Lincoln and the Republican Party In Illinois

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WITH the birth of the Republican party in Illinois Lincoln had nothing to do. It was organized in the spring and summer of 1854, and it held a State Convention in October of that year.[1] He was pressed to join it, and its platform was kept remarkably conservative to attract him. But as he said later, "I never had anything to do with that organization."[2] As late as 24 October 1855 Lincoln regarded himself as a Whig.[3]

But in February of 1856, when he attended the Editor's Convention in Decatur, Lincoln was committed to the new party. He had waited until it had divested itself of its earlier advanced anti-slavery position, and until its original "radical" leaders had been replaced by moderates. And in the party itself it was his purpose to keep it conservative; this is evident in the resolutions adopted by both Decatur and the Bloomington Conventions. It is significant that the party organized—or reorganized—at Bloomington did not call itself "Republican." It was the "Anti-Nebraska," or the "People's Party."[4]

It was inevitable that Lincoln should join the new party and assume a dominant role in it. He was a politician seeking office when his Whig party died. As a candidate for the Senate in 1855 he had sought Republican support,[5] but had run as a Whig. To run in 1858 he must become a Republican. He merited high place in the new party. He was the oustanding Whig in Illinois. He had long been the dominant figure in the central section of the State which, by reason of its high population and its heavy Whig vote, was politically decisive. The Republicans must enlist old line Whigs and Know-Nothings; without them, as Lincoln said, there were not enough votes to defeat the Nebraska Democracy, and they held the balance of power.[6] Lincoln undertook to win them.

This would have been a formidable

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[1] Non-partisan Anti-Nebraska meetings were held in Illinois as early as 18 March 1854 (*Rock River Democrat,* 21 March) and 5 April (at Freeport; *Illinois State Journal,* 5 April). Such meetings were recommended in Lincoln's section (*Tazewell Mirror, Morgan Journal, Illinois State Journal,* 27 July). On 1 August a mass meeting in Ottawa assumed the name "Republican" (Cole, *Era of the Civil War,* 128). The party was organized in Kane County 19 August (Davidson and Stuve, *Complete History of Illinois,* 641 f.). Soon after this it was formed in Will, LaSalle, Putnam, and McLean counties (Ottawa Republican, 16 September). Republican congressional district conventions were organized: First, 30 August; Second, 30 September; Third, 21 September (Cole 130f). In elections to the State legislature the "fusion" movement was successful in thirty-two counties. For the State Convention see *Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society,* 1900, 44-46; platform in Davidson and Stuve, 642f. The party stood for no extension of slavery into the territories, but there was no demand for the repeal of the fugitive slave act nor for the non-admission of more slave states. The most that was demanded was jury trial and the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus* for fugitives.

[2] Basler (Ed.), *Collected Works,* III:113.

[3] CW II:323.

[4] This was the consistent practice of the *Illinois State Journal.* See Beveridge, *Lincoln,* II:369f.

[5] In Lincoln's compilation of the names and party affiliation of legislators in 1855 he noted of the "fusion" members that "a great many have gone into the Republican organization." He solicited their support by correspondence. (CW II:286-306.)

[6] CW II:316.

task at best. The Whigs had always been a minority in Illinois. Lincoln knew that they would be hard to manage.[7] They lacked party regularity; one of them said that "whatever their conventions may resolve to do the party will do just as they please."[8] They clung to their conservative "principles." They accepted slavery as an aspect of their commitment to property interests. In Northern Illinois the Kansas-Nebraska Act made Republicans and bleeding Kansas multiplied them. But the Whigs in the south and the center did not so react; they did not abandon their conservatism, and some supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act.[9] The Whigs were strongly repelled by the nomination of Fremont.[10] They would not become Republicans so long as that party emphasized anti-slavery.

Lincoln and the other moderates had executed a notable feat of policy at the Bloomington Convention. As a bid for Whig and Know-Nothing support the platform and the candidates were conservative. Bissell, an Anti-Nebraska Democrat, was nominated for Governor. The German vote (almost unanimously Republican) was insured by the nomination of Hoffman for Lieutenant-Governor and by the adoption of a mild anti-nativist resolution. Then an old line Whig and three Know-Nothings were nominated for the remaining offices. No original Republican was placed on the ticket for any State office; by common consent the original Republicans worked in the rank and file. One of the Know-Nothings on the Republican ballot was also on the Fillmore ticket.[11]

These things were done because, as Lincoln saw, the nothern counties were safely Republican and the southern were safely Democratic. The central counties, where the Whig vote was strong, would be decisive.[12] Here Lincoln made his greatest effort. But those Whigs could not easily be led from the party of Henry Clay. This is why the **Illinois Journal** avoided reference to the Republican party, always using the title, "People's Party." And when Know-Nothing and resuscitated Whig conventions nominated Fillmore, Lincoln's task become hopeless. Hence he made his major effort against Fillmore. Denying that his party was sectional, he reiterated that a vote for Fillmore was a vote for Buchanan.[13] As to the effect of the Fillmore vote his logic was correct, but he failed to convince. Fremont's vote showed a gain over the vote for Scott in 1852, but Fillmore's 37,531 votes came from Whigs and Know-Nothings who refused to become Republicans. Although the Republicans won the State election it is evident that Lincoln failed to bring the Whigs into the Republican party. Thousands of them became Democrats.[14]

[7] Whitney, *Abraham Lincoln,* I:260f.

[8] Phillips to Bailhache and Baker, 24 July 1858, Robert Todd Lincoln Papers.

[9] Davidson and Stuve, 639. Lincoln's slowness in joining the Republican party is paralleled by his belated reaction to the Nebraska Act. His first recored protest was in a speech on 26 August 1854 (CW II:226).

[10] Lincoln to Trumbull, CW II:342f. Jesse K. Dubois, even though then a Republican candidate wrote to Trumbull that "we old line Whigs belonging to the Republican ranks are not worth a curse to carry on a campaign." (17 July, 1858; Trumbull MSS, LC.)

[11] Dubois accepted the Republican nomination for State Auditor, but cursed the party for its abolitionism (Davidson and Stuve, 652). The policy of nominating Democrats, Whigs, and Know-Nothings was frankly Stated in advance of the meeting of the Convention by the *Chicago Tribune* (*ibid,* 650).

[12] A Democratic analysis of 1858 is to the same effect. Thomas L. Harris wrote to Douglas that "we will lose nothing in the center and the south, and of course we can win nothing in the north." Harris listed Scott, Morgan, Sangamon, Macoupin, Madison, St. Clair, Randolph, Bond, Mason, Champaign, Logan, Peoria, Woodford, Marshall, Putnam, and Coles as the pivotal counties (7 July 1858, Douglas Papers, Springfield). The sectional situation did not differ in 1856.

[13] CW II:344, 346f, 353ff, 358. His denial that the party was sectional was devastatingly refuted in the Springfield *Conservative* (a Fillmore paper), 21 August 1856.

[14] "It has been supposed that the whig and know-nothing parties were wholly absorbed by the republican party. Such is only partly true . . . The whigs of Sangamon, Tazewell, Morgan, and Adams largely joined the democracy, where they are to this day." (Davidson and Stuve, 654.)

The statistics make plain the sectional distribution of party strength:

District	Region	Fremont	Buchanan	Fillmore
1	North	18,247	5,991	677
2	North	28,556	9,943	966
3	Northwest	17,927	7,554	1,921
4	Northeast	14,918	13,044	3,726
5	West	6,373	8,808	4,854
6	Central	4,740	14,077	7,834
7	East South Central	5,199	12,382	6,078
8	Southwest	4,930	10,308	5,838
9	South	880	15,312	5,280

The Fillmore vote, an index of the success of Lincoln's appeal, was negligible in the north. but increasingly decisive as the center is approached. Lincoln's home county (Sagamon) voted Fremont 1,174, Fillmore, 1,612, Buchanan 2,475.

But Lincoln's failure implies no discredit. No one could have succeeded. It is probable that he brought more Whigs and Know-Nothings into the Republican party than anyone else could have brought. And, as he viewed the result, the outlook was hopeful.[15]

There was reason for Lincoln's optimism about Illinois. The growth of the Republican party there was assured by two related factors which promised its success in but a matter of time. That growth would have come with or without Lincoln. Population increase by immigration determined the event. The old situation was changing. Early settlement of southern and central Illinois by people mostly from the South accounted for the Democratic majority in the south and the strong Whig vote in the center. Later settlement in the north of people from New England and the Middle States determined the political strength of that area.[16] So soon as the less populous north and the thinly peopled east central prairie province were densely settled the political alignment in the State must shift. In 1856 the change was occurring; by 1858 it was noticeable.

So clear are the facts that brief statistical exhibit suffices. In 1840 the population of eighteen of the oldest southern counties was 67,929. At this time eight northern counties, smaller in area, had 30,028. But in 1850 these southern counties held 92,830 people. while the northern held 93,477—a 34% increase in the south, a 211% increase in the north. In 1840 the area of the five southern Congressional Districts exceeded the four northern in population by 176,748; their excess had dropped to 86,940 in 1850—the northern area had grown by 238,512 while the central and southern had added 138,704. The Sangamon region and its environs held the largest portion of Illinois people in 1850, but the shift was already apparent.

The rapidity of growth and change was amazing. It was accelerated by railroad building. In 1850 there were only 100 miles of railroad in Illinois; in 1854 there were 3,600 miles.[17] By 1860 essentially the modern systems existed. Largely as a result the population distribution was as shown in the table on page 16.

In the increased density of settlement the proportion of immigrants from the East and North greatly outnumbered those from the South; as opposition to slavery determined party alignment the growth of the Republican party was assured.

The movement, and the related effect of railroad extension were noted when Lincoln and Douglas "debated" in Jonesboro, a small town in "Egypt." The cor-

[15] CW II:385.

[16] This subject is briefly sketched in Riddle, *Lincoln Runs for Congress,* 22-43, and is fully presented in Boggess. *The Settlement of Illinois,* 1778-1830 and in Pooley, *The Settlement* of Illinois from 1830 to 1850.

[17] Cole, 27-52.

Dist.	Region	Pop. 1850	Inc.	% inc.	Pop. 1860	Inc.	% inc.
1	North	93,477	63,449	211	163,873	70,396	75
2	North	94,508	65,415	225	266,196	171,688	182
3	Northwest	93,003	34,493	95	229,102	136,099	146
4	Northeast	101,841	44,166	115	220,764	118,923	117
5	West	93,200	34,234	71	157,069	63,869	69
6	Central	105,212	15,983	18	176,194	70,982	67
7	East South Central	83,882	16,439	53	161,119	77,237	92
8	Southwest	93,345	28,764	45	159,277	65,832	71
9	South	92,830	10,866	34	151,140	58,310	66

respondent of the New York **Evening Post** made an acute observation:[18]

> Jonesboro is a mile and a half from the railroad. The station is called "Anna," and is as large as the town itself. The Station is Republican, the town is Democratic. The land sales of the Illinois Central Railroad, by opening the country to the advent of settlers, have introduced the men of the East, who bring certain uncomfortable and antagonistic political maxims, and thus the time-honored darkness of Egypt is made to fade away before the approach of the middle state and New England ideas. Let the land sales go on and a change will take place in the political physiognomy of Southern Illinois. All things suffer a "sea of change," and already the alternative influence of the new ideas is sensibly felt in this section.

Time was on the side of the Republicans, and the railroad aided time. In 1860 the four northern districts had grown by 497,206, while the five northern had a population increase of 335,130. The excess of 162,076 in the North insured a Republican majority in 1860, but the campaign of 1858 was made while the parties were in an almost even balance in the State.

In the extraordinarily important Senatorial election campaign of 1858 two of Lincoln's (and his party's) difficulties emerged. One was rivalry for control of the party itself. The most conspicuous strain was between Norman B. Judd (Chairman of the State Central Committee and a Lincoln supporter) and John Wentworth. In order to weaken Judd's power Wentworth was touted for nomination for Senator. Lincoln handled this deftly: he timed his "House Divided" speech delivery when the State Convention met, planning it as bid for the nomination.[19] It won that result: he was declared to be the party's "first and only" choice. Wentworth was nominated and elected Mayor of Chicago.

The second difficulty was much more serious. It was a recurrence of the cleavage between the old Whigs and the abolitionists in the party. Although in 1858 there was nothing corresponding to the Fillmore ticket of 1856, the conservative Whigs in the Republican party could, and did, attempt to nominate conservatives and prevent the nomination of abolitionist candidates for Congress and for the Legislature. Some Whigs sought to displace Lovejoy by running Judge T. Lyle Dickey in the Third District. Judge David Davis and Whig lawyers of his circuit were working under cover to that end. A Quaker abolitionist apprized Lincoln of the situation.[20]

> There is a report . . . that thou and some others are conspiring to defeat . . . Lovejoy. . . . An attempt is made to excite a jealousy between the old free soilers & the old Whigs and Americans. . . . No free soiler has . . . bolted a republican nomination because the candidate was from the whig or democratic party. . . .

Two former Free Soilers, now Republicans, pointed out that

> Many prominent members of the Republican Party in their electioneering against Mr. Lovejoy's nomination are arguing . . . that it will never do

[18] New York *Evening Post*, 22 September 1858, quoted in Sparks, *Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 261.

[19] CW II:457, 461-469, 472.

[20] Abraham Smith, 5th month, 1858, 6th month 4th 1858 to Lincoln, RTLP.

to send him again on account of his abolitionism."

. . . Our party is a composite one and has diverse elements whose tastes and feelings ought to be carefully handled until time renders us a homogeneous mass. Such arguments, or rather such appeals to old prejudices that ought to be forgotten, only serve to perpetuate our original diversities and to retard very much the complete fusion which must take place before we can hope to become a power in the land.[21]

Judge Davis acknowledged that the charge was true, and argued to justify what was attempted.[22] But Lincoln quashed the opposition to Lovejoy and opposed the running of independent candidates. This incident had costly result; Judge Dickey went over to Douglas, and executed a coup which had damaging effect.

And Lincoln in his speeches took more advanced ground. That is the significance of the "House Divided" speech, and except as necessary modifications were made a more advanced position on slavery characterized his speeches from that time.

Not that he was, or became, radical. He was subtle. He made shrewd use of ambiguity. Thus the "House Divided" speech, and other speeches, pleased the free soilers and abolitionists as embodying their principles, while moderates and conservatives could understand them as commitment to no more than opposition to the extension of slavery.[23] They had exactly this effect. The Quaker who had written about the conspiracy against Lovejoy now wrote, "Thou hast taken high ground."[24] Some old Whigs followed Judge Dickey and went over to Douglas. But most Republicans remained loyal. To hold them, and to win conservatives, Lincoln modified his position where it was politic to do so.

Douglas made the most of Republican sectional diversity, showing that Lincoln and the party were abolitionist in the north, moderate in the center, and conservative in the south. At Freeport Douglas read from the record that Republicans in the north were pledged not to support candidates unless these candidates pledged themselves to work for the repeal of the fugitive slave act and to oppose the admission of more slave States to the Union. Had they secured Lincoln's pledge? he demanded.[25] If so, Lincoln had violated it.[26] If they had not secured his pledge they could not in conscience support him. Douglas put his question to Thomas Turner, a former Democrat, now a Republican, who had been Lincoln's colleague in Congress; Turner had written the resolution quoted. Lincoln in agitation grasped Turner by the arm and commanded, "Don't answer that, Turner; you have no right to answer."[27]

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[21] John H. Bryant and Stephen D. Paddock to Lincoln, 4 June 1858, RTLP.

[22] Judge Davis to Lincoln, 14 June 1858, RTLP; he put the point in corollary: "The Republican party is a confederated, not a consolidated, party." Ward Lamon also took the conservative side: "I believe the whole country is fast going to the Devil! The counties of McLean and LaSalle in their primary meetings have instructed their delegates to the Congressional Convention for Lovejoy . . . . I fear that Lovejoy's election a second term will put this Congressional District irremedially in the hands of the abolitionists." (Lamon to Lincoln, 9 June 1858, RTLP.) Although Lincoln accepted and supported Lovejoy in 1858 he was in full agreement with the conservatives in 1856. "It turned me blind when I first heard Swett was beaten, and Lovejoy nominated; but after much anxious reflection, I really believe it is best to let it stand." (CW IIL347, 458f.)

[23] See the superb discussion of this point in Randall, *Lincoln the President,* I:107, and the equally excellent discussion of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, *ibid.,* 109-128.

[24] Abraham Smith to Lincoln, 7th month, 20, 1858, RTLP. So also W. H. Hanna and J. H. Wickizer to Lincoln, 5 November 1858 and W. C. Hobbs, 27 July 1858; RTLP.

[25] CW III:63-65.

[26] If Lincoln was bound he had indeed violated his pledge, and so had Washburne. Lincoln wrote to Washburne of rumors that Washburne was pledged against admitting more slave states, indicating that he hoped that this was not true. Washburne answered that the rumors were not true. (CW III:144f, Washburne to Lincoln, 20 September 1858,

[27] CW III:65.

Douglas also emphasized the "Negro equality" implication of Lincoln's appeal to the Declaration of Independence. This was very damaging in central and southern Illinois. John M. Palmer wrote to Lincoln that "Negro equality goes hard."[28] The editor of the Chicago **Journal** wrote to Senator Trumbull that "if there is one rock more dangerous than another in the pathway of the Republican party it is this."[29] Many of Lincoln's invitations to speak urged him to repudiate the whole idea.[30] Judge Davis wrote of the critical situation in Tazewell County: "among the Kentuckians [of whom there were many in that Whig stronghold] it is circulated that **you** favor **negro equality.**" He emphasized that party speakers must disavow this, and declare against Negroes voting, holding office, sitting on juries, and the like. Significantly the Judge ended his letter saying, "For God's sake don't let Lovejoy go into Tazewell."[31] Lincoln did as advised. In the Charleston "debate" he completely disavowed belief in Negro equality, and retreated to an extremely conservative position on Negro civil rights.[32]

Yet Lincoln's inconsistency lost him nothing. He knew that his hedging in the center to get votes there would lose him no votes in the north. A discerning Republican wrote, "Our state, reaching over so many degrees of latitude, and embracing about an equal number of degrees of anti-slavery, creates some difficulty in satisfying all your friends. . . . Should expediency, logical conclusions, and your own judgment constrain you to take [a moderate position] I do not think it will cost you a single vote in the north."[33]

At least the broad cases of agreement had been reached. In a prepared speech Lincoln said that

> . . . in our opposition [to the Kansas-Nebraska Act] . . . the people in the north end of the State were for stronger measures . . . than we of the central and southern portions. . . . You at the north met in conventions and passed resolutions. We in the middle . . . and south did not . . . pass the same resolutions. . . . These meetings which the Judge has alluded to, were local, and did not spread over the whole State. We at last met together and agreed upon a common platform. You who held more extreme notions, either yielded them or . . . yielded them practically. . . . We agreed upon at platform for the party throughout the State . . . and we are now all bound **to that platform.**[34]

But the vital problem in the 1858 Senatorial campaign was the legislature. The Republicans had a majority of the voters in the State as a whole. But the issue now was party control of the legislature which would elect the Senator; there must be more Republican than Democratic votes cast for party candidates for that legislature.

In this matter the Republicans were not so strong, nor were they sagacious. Democrats were elected to the legislature in districts where Republicans were elected to Congress; some counties in these districts had Democratic majorities. In some state senatorial districts, consisting of two or more counties, one county might be Republican and another Democratic; everything depended upon the majority in the whole district. In some counties and districts the Republicans nominated weak candidates, and some who did not campaign actively.[35] In the First Congressional District a fatal mistake was made: Republicans agreed to vote for Democrats for the legislature in return for Democratic

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[28] Palmer to Lincoln, 19 July 1858, RTLP.

[29] Charles L. Wilson to Trumbull, 14 May 1858, Trumbull MSS, LC.

[30] For example, Thomas A. Marshall to Lincoln, 22 July 1858, Hiram Tremble to Lincoln, 4 August 1858, C. W. Waite to Lincoln, 4 August 1858, RTLP.

[31] David Davis to Lincoln, 3 August 1858, RTLP.

[32] CW III:145ff.

[33] L. D. Whiting to Lincoln, 23 August 1858, RTLP.

[34] CW III:71.

[35] William Frinke to Lincoln, 30 July 1858, J. W. Hosford to Lincoln, 11 October 1858, Charles Denio to Lincoln, 27 September 1858, RTLP.

votes for Washburne for Congress.[36] And still there was that old question in the central counties: would old Whigs vote for Republicans for the legislature? Lincoln analyzed the area minutely, and advised how to win it. Again he recommended, in some counties, the nomination of Know-Nothings.[37]

Lincoln toiled valiantly and more effectively than ever before. There were hopeful factors. This time it was the Democrats who were divided; there were candidates of Douglas Democrats and National Democrats on the tickets.[38] The federal patronage was taken away from Douglas, with his appointees dismissed and Buchanan men put in their places. Anti-Douglas newspapers were established and subsidized. To some extent the patronage was used to aid Republicans.[39] It was an off-year election, without the pull of loyalty to party for national control. But there were also unfavorable circumstances: Kansas no longer bled; the Lecompton Constitution had been rejected and it appeared that Kansas would be a free State. And by that same token Douglas's fight against Lecompton recommended him to many Republicans; one of Lincoln's problems was Greeley's endorsement of Douglas.[40]

One unfavorable development must be noted in detail. Douglas's fight for the rejection of the Lecompton Constitution had won the admiration of both Seward and Crittenden in the Senate. Lincoln feared that Seward's praise would affect the Illinois voters, and he took steps to ascertain Seward's attitude so as to counter it if necessary.[41] But Seward was careful not to allow his admiration of Douglas to be used against Lincoln. Crittenden, however, was drawn into the Illinois campaign. He affirmed his purpose not to intermeddle, but his influence could not be kept out. Thousands of Illinois Whigs would do as he advised. Some of them wrote to Crittenden, asking his advice. Lincoln heard of these inquiries, and wrote to Crittenden in some concern.[42] At that time Crittenden avowed his neutrality, but when Judge T. Lyle Dickey broke with Lincoln over the Lovejoy nomination, and went over to Douglas, he wrote to Crittenden and received, with permission to publish, a letter warmly endorsing Douglas and expressing the hope that he would be re-elected. Dickey held this letter for nearly three months, and published it a week before the election. Some Republican leaders believed that the Crittenden letter was so effective that it decided the election: "Thus," said John

[36] Denio to Lincoln, *ibid.*

[37] CW II:443; analysis CW II:476-481. Lincoln's dependence upon the Know-Nothings is evident: he calculated Republican strength by assuming (incorrectly) that the sum of the Fremont and the Fillmore vote in 1856 was the potential Republican vote in 1858. In a letter to Gillespie (CW II:503) he pointed out that Gillespie must get four-fifths of the Fillmore vote to win. Gillespie lost.

[38] Lincoln at first was overconfident because of this split. But the effectiveness of Douglas's campaign, and the lack of support for the National ticket canceled the apparent advantage. The Trumbull MSS contain many highly optimistic estimates (Beveridge, II:544-553). Lincoln's most hopeful statement is in CW III:443.

[39] Lincoln avoided reference to this matter: CW III:471f. But see Milton, *The Eve of Conflict,* 302ff, and especially Herndon to Trumbull, 24 June 1858: "Lincoln does not know the details of how we get along. I do, but he does not. That kind of thing does not suit his tastes."

[40] CW II:430, 443f, 456f; Herndon and Weik, *Lincoln,* II:59-65; Beveridge, II:545-550. What Lincoln particularly feared was the influence of the circulation of Greeley's New York *Tribune* (estimated at 10,000 in Illinois) upon the former Whigs.

[41] Josiah M. Lucas to Lincoln, 3 May 1858, James Watson Webb (Pokahoe, N. Y.), 9 June 1858, Chester P. Dewey (Rochester, N. Y.), 30 October 1858, R. R. Stephens (New York City), 24 June 1858, Samuel Baker, 6 September 1858, RTLP. Webb's letter states that he had visited Seward to ascertain whether Seward was intermeddling in Illinois; Seward said that while he greatly admired Douglas for opposing Buchanan he was entirely neutral in the campaign and was not advocating Douglas's re-election.

[42] CW II:483f, III:335f.

Wentworth, "was Lincoln slain in Old Kentucky."[43]

The best that Lincoln could do was to ignore the Lecompton issue, and by stressing popular sovereignty, to represent that Kansas was still open to slavery. He emphasized the Dred Scott decision, and reiterated his "conspiracy" charge ("Stephen, Roger, Franklin and James"), upon which he set great store.[44] He insisted that the Dred Scott decision, unless reversed, would be followed by others which would result in slavery being taken into the free states.

Again Lincoln failed. Douglas won the election to the Senate by a clean-cut victory in the campaign. He defeated both the Republicans and the Buchanan Democrats. But Lincoln's defeat lost for him no luster. On the contrary, he gained. In that campaign Illinois was the cynosure of the nation.[45] Lincoln built himself up, even in defeat. National leaders were observing him.[46] After the election he made speeches in Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Ohio. He published the joint speeches with Douglas and other speeches of his own. He made the fullest use of the occasion of the Cooper Union speech; his work on it was masterly and the address is by all odds his best. After its delivery he spoke extensively in New England. By letters and in person he cultivated Republican leaders of the East and North. He authorized the publication of a sketch of his life. The purpose of all this was evident: by the Spring of 1860, as he wrote to Trumbull, the taste was in his mouth, and he used his great talent for political management to control the party in Illinois so as to secure his nomination for the presidency.

By 1860 time, the railroads, immigration into Illinois, emotional tension over slavery, and the diminution of Whig and nativist party membership had their culmination. The Republican party carried the State in all offices. It was still

[43] Dickey to Crittenden, 19 July 1858, Herndon to Crittenden, I November 1858 (Crittenden MSS, LC); W. P. Boyd to Crittenden, 17 July 1858: "The Democracy of Illinois will unite to a man on Douglas. Many old Whigs, having no shepherd and in doubt where to go, will readily turn to his fold" (*ibid.*). The Crittenden letter is printed in Whitney, *Lincoln,* I:271-273. Judge Davis wrote to Lincoln (7 November 1858, RTLP) in great indignation over the action of Dicky and Crittenden. John Wentworth's Chicago *Democrat,* 9 November 1858, credited the letter with Lincoln's defeat.

It was said by many at the time, and is still believed, that the legislative apportionment caused Lincoln's defeat. It must be borne in mind, however, that an explanation must be based upon what was, not upon what it may be considered ought to have been. It might be borne in mind, too, that there never was an apportionment which was generally regarded as fair; Egypt is over-represented now, as it was then. It should be noted that Edwards County by thorough organizaion and zealous work turned a Democratic into a Republican majority (William Pickering to Gillespie, 19 December 1860; Gillespie Letters, Chicago Historical Society). It is inescapable that it was the effectiveness of Douglas's campaign that defeated the Republicans.

[44] Lincoln wrote to Joseph Medill, editor of the Chicago *Tribune,* asking him to see to it that none of the Republican papers of Illinois say anything about the conspiracy charge until he (Lincoln) first made the charge "on the stump." Although others made the charge it is difficult to comprehend how Lincoln believed it. Trumbull expressed the idea to Chief Justice Caton of the Illinois Supreme Court; Caton replied that it was nonsense; that such talk was either stupid or sheer politics. "Come and spend a month with me and I will make a rational and sober man of you again" (Caton to Trumbull, 27 January 1858, Trumbull MSS, LC).

[45] Josiah M. Lucas, a Jacksonville, Ills., friend of Lincoln's, for years a department clerk in Washington—an experienced and credible observer of national politics—wrote Lincoln that "it is no less singular, than true, that almost every political move that is made in Illinois, however trivial, is known here" (letter, 15 June 1858, RTLP).

[46] Lucas reported (3 May, 1858, RTLP) that Seward spoke highly of Lincoln. The Stephens and Dewey letters cited in Note 41 are to the same effect. Samuel Baker, in a letter copied by Lincoln (6 Septtmber 1858, RTLP), reported that Seward had made the suggestion that Bell of Tennessee be induced to speak in Illinois in Lincoln's interest. Lucas (5 June 1858, RTLP) tells of an appeal made by Richard W. Thompson of Indiana that Lincoln retire in favor of Douglas, with the compensation that Lincoln would be appointed Secretary of the Interior.

a weak minority in Egypt, and it was far from strong in the central area, but the massive population increase, especially in the north, brought it a decisive majority.

Thus Lincoln's role in the early life of the Republican party in Illinois was important, although he had nothing to do with its birth. He reoriented a party which with its original leadership could never have been more than a sectional movement within a key State. Naturally conservative himself, he made the party conservative. This was realistic and rational. His efforts with Whigs and Know-Nothings, at first unsuccessful, ultimately bore considerable fruit.[47] He was hard put to it to reconcile the heterogeneous elements—the Anti-Nebraska Democrats, the Free Soilers, the abolitionists, the Whigs and the Know-Nothings—who coalesced to form the new party, and to avoid local schisms and intra-party rivalries; he managed to do both. He used the party for his advantage, as he must do to realize his ambition for high office. He was opportunistic and successful in manipulating party leaders and candidates, and in awarding place to former Democrats, Whigs, and Know-Nothings. He was politic and wise to keep abolitionists in the background. He was effective in phrasing issues into statements of principle and in touching them with emotional fervor. Immigration and population increase favored him and his party; he utilized these factors advantageously. The repudiated ex-Congressman, the twice-defeated Senatorial candidate, the ambitious politician in search of a party found what he needed in the young Republican movement. From the moment of joining it he deftly influenced it, shaped it, managed it, and as its foremost spokesman he brought himself and it to victory.

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[47] The negligible Bell vote in 1860 (4, 913) shows that the old Whigs and Know-Nothings had joined one party or the other; probably most of the 1856 Fillmore supporters in 1856 voted for Lincoln in 1860.