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. V, pp. 361-385.

Breckenridge was a disappointment as a presidential candidate. A lady in Kentucky called him, "all ruffles and no shirt," a Memphis newspaper said he was a fraud. He tried to avoid declaring his position, but the pressure grew so strong from the opposition that he was forced to break his silence. In a speech in Lexington, Kentucky, he only reiterated his loyalty to the Union and Constitution, but refrained from declaring his stand on the slavery or secession questions.²²

Douglas never missed an opportunity to aid Bell if he could not swing votes for himself. His desire to beat Breckenridge was as great as that of defeating Lincoln. On August 17, 1860, Lincoln wrote the following letter to Thurlow Weed:

My dear Sir:

Yours of the 13th was received this morning. Douglas is managing the Bell element with great adroitness. He has his men in Kentucky to vote for the Bell candidate, producing a result which has badly alarmed and damaged Breckenridge, and at the same time has induced Bell men to suppose that Bell will certainly be President if they can keep a few of the Northern States away from us by throwing them to Douglas. But you better than I understand all this.

I think there will be the most extraordinary effort ever made to carry New York for Douglas. You and all others who write me from your state think the effort cannot succeed and I hope you are right. Still it will require close watching and great efforts on the other side....

Yours very truly,

A. Lincoln.²³

Douglas continued to work, even more diligently, after the

²²Milton, op. cit., p. 495.

²³Nicolay and Hay, ed., Abraham Lincoln Complete Works, Vol. I, pp. 648-649.

early state elections. He spoke before large audiences, in some of which were as many as 30,000 persons, in the South, in Border States and New York. He was inspired to greater efforts, by the thought that Lincoln could not be elected.²⁴ During the latter stages of the campaign, however, Douglas worked in a frenzy. His demagoguery disappeared as the danger of secession of the South, so persistently minimized by the Republican leaders, loomed more portentously in his knowledge of the situation. When he received the results of the October elections of Pennsylvania and Indiana, from his friend John W. Forney, he knew then that Lincoln would be elected.²⁵ Douglas immediately cancelled all speaking dates in the West and hastened South in an attempt to prevent disunion. He spoke in Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia, everywhere pleading for the Union regardless of whom would be elected president. He was asked the question in Norfolk, Virginia, would the South be justified in seceding if Lincoln should be elected? He answered, "no." He was then asked, if the South should secede before Lincoln was inaugurated, if elected, should force be applied in bringing the seceded states back into the Union? His answer to this was that every means should be used to force the seceded states back into the Union. Both of his answers brought long cheers from the audience.²⁶

There was one factor ever present in the minds of the leaders of

²⁴Rhodes, op. cit., p. 487.

²⁵Wilson, Rise and Fall of Slave Power in America, Vol. II, p. 700.

²⁶Milton, op. cit., pp. 492-493.

all parties. This factor was the possibility that the election might fall into the hands of the House of Representatives through a failure of the people to elect a president. When the revolt in the Charleston Convention loomed as a possibility, the charge was made that the South was preparing to bring this result through a division in the Democratic party and the consequent creation of a strong third party; therefore, an election by the people would be prevented, in which emergency the lower house of Congress would decide the issue. This situation, it was charged, was the method in which the Union would be disrupted, for the stormy House might fail to settle a majority vote on any one of the candidates for the presidency, the Senate might fail to unite on a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, and then there would be no legal government. The Constitution made no provision for such a contingency.²⁷

In addition to these possibilities of a manipulation of a Congressional election of the President and Vice-President, another possible method of defeating Lincoln was the fusion of parties, especially in those states with large electoral votes. Jefferson Davis was authority for the statement that both Bell and Breckenridge, in order to unite the divided forces opposed to the Republicans, agreed to withdraw if only Douglas would do likewise, but the "Little Giant" repeatedly refused to give his consent to such a conspiracy.²⁸

²⁷Seitz, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

²⁸Fite, op. cit., pp. 223-224.

The lack of sincere political principle displayed by those entering into fusion agreements did not escape comment. Where were the Democratic principles? was often asked. Many were uncertain to whom the blame belonged for the original idea, Douglas, Bell, or Breckenridge. The Republicans were the only ones that stood for moral principles.²⁹

Late in the campaign there appeared the Southern Minute Men, similar to the Republican Wide Awakes, a society that extended rapidly into many states. The Constitution of the Minute Men had in its preamble the following:

We the undersigned citizens of South Carolina in view of the impending crisis necessarily incident upon the election of a Black Republican to the Presidency of the United States, and in view of our duties to our section, ourselves and our dearest interests, which must fall in the event of the triumph of Northern fanaticism, hereby form ourselves into an association, which under the name and style of Minute Men, and we do further solemnly pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor to sustain Southern Constitutional equality in the Union, or failing that, to establish our independence out of it.³⁰

Writers of the time agree that the campaign was not exceedingly exciting, which was a surprise to leaders and followers alike. Reasons for the lack of excitement were obvious. Enthusiasm for human liberty, which in 1856 convulsed the minds of the public and turned ministers of the gospel into campaign speakers, was certainly as strong as ever, but with the assurance of victory, new methods of arousing the public mind was necessary. It was undoubtedly a contest

²⁹Ibid., p. 224.

³⁰Ibid., p. 230.

of principle that offensive personalities aimed at the various candidates was not used, and this fact was conspicuous for its absence. It was not a man worshipping struggle. Probably the majority of the followers of each party or faction wanted another candidate for their standard bearer, especially was this true with the Republicans. In some campaigns, admiration for a hero had been the guiding motive, but in the 1860 campaign it was love of principle. The campaign was not waged on any of the presumed defects of the opposing candidates as leading issues. No party accused its opponents as unworthy.³¹ Horace Greeley believed that there were as many campaign speeches delivered in 1860 as had been delivered in all former presidential contests from 1789 to 1856 inclusive. Many men spoke every day for two or three months; ten thousand speeches were delivered for Lincoln in New York state alone, and fifty thousand made for him in the Union. There was a general solicitation of the merchantile or capitalist group to the fusion and Democratic cause, for the men of business and property were afraid of disunion and of the financial loss that they would suffer if the South should secede. This fear increased as the day of election grew nearer, until by November 6, all the conditions were prepared for the sudden break of a financial panic if any untoward result had been declared at the polls. The attitude of the commercial classes was a salient feature of the situation, as nothing comparable to it had existed since the

³¹Rhodes, op. cit., pp. 495-496.

National Bank issue of the thirties. The American voters had lived through more excitable, demonstrative, and enthusiastic campaigns, but none in which a larger number of men took a more sober interest, none in which the public mind had been better educated.³²

The result of the campaign, from August until November 6, never seemed to be in doubt in the minds of the Republicans, while the Democratic factions, discouraged, were expecting to be defeated. In August mid-summer elections took place in North Carolina, Arkansas, Texas, Missouri, and Kentucky, unimportant except to indicate the bitterness of the struggle in the slave states between the factions of Breckenridge and Bell. It was plainly noted as the campaign progressed the Bell group became stronger and stronger in the South and would crowd the Breckenridge faction very close in the final contest. September elections in Vermont and Maine strengthened the Republicans in their hopes, and the October contests in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana confirmed their hopes with a sweeping Republican victory. When these election reports came in, both the North and South conceded the victory to Lincoln.³³

Of the total 4,682,069 votes cast on November 6, Lincoln received 1,866,452 or practically forty percent of the total votes cast; Douglas received 1,376,957; Breckenridge, 849,781; and Bell 588,879.³⁴ Lincoln received 180 of the total electoral vote of 303,

³²Fite, op. cit., pp. 231-232.

³³Ibid., pp. 232-233.

³⁴Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress, Vol. I, p. 215.

which was the total electoral vote of every Northern state except three of the votes of New Jersey; Douglas received the three votes of New Jersey, Lincoln had four of the votes of that state, and the nine votes of Missouri; Bell received the 39 votes of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee; Breckenridge carried the votes of Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida and Texas, which gave him a total of seventy-two electoral votes.³⁵

It was a remarkable fact that in all the Southern States, except South Carolina, in which the electors were selected by the state legislature, Breckenridge received but 571,071 popular votes against 515,973 for Bell. This was a difference of less than 60,000 votes, which demonstrated the fact that Bell carried almost all of the votes of the former Whig party. The total vote of the Southern States for the three candidates opposed to Breckenridge was 705,928, which showed a majority with the Unionist sympathies of 134,877. It was quite evident that on the day of the election the majority of the voters in the South were not sympathetic with the move for secession. The border states cast a total vote for Lincoln of 26,430, of which 17,028 votes were from Missouri. Lincoln's three opponents commanded a total vote of almost a million more than he received. Yet if all the ballots cast had been given to any one of the three, the Republican Candidate would still have won a majority

³⁵Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 893-894.

in the electoral college.

While the Republicans were electing Lincoln and Hamlin as President and Vice-President it was clearly seen they would have minorities in both houses of Congress. They lacked eight members in the Senate and twenty-two in the House having control of Congress.³⁶

The day following the election, Buchanan remarked that it looked as though disunion, by the secession of the South, was inevitable. His reason told him there was great danger, but his feelings repelled the convictions he had formed. Buchanan read to his cabinet, on November 8, a message which implored all to submit to Lincoln's election, and not to discuss secession. The members from the South objected to the message, but after Jefferson Davis had suggested certain changes which the President made the message was accepted.³⁷

³⁶Rhodes, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 501.

³⁷Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, Vol. I, pp. 57-59.

CHAPTER IV
RESULTS OF THE ELECTION

South Carolina began making preparations for secession even before the election day, November 6. A conference of a select few was held in the home of United States Senator Hammond on October 25 to discuss steps South Carolina should follow in the event of Lincoln's election. Those who attended this conference were Senator Hammond, Governor Gist, former Governor Adams, former Speaker Orr, and all of the state's delegation to Congress, except one who was ill. It was at this meeting that resolutions were passed that the state would secede if Lincoln should be elected. The resolution was adopted unanimously.¹

The next step was taken by Governor Gist. He called the legislature to meet in session on November 5, to cast the electoral vote for the state. Before the legislature met, however, a caucus was held in Columbia, at which time replies to a circular letter, sent out by Governor Gist to the other Southern states asking what action South Carolina should take, were read. The answers suggested that South Carolina take the lead, and pledged the support of the Cotton states to support her. A plea to wait for cooperation was not accepted, a fact which largely influenced later developments.²

¹Chadwick, Causes of the Civil War, 1859-1861, A. B. Hart, ed., The American Nation; A History, Vol. XIX, p. 136.

²Nicolay and Hay, ed., Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works, Vol. II, pp. 307-308.

When the legislature met on November 5, 1860, Governor Gist sent his message to both Houses in which he advised:

...in view of the threatening aspect of affairs, and the strong probability of the election to the Presidency of a sectional candidate, by a party committed to the support of measures, which, if carried out, will inevitably destroy our equality in the Union, and ultimately reduce the Southern States to mere provinces of a consolidated despotism, governed by a fixed majority in Congress, hostile to our institutions and fatally bent upon our ruin, I would respectfully suggest that the Legislature remain in session and take such action as will prepare the state for any emergency that may arise.³

Following the reading of Governor Gist's message, James Chestnut, United States Senator, and Congressman William W. Boyce, both of South Carolina, made speeches praising the message and attitude of their Governor toward the probable election of Lincoln. They further declared that the time had come for a separation from the Union in case anticipated results should occur. Mr. Boyce was followed by General Martin, and Colonels Cunningham, Simpson, Richardson, and others, who contended that for the South to submit to the election of Lincoln was to consent to a lingering death.⁴

The election of Lincoln on November 6, was to the South a joyous event. Now the South could withdraw from the Union and set up a new Confederacy based, primarily, upon slavery. While the people of Charleston were congratulating each other on November 7, the United States District Court assembled. Judge Magrath told the Court that an event had occurred which was of ominous import to

³Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, pp. 307-308.

⁴Ibid., pp. 331-332.

fifteen slave states. With a few additional remarks the Judge resigned, followed by the resignations of the other federal officers.⁵ The people of Charleston were wild with excitement, Palmetto flags were unfurled, speeches were made, cannons were fired, and the city was brilliantly lighted. Governor Gist received many messages of encouragement and approval. A dispatch received from Washington gave the cheering assurance that the Southern men there had donned the Palmetto cockade and were ready to march South, and the President was in sympathy with the South.⁶

To all of this, the North assumed an attitude of tolerance and watchful waiting. It was true they had won the election, but grave problems faced the nation. Their President had been elected by a minority vote, with both Houses of Congress overwhelmingly against the North, and the Supreme Court under the domination of slave power.⁷

The action of the South Carolina legislature was that suggested by its Governor. The Senate on November 10, passed a bill calling for an election of delegates on December 6, to a state convention to be held in Columbia on December 17. This bill with a distinct motive of secession, passed the lower House on November 8, with unanimity. The convention assembled at the time and place designated, but on account

⁵Wilson, Rise and Fall of Slave Power in America, Vol. III, p. 4.

⁶Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁷Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, p. 704.

of a smallpox epidemic raging in Columbia the meeting adjourned to meet in Charleston.⁸ President-elect Lincoln's attitude to these events were conveyed to Congressman Kellogg on December 11, 1860, by a letter which read:

Entertain no proposition for a compromise in regard to the extension of slavery. The instant you do they have us under again; all our labor is lost, and sooner or later must be done over. Douglas is sure to be again trying to bring in his "popular sovereignty." Have none of it. The tug has to come, and better now than later. You know I think the fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution ought to be enforced -- to put it in its mildest form, ought not to be resisted.⁹

In the evening of the second day the Convention was addressed by commissioners from Alabama and Mississippi, Elmore and Hooker respectively. They both urged the immediate secession of South Carolina, declaring that they were sustained in doing so by the Governors and the large majority of the people of their states. On December 20, 1860, the following ordinance was reported and passed by the convention:

We the people of South Carolina in convention assembled do declare and ordain and it is hereby declared and ordained, that the ordinance adopted by us in convention on the 23rd of May, in the year of Our Lord 1788, whereby the Constitution of the United States of America was ratified, and also all acts and parts of acts of the general assembly of this State, ratifying amendments of the said Constitution, are hereby repealed, and that the Union now subsisting between South Carolina and other states under the name of the United States of America is hereby dissolved.¹⁰

Following the passage of the above ordinance a declaration of

⁸Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 1860, "Monthly Record of Current Events," Vol. XXII, p. 404.

⁹Nicolay and Hay, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 657-658.

¹⁰Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865, Vol. I, p. 7.

causes was reported and passed. It declared that:

1. the state was superior to the Union,
2. the United States was subject to the law of compact, and the failure of one of the contracting parties to perform its part of the contract, released the obligations of the other,
3. each party was to judge for itself whether or not the contract had been broken by the other, and,
4. since the contract had been broken by the free states the people of South Carolina deemed themselves rightfully entitled to secede from the Union.¹¹

The announcement of the passage of this act was heralded with long and jubilant applause, speeches were made, people shouted their approval, the President of the Convention declared the State of South Carolina to be a free and independent Commonwealth.¹²

From this time on events moved rapidly toward the formation of a new Confederacy and providing for setting up of state governmental machinery. The newly elected governor of South Carolina, Mr. Pickens, issued a proclamation on December 24, 1860, pertaining to such departments of the state as custom houses, revenue and navigation laws, reception of foreign envoys and establishment of courts. He ordered all employees to remain at their posts and declared that all property which formerly had belonged to the United States was then subject to the disposal of South Carolina.¹³ Commissioners were appointed to visit other slave states for the purpose of recommending that a Confederacy be formed adopting a constitution similar to that

¹¹Harper's Monthly, op. cit., Vol. XXII, p. 405.

¹²Greeley, The American Conflict, Vol. I, p. 347.

¹³Harper's Monthly, op. cit., Vol. XXII, p. 406.

of the United States, with certain modifications and limitations.¹⁴

During the month of January, 1861, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and Louisiana followed in the footsteps of South Carolina, declared themselves to be separated from the United States and free and independent states. Their method and procedure of secession was similar to that of South Carolina.¹⁵ The Louisiana convention had the problem of the navigation of the Mississippi River to consider, and with this in mind there was inserted in the ordinance of secession the following clause:

We the people of Louisiana, recognize the rights of free navigation of the Mississippi River and tributaries by all friendly states bordering thereon: we also recognize the right of ingress and egress of the mouth of the Mississippi by all friendly States and Powers, and hereby declare our willingness to enter into stipulations to guarantee the exercise of these rights.¹⁶

The next state to fall into the line of secession was Texas, which seceded January 29. Thus eight of the slave states had seceded before February 1, 1861.¹⁷

While the South had been in a turmoil with the problems of secession and setting up new state governments the North too, had its problems. To know the reaction of the Congress which convened on December 3, 1860, let's follow its actions. When Congress convened a large majority of both Houses was present. The members of the

¹⁴Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁵War of Rebellion Records, Series 4, Vol. I, p. 43.

¹⁶Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865, Vol. I, p. 9.

¹⁷Milton, The Eve of Conflict, pp. 517-518.

lower House from South Carolina were there, but both Senators were absent during this term of Congress.¹⁸

The President's message to Congress, on December 4, 1860, was a discussion relative to the conditions of the Union which he claimed were caused by the North. In part his message was:

....the long continued and intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery in the Southern States has at length produced its effects.... This does not proceed solely from the claim on the part of Congress or the Territorial Legislatures to exclude slavery from the Territories, or from the efforts of the different states to defeat the fugitive slave law.... The immediate peril arises not so much from these causes as from the fact that the incessant and violent agitation of the slavery question throughout the North for a quarter of a century....¹⁹

This opinion was not held by the President and members from the South alone. Horace Greeley had said:

If the Cotton States shall decide they can do better out of the Union than in it, we insist on letting them go in peace. The right to secede may be a revolutionary one, but it exists nevertheless.... Whenever a considerable section of our Union shall deliberately resolve to go out, we shall resist all coercive measures to keep it in. We hope never to live in a republic, whereof one section is pinned to the residue with bayonets.²⁰

Henry Ward Beecher in a speech in Boston on November 29, 1860, had stated that it would be an advantage to the South to secede from the Union.²¹

¹⁸Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 2 sess., Vol. XXX, p. 1.

¹⁹Richardson, comp., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Vol. V, p. 626.

²⁰Greeley, The American Conflict, p. 358.

²¹Rhodes, History of the United States, Vol. III, p. 141.

Countless meetings had been held throughout the North to devise methods to placate the South and eliminate objectionable anti-slavery laws which had so embittered slave holders.²² Speech after speech was made in Congress, some affirming, others denying the right of a state to secede.²³ Committees were appointed and compromises suggested to right the wrong occasioned by the election of Lincoln.²⁴

All the proposed measures failed to satisfy those states which had seceded or were about to secede. Instead of the conditions from a national standpoint growing better, they grew worse. The slave states had definitely withdrawn from the Union and set up a government of their own.²⁵

This new Confederacy was organized on the basis of the influences of: (1) slavery, a peculiar institution of the South; (2) the balance of power between the North and South as a safeguard of states rights; and (3) the theory of "popular sovereignty," as the final attempt to take from the people of the South what they considered their Constitutional rights.²⁶

Thus the long political struggle was over. History records an unfortunate blot upon the integrity of the President, Congress, and American Statesmen who in that fateful session of 1860-1861 utterly

²²Greeley, op. cit., pp. 359-367.

²³Congressional Globe, op. cit., p. 6.

²⁴Ibid., p. 114.

²⁵Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865, Vol. I, pp. 25-26.

²⁶Greeley, The American Conflict, pp. 414-417.

failed to produce results of which the machinery of our great Democracy is capable. It cannot be said that personal responsibility for forcing the conflict belongs to any certain body of men, but to those who, in 1854, broke down the adjustments of 1820 and of 1850.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

From 1820 to 1861 the events which tended to sectionalize the United States into a North and South were dominated in a large measure by the question of slavery. Following the election of Lincoln in 1860, and his inauguration on March 4, 1861, the eleven Southern States seceded and set up a government of their own, the Confederate States of America. This secession and subsequent events resulted in the War of Rebellion.

During the war many changes occurred in business. The North and East having been manufacturing areas prior to 1860 soon saw an opportunity to increase their profits through the demand for cotton, wool, leather and iron products. New factories sprang up throughout the North in response to this demand. The North could pay for manufactured goods, for it had a national currency system, but the South had few, if any, factories and no stabilized system of currency.

The agricultural development in the North was accelerated by the secession of the agriculture states of the South and the demands of the war, while the invading armies and loss of man power demoralized the South. The North could and did trade with Europe on a large scale, but the blockade of the South practically closed all markets to the Confederacy. While the Northern business men were waxing stronger financially, the Southern businesses were rapidly starved to death.

The question of slavery was a strong factor in causing the dissolution of the Union and was not forgotten by the North. The passage by Congress of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments eliminated the question from future national presidential contests, but did not immediately solve the problem for the South. With the freeing of millions of slaves, the agricultural South was paralyzed. In the North the Homestead Bill had increased the number of farmers, and the South could not even farm on a small scale for several years. The plantation system was destroyed, with the loss of slave labor. The three and one half million freed slaves brought a social problem to the South which was not solved for many years. The North with its anti-slavery views was not confronted with the negro in his ignorant and irresponsible state.

The breach in the Democratic party of 1860 was not healed until the party gained control of the lower House of Congress in 1874. In 1860 the Democrats had control of both the House and Senate in Congress, but waived their power when the Southern members of Congress withdrew in protest of Lincoln's election. At that time the Democrats could have controlled all legislation of Congress, preventing the war and subsequent loss of life and property in both the North and South. The split was suicidal to the party. The one dominant feature of the division of thought among the Democrats was the formation of a solid South which remains until the present time. The corruption of the carpetbaggers while in power during the reconstruction period strengthened the loyalty of the South to the Democratic party to such an extent that it was not until 1920 that an electoral vote

was cast by one of the former seceded states to a Republican candidate for President, in that year Tennessee gave her vote to Harding. The changes in principles brought about by the war were: (1) the creation of a national banking system, thereby eliminating the flow of currency issued by the individual states; (2) the definite increase in tariff schedules; (3) the construction of transcontinental railroads by the aid of federal grants; (4) the opening of public lands as provided by the Homestead Bill; (5) Supremacy of the National government; (6) states' rights theory exploded; (7) breaking down the aristocracy of the South; (8) the shifting of political power from the planter and professional group to the small farmer; and (9) the migration of the negro to the North has caused new social and economic problems.

Although the principles of third parties have had their significance in the political history of the United States, no third party has been a serious threat to the two party system resulting from the election of 1860. The Democratic and Republican parties have controlled American politics in every election since 1860.

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