"To Protect the Rights of the White Race"

Illinois Republican Racial Politics in the 1860 Campaign and the Twenty-Second General Assembly

Sally Heinzel

ON A JULY MORNING IN 1860, under overcast skies and intermittent rain, Republicans in Pekin raised a 140-foot pole to drum up enthusiasm for their party's candidates. A brass band played while families from the surrounding countryside streamed into town in carriages and on foot. On a nearby hilltop close to the Illinois River sat a wigwam, a makeshift meeting hall consisting of tiered seats under a board roof. A crowd estimated around 5,000 gathered there in the afternoon, eager to hear U.S. Senator Lyman Trumbull speak.

The senator's seat was up for election and whichever party won control of the state legislature in the fall would decide who would fill it. The present legislature, which was controlled by Democrats, had chosen Stephen Douglas over Abraham Lincoln for senator two years earlier. Unless the Republicans wrestled control from the Democrats in the general assembly, Trumbull would lose his seat. It was no coincidence that he came to Pekin, the seat of Tazewell County, to campaign. Located in the highly contested battleground of central Illinois, voters in Tazewell County were going to cast ballots for both a state senator and a state representative at the next election.

The rain abated as Trumbull addressed the crowd. He spoke briefly on economic issues but focused mainly on the Democracy's fanaticism for extending slavery westward. Trumbull contrasted this with the Republican creed, which "favors the giving of our public lands to free white men—not to negro slaves." The audience cheered.[1]

Trumbull's statement captured the guiding principle of Republican ideology and also exposed its ambiguities. Stopping the spread of slavery

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was the main issue that united different factions under the Republican banner. Many Republicans hoped that preventing slavery from expanding beyond its present borders would bring about a gradual, peaceful, and voluntary end to the institution. Lincoln believed the process would take "a hundred years at the least."[2] Yet the party was ill prepared to tackle the inevitable consequences of that belief—what to do with slaves once freed. There was little consensus as to what role blacks should (or could) play in the nation's social, civic, and political communities. Some, such as Trumbull, envisioned a racial landscape without any blacks, enslaved or free. In an 1858 speech at Chicago, the senator suggested establishing a colony in Central America to which free blacks and manumitted slaves could emigrate.[3]

Many Illinois Republicans shared Trumbull's vision of an exclusively white nation. In doing so, they distanced themselves from the party's more moderate and mainstream racial views, which, according to historian Eric Foner, "asserted that free Negroes were human beings and citizens of the United States" and "should be given an 'equal chance' to prove [themselves] capable of economic advancement." Although not always agreeing on what it meant to have an "equal chance," most Republicans agreed that equality concerned natural rights as opposed to political rights.[4]

Natural rights were considered the most fundamental of rights, such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," as outlined in the Declaration of Independence. Innate and inviolable, natural rights played a salient role in the Republican view of free labor by allowing workers to pursue their own economic advancement unimpeded. Natural rights also guaranteed that individuals would be secure in their person and property. Many Republicans believed that this category of rights cut across racial lines. Abraham Lincoln expressed this sentiment in a debate with Stephen Douglas in 1858 when he asserted, "there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence . . . in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, *he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man*."[5] This also meant blacks were entitled to equal protection under the law, which would safeguard one's natural rights. Republicans, however, drew a sharp distinction between natural rights, which were universal, and political rights. The

latter, which included suffrage, holding office, and jury duty, were exclusive to white men.[6]

If moderate Republicans believed that blacks were entitled to natural rights and citizenship status, then antebellum Illinois Republicans as a whole stood to the right of the national party's center. In denying blacks fundamental natural rights, such as due process and the ability to move about freely, Illinois Republicans occupied the conservative wing of the party as it related to black rights. This became apparent during the 1860 campaign. Vying with Democrats for recognition as the "white man's party," Illinois Republicans campaigned on the tenets of white supremacy and black exclusion.

Nor was this mere campaign rhetoric. After winning majorities in both branches of the legislature for the first time in the party's short history, Republicans upheld the principles upon which they were elected during the 1861 legislative session. In *The Era of the Civil War*, Arthur C. Cole claimed, "the republican assembly of 1861, to the disappointment of all radical antislavery leaders . . . failed to eliminate these [black] laws on account of the sectional crisis."[7] However, far from being too occupied by national affairs, Illinois Republicans in fact affirmed their commitment to legal inequality by refusing to alter or abolish any laws that denied natural and civil rights to the state's black population.

The 1860 Campaign

In the presidential election of 1860, the sectional divisions that had intensified during the preceding decade could no longer be contained. Southern Democrats refused to tolerate anything less than full support for the expansion of slavery. They bolted the party, ran their own candidate, and vowed to secede if Lincoln were elected. Stephen A. Douglas won the nomination from the northern faction of the Democratic Party. In Illinois, with the exception of some pockets mainly in southern Illinois, most Democrats supported Douglas. Although there were four presidential contenders in 1860 (including the ephemeral Constitutional Union Party), the election in Illinois amounted to a battle between its two adopted sons.

The stakes of the election were high for Illinoisans not only at the national level but also at the state level. The party that controlled the state legislature would send a senator to Washington. Additionally, it would

dictate the terms of congressional apportionment (which, based on the 1860 census, gave Illinois five additional congressional seats) as well as a new legislative apportionment act. The current legislative districting did not reflect the recent population increase in northern Illinois, which was strongly Republican, and therefore gave Democrats an advantage in maintaining control of the general assembly. Republicans still fumed over Douglas's appointment to the Senate in 1858 despite Republican legislators winning a majority of the popular vote.[8] The *Quincy Whig Republican* advised its readers that capturing the legislature in 1860 was "far more important" than winning the presidency or governorship.[9] Before Lincoln received the Republican nomination, the *Chicago Tribune* backed his candidacy as a way to increase Republican chances for the legislature: "Constables are worth more than Presidents in the long run, as a means of holding political power. The Legislature is of vastly more consequence to particular States than their delegations in Congress. We look to Mr. Lincoln to tow constables and General Assembly in power."[10]

Doing so would require gaining ground in the highly contested region of central Illinois, where Republicans failed to attract former Whigs four years earlier.[11] The sectional tensions that beset the nation were geographically reflected in Illinois; the northern counties were strongly Republican and the southern ones Democratic. Central Illinois, however, was a toss-up. Assessing the political landscape, the Republican *Bloomington Pantagraph* judged that "the real battle ground . . . is across the middle portion of the State . . . From the survey of the field, a tactician will see at a glance that the centre must be carried or the battle will be lost."[12] Contemplating a run for governor, Richard Yates wrote to a Republican Party activist that his strength lay in his ability to "neutralize the large democratic majorities in the centre, and at the same time carry the full party vote in all other parts of the State."[13]

Illinois Republicans began the 1860 campaign with a tactical advantage by finalizing their state and presidential tickets more than a month before the fractured Democrats. The Illinois Republican State Convention met in early May 1860 at Decatur, where a large wigwam was constructed for the occasion. In addition to continuing to embrace free soil for the territories, the Decatur platform favored homestead legislation, called for the admission of Kansas as a free state, and courted immigrants with anti-nativist naturalization policies. A week later the Republican National

Convention met in Chicago and nominated Lincoln for president. Similar in substance to the resolutions passed at Decatur, the national platform softened its rhetoric compared to the one four years earlier; slavery was no longer referred to as a remnant of "barbarism." Yet, the 1860 platform remained unwavering in its commitment to non-extension. Neither the national nor Illinois Republican platform mentioned race or took a position on black rights.[14]

From the spring months until the November election, Illinois residents participated in a spirited, contentious, and seemingly ubiquitous campaign. Andrew Heath, a teacher in central Illinois, informed a New Hampshire cousin, "you never saw such enthusiasm as there is here."[15] A Beardstown resident described the political climate as one of "great agitation."[16] The *Urbana Clarion*, an independent paper, lamented that "politics seem to enter into everything, and very little attention is now paid to anything unless it be mixed up in some way with the political movements of the day."[17] The *Clarion* lasted until September, when it was sold to a new proprietor who printed it under a different name as a Douglas organ.[18] Rallies, club meetings, parades, torchlight processions, and speeches held throughout the state attracted thousands of spectators. A bystander at a Republican rally in Carthage described the festive atmosphere: "At 9 o'clock the delegations could be seen approaching town from every direction, with flags and cannons innumerable, headed by brass bands and martial music; and by twelve o'clock our streets were completely jammed full of wagons and carriages of every description."[19] Many towns ceremoniously erected poles to honor a particular candidate or to hang an opponent in effigy. A Lincoln and Hamlin pole raised in Avon in Fulton County was 129 feet tall and "as graceful as the 'tall cedars of Lebanon.'"[20]

The formation of a new political organization called the Wide Awakes injected additional enthusiasm into the campaign season. Comprised mainly of young, non-affluent, white males, the Wide Awakes canvassed for Lincoln by imitating military formations, replete with ranks, uniforms, drills, and torches. This national grassroots movement was particularly popular in battleground states.[21] Local companies formed throughout Illinois. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that William H. Seward's visit in October attracted 10,000 Wide Awakes, whose procession through the city measured three miles.[22]

Illinois Democrats tried to match the Wide Awakes through similar organizations such as the Hickory Club, Douglas Invincibles, Roundabouts, and Ever-Readies, but they never matched the size and enthusiasm of their Republican counterpart.[23] This reflected larger organizational problems plaguing the Illinois Democratic Party. In early August, the *Chicago Tribune* praised the efficiency and productivity of local Republican groups throughout the state.[24] But that same week, Springfield's *Illinois State Register*, one of the leading Douglas papers in the state, implored its readers that "*the state must be organized*."[25] Democrats could not match the Republicans in terms of grassroots organization, number and quality of orators, or breadth of canvassing, but this did not deter them from launching a relentless campaign to discredit their opponents by smearing them as "Black Republicans," "Nigger Worshippers," and "amalgamationists."[26]

In stump speeches and editorials throughout the state, Democrats raised the specter of racial equality and warned that a Republican victory would be fatal to white supremacy. Conflating antislavery with racial egalitarianism, Democrats accused the Republican Party of being "as openly and squarely committed in favor of the doctrine of negro equality as it is in favor of 'freedom and free negroes.'"[27] Voting Republican, argued the *Illinois State Register*, was a vote in favor of "negroism, negro equality, abolitionism, Lovejoyism, Lincolnism and every other foulism."[28] Democratic papers needed no further proof of this than the presence of blacks at Republican rallies. In an article titled "Another Nigger in the Crowd," the *Quincy Herald* claimed that a "mulatto" marched in full uniform in a Wide Awakes procession at Colchester, demonstrating that "these republicans are beginning to reduce their theory of negro equality to practice."[29] A similar scene reportedly occurred at Rock Island, where a white and black man "join[ed] hands" while holding a U.S. flag.[30] When actual African Americans could not be found, Democrats created visual representations of them. At Griggsville, located seventy miles west of Springfield, Democrats replaced the flag on a Lincoln pole with one depicting a "big nigger."[31] Further south, in Carlinville, a Democrat procession began with a banner depicting "the head of a negro—with widely distended mouth," followed by "a black man and white woman; the little niggers, big niggers, and Douglas himself just *behind* a huge nigger-head."[32]

In addition to discrediting Republicans by associating them with black equality, Democrats promoted themselves as the defenders of white interests. Underlying this assertion was a belief that the possession of rights was a zero-sum formula. Any improvement in the lives of African Americans would be at the detriment of whites (though precisely how this would come about was never fully explained).

In an editorial entitled "The Greatest Danger to Illinois," the *Illinois State Register* articulated these views by painting a nightmarish scenario of what would become of Illinois under Republican control. The prosperity of the state, argued the *Register*, was due to the Democratic "policy to make and preserve Illinois as a state for white people." Laws that deterred blacks from coming to the state and turning Illinois into "an asylum for the worthless free negro population of the whole valley of the Mississippi" had successfully kept the black population low. Because Illinois was not "contaminated by the society of negroes," immigrants of the "hardy, industrious, free white laboring and agricultural population" poured in from other states and Europe. Illinois had a global reputation of being "the state where the white race has exclusive possession of the soil, and of its government." This white paradise was in peril if Republicans triumphed in November. They would repeal the blacks laws and "degrade the white man by abolishing the distinctions between the two races." The state would become inundated by "idle, ignorant and broken down" blacks, who would drive away white immigrants. In this dystopian scenario, "the negro and the white man are to sit down together in all the freedom and equality of brothers of a common race."[33]

This perception of Illinois Republican racial ideology existed more in Democratic rhetoric than it did in reality. Illinois Republicans understood the importance of distancing themselves from the radical wing of their party and consequently emphasized their conservative credentials during the 1860 campaign. For example, the *Belleville Advocate* declared the Republican Party to be "the great conservative party of the country" because it came into existence to battle forces that would destroy the nation's founding principles. By striving to preserve the government, the Republican Party was "not only not ultra, but essentially conservative."[34] Similarly, the *Amboy Times* stressed that the Republican Party was organized to "oppose a revolutionary party." In this case, the revolutionaries were the ones who overthrew the Missouri Compromise.[35] Early in 1860,

the *Bureau County Republican* proposed conducting a vigorous public speaking campaign in southern Illinois, where the Democracy was deeply entrenched. Conceding the region without a fight would legitimize their opponent's characterization of them as radicals. Southern Illinoisans only needed "to learn our principles" in order "to embrace them." Therefore, reasoned the *Republican*, "send down there our best men—such men as they have said we were afraid to send . . . Let them see [Owen] Lovejoy, with his horns, and his 'iron-wooden shovel,' and *let them see that we are as conservative here as the Republicans in Egypt*" [emphasis added].[36]

This was the strategy that Illinois Republicans ended up adopting for the 1860 campaign. In addition to a thorough canvass of central Illinois, Republicans marshaled their resources to extract every Republican vote they could out of the southern end of the state. Republicans from diverse political heritages—Democrats, Know-Nothings, and Whigs—mounted the hustings throughout Egypt.[37] Hoping to attenuate their nativist association, Republicans heavily courted German immigrants, many of whom had become increasingly disillusioned with the Democratic Party following the Kansas-Nebraska Act.[38] Gustavus Koerner and John Scheel delivered speeches in their native tongue to the large German populations in Madison and St. Clair counties.[39]

All this labor bore fruit. In June, the *Chicago Tribune* reported the establishment of nineteen new or realigned newspapers dedicated to the Republican cause in central and southern Illinois. These new Republican papers appeared as far south as Sparta and Shawneetown. "This is beard-ing the lion in his den," quipped the *Tribune*.[40] When the Democratic paper in Benton raised the Lincoln banner, Democratic senator John A. Logan purchased it rather than have a Republican organ in his town. According to the editors of the *Franklin County Democrat*, they were forced "to sell at a very ruinous sacrifice, or suffer the consequences of mob violence" if they did not turn the press over to "Dirty Work" Logan.[41]

One of the most interesting maneuvers used by the Republicans during the campaign was deploying Owen Lovejoy, brother of martyred abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy, to stump for the party throughout the state, including Egypt. Owen Lovejoy was a highly controversial figure in his own right. For seventeen years he had preached against slavery from his pulpit in Princeton, Illinois, and gained a reputation as one of the leading abolitionists in the state. In 1856 he was elected to Congress, where he

continued to attack slavery as a sinful institution. During the 1856 and 1858 elections, Lovejoy mainly stumped within his own district, but in 1860 the Republican State Central Committee accepted a plan for Lovejoy to go on a swing around the state. Lovejoy delivered more than 100 speeches, the majority of which were outside his own congressional district.[42] This was a seemingly baffling decision at a time when Republicans needed to reassure voters, especially those in the doubtful central counties, that they did *not* represent the radical views that Lovejoy espoused.

Using Lovejoy was a risky yet calculated move that was most likely based on the same theory proposed by the *Bureau County Republican* earlier that year: a known enemy is less potent than an imagined one. Lovejoy already had an infamous reputation in southern Illinois. Isolating him would invite Democratic charges of hypocrisy and deceit about the Republicans' true intentions regarding slavery. This would bolster Stephen A. Douglas's claim that the Republican creed in Illinois "assumes paler shades as you go South."[43] By directly confronting his detractors in hostile territory, Lovejoy could control his own message.

For the most part, Lovejoy's speeches were centered around conventional Republican talking points: the benefits of homesteading, the importance of keeping slavery out of the territories, and the erosion of constitutional liberties by the Slave Power. His notoriety attracted spectators who would otherwise never attend a Republican rally. A paper in Springfield commented on the Douglasites who were "looking on and listening with their mouths wide open" while Lovejoy explained the differences between the Republican and Democratic homestead bills.[44] In southern Illinois, Lovejoy frequently conducted a "jury trial" where he impaneled twelve audience members, had them swear an oath, and then presented a defense of the Republican Party against Democratic indictments. On one occasion, a jury that had nine Douglas supporters returned a unanimous verdict of "not guilty" for the Republican Party, indicating, as one newspaper correspondent observed, Lovejoy's ability to "make a number of converts."[45]

Lovejoy did not conceal his abolitionism but he was careful to distance it from the Republican Party. At a campaign speech in Freeport, Lovejoy told his listeners, "personally, I may, in my opinions go further than the Republicans, but I go so far with them, my way, as they go. If I want to go to Chicago and you offer me a ride half way, I go with you as

far as you go."[46] In regards to racial equality, Lovejoy also went further than many Illinois Republicans by embracing the universality of natural rights, but he defended his beliefs within a conservative framework. At the Chicago Wigwam in October, Lovejoy explained that he would not give up the Declaration of Independence: "All men are entitled to life, to liberty, and to the fruit of their own honest toil. . . . And these Democrats in appealing to men's prejudices against the colored man, which is universal, are attempting to unloose this government from its old granite moorings. . . . This is what they call my radicalism, because I go back to the root of the thing." He followed this by declaring, "I know very well that the African race as a race is not equal to ours. I know very well as a matter of fact, that in regard to the great overwhelming majority, this government may be considered in a certain sense of government for white men." [47] Lovejoy remained silent on whether he was among that overwhelming majority.

Though seemingly illogical and potentially disastrous, the Republicans' use of Lovejoy to underscore their conservatism appeared to be a success. Rather than sequestering Lovejoy, they used his reputation to their advantage and effectively pulled off a political bait-and-switch. Take, for example, John Palmer's introduction of Lovejoy at a large rally in the southwestern town of Rockbridge:

> Fellow-citizens: I suppose there is not in this vast assemblage a man, woman, or child who has not heard Owen Lovejoy, the 'raw head and bloody bones' of the Republican party, and I have no doubt, from the reports which have been circulated in reference to the gentleman, that many of you are prepared to see him wearing all the outward insignia of the Prince of Darkness. In order, then, that you may all have a fair view of the cloven feet, hoofs, horns, and tail of my formidable friend, the rail has been taken away, and I now have the pleasure of introducing him to you.[48]

Instead of raining fire and brimstone upon the audience, Lovejoy delivered standard Republican rhetoric. The *Illinois State Journal* praised a speech Lovejoy gave in Springfield as a triumphant refutation of "the charge of abolitionism and negro equality which has so often and so malignantly been hurled against him, and [he] proved himself to be at least as moderate and conservative as any man or set of men in the nation."[49] Referring to a speech he gave at Mattoon, a letter to the editors of the *Illinois State*

Journal remarked that "Lovejoy excelled even himself, many saying that if these sentiments were Republican, then they were Republican, thus rebuking the extremist views that are supposed to be entertained by that gentleman. The ball of civil revolution is in accellerated [*sic*] motion from all directions."[50] A correspondent of the *New York Times* declared Lovejoy to be the king of Illinois stump speakers and the

> principal card played by the Republicans in Southern Illinois. A general impression prevails (and rightly) that he is furiously ultra, and he is ordinarily introduced as "the ogre"—"the man who takes a couple of darkies for breakfast," &c. &c. Whereupon, a bland, portly gentleman appears, three parts benevolence and the rest fun and jollity, and the audience, after laughing with him for a couple of hours are ready to scout the notion of his being a fanatic.[51]

A telling counterpoint to the Republican Party's embrace of Lovejoy was its disavowal of "Long John" Wentworth, mayor of Chicago and editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, for advocating radical principles. Wentworth was a colorful but polarizing figure with unbridled personal ambition. He had already made a number of enemies in the Republican Party when he joined it as an anti-Nebraska Democrat in 1856. One of these was Norman Judd, chairman of the State Central Committee in 1858 and 1860. Their feud had escalated to the point where Judd filed a $100,000 libel suit against Wentworth in December of 1859 for insinuating in the *Democrat* that he was involved in the canal script fraud. For the sake of party unity, Lincoln attempted to mediate a compromise between the two. When the Republican State Convention met in Decatur that following May, it snubbed Wentworth by passing him over as a delegate to the national convention, which was being held later that month in Chicago. The Republican mayor of Chicago was an onlooker to the party's national convention while Judd worked the floor to orchestrate Lincoln's nomination.[52]

The tone of the *Democrat* became extremely radical during the summer and fall months leading up to the election. Wentworth sang the praises of John Brown, predicted that Lincoln's election would bring about universal emancipation, urged the repeal of the state's black laws, and called upon the State Committee to pay the fines of individuals who were convicted under the Fugitive Slave Act.[53] Democratic papers throughout the state gleefully reprinted Wentworth's editorials as proof of

Republicans' true radical convictions. Many Republicans were outraged by Wentworth's actions, viewing it as retaliation for being slighted and an overt attempt to malign the party. His biographer agrees, noting, "it was hard to believe that a man so renowned for his political cunning could be unaware of the damage he was causing."[54] Wentworth never showed his hand, so his intentions can only be conjectured. After the election, he continued to support black rights. In 1861 he successfully fought for the admission of a black student to a Chicago Normal program and personally handed her a diploma two years later. As a U.S. representative from 1865–1867 he supported the Civil Rights Bill and the Fourteenth Amendment. [55] Thus is it possible that his burgeoning radicalism in 1860 was sincere, which if true would still not exclude the possibility that he also used it to exact revenge.

Regardless of Wentworth's motivations, the way in which other Republicans reacted to him reveals how firmly the party adhered to a conservative narrative. Wentworth was toxic and many Republicans could not disown him fast enough. The *Greenville Advocate* called Wentworth a traitor who is "laboring to defeat its nominees, by attributing to them doctrines which they never held, and by creating the impression that the party is pledged to the abolition of slavery wherever it exists."[56] A letter to the *Chicago Tribune*, signed by "A Republican," accused Wentworth of playing the part of abolitionist "to furnish ammunition to the Dirty Work Logan's [*sic*] to fire at Republicans—holding their party in Egypt responsible for Wentworth's hypocritical ultraisms. . . . The mask will be thrown off ere long, when he will resume his place as a pro slavery leader among the Irish Democracy. Let no Republican be deceived by his present dissimulation. He is a black-hearted traitor and spy in our camp."[57] The editors of the *Tribune* complained that Wentworth's "new born" doctrines, which "have no place in the Republican creed," were used by Democrats so that "the hypocrisy of Republicans who deny them is rebuked, and in which Lincoln, Trumbull and their friends are made responsible for all the balderdash which John Wentworth is pleased to utter. 'Did I not tell you so? Nigger equality.'"[58] The *Illinois State Journal* was more circumspect but no less clear: "Mr. Wentworth speaks only for himself. Mr. Wentworth alone is responsible for what appears in his paper."[59]

Wentworth was an easy target for Illinois Republicans to censure because his views were so extreme. More problematic were those

Republicans whose racial views were more moderate. Take, for example, the views of the party leader. In a speech at Chicago in 1858, Lincoln stated, "let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man—this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position—discarding our standard that we have left us. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal."[60] Democrats proved to have a keen recollection of these words two years later. To counter accusations that Lincoln endorsed complete racial equality, the *Illinois State Journal*, Lincoln's unofficial organ, explained what Lincoln meant in that speech. He believed, the paper asserted, that the "abstract idea" of equality was true, but he "does not and never did desire the social and political equality of blacks and white." Furthermore, reassured the paper, Lincoln "believes *precisely as Henry Clay did*, that the best remedy for the evils of such pernicious intercourse and amalgamation, either under slave society or free society, is a SEPARATION OF THE RACES."[61] The *Journal* did not venture to explain how such a separation could be achieved. Importantly, Lincoln's embrace of "abstract" universal natural rights had no practical consequences for the legally sanctioned system of black oppression in Illinois.

Richard Yates, Republican candidate for governor, faced a similar but more tangible difficulty during the campaign. As a state representative in 1849, he voted against tabling a resolution that recommended the "tyrannical, iniquitous, and oppressive" black laws be "modified, amended, and altered." He also obstructed any attempts to pass a law in accordance with the Fourteenth Article of the 1848 Constitution, which would prohibit immigration of blacks to the state.[62] In 1860, Democratic editors and orators, including the nominee for governor, James Allen, revived Yates's legislative record. Allen interpreted Yates's vote against tabling the black law resolution as an endorsement of black suffrage and interracial marriage.[63] The *Prairie Pioneer* labeled Yates as the "drivling [*sic*] negro-equality convicted candidate."[64] A lawyer at a Democratic club meeting in Bloomington claimed it proved that Yates intended to "remove all legal distinction, between whites and blacks in the state, and place them on a legal equality."[65]

While Democrats naturally construed Yates's record in the most radical manner possible, Republicans downplayed its significance. The *Scott*

County News correctly pointed out that the black laws resolution that Yates voted against tabling did not specify which laws should be altered and to what extent. The *News* reasoned that the aim of the resolution was not to repeal any of the black laws but simply to "strip them of some of their unjust features," such as withholding school funds from black taxpayers and selling any blacks caught without a certificate of freedom into bondage for a year. These two examples offered by the *News* were unlikely to alarm whites because they did not undermine racial exclusion or white privilege. In any case, the paper added, "Yates simply voted against laying the resolution on the table. That is all."[66]

During the course of the campaign, Republicans did not just defend themselves against Democratic allegations of racial equality. They responded in kind by accusing Democrats of being the true fanatics for black rights and the ones gripped with "niggerism." A "Catechism on Negro Equality" was reprinted in Republican newspapers throughout Illinois, which highlighted Democratic involvement in securing black citizenship and suffrage in some eastern states.[67] In a few years' time, many of these same papers would fully embrace those causes, but in 1860 they served as political ammunition. A correspondent to the *Belleville Advocate* asserted that the "wooly headed democracy" is the true "nigger party" because it relied on the influence of slaves through the three-fifths clause to control the federal government.[68] Republicans could not resist calling out the hypocrisy of being labeled amalgamationists when it was widely recognized that slave masters had sexual relations with their slaves. J. Baker, a resident of Belleville, suggested the appellative of "Mulatto Democracy" as a fitting label for his opponents due to their desire to "Africanize" the population, whereas the name "Black Republicanism" was fitting because Republicans abhorred interracial mixing.[69]

One of the most common ways in which Republicans turned the table on Democratic accusations of racial equality was by pointing out that it was Democrats, not they, who wanted to populate the territories with blacks. Republicans mockingly suggested that the Democratic motto should be "niggers for the niggerless."[70] By denying the right of whites to refuse to work alongside slaves, Democrats, argued the *Illinois State Journal*, "maintain the only practical 'nigger equality' that is maintained in this country. . . . Republicans oppose the extension of slavery into the Territories because it compels the white laborer to work beside the negro,

and degrades labor into the occupation of a menial."[71] The *Chicago Tribune* reasoned that "there will be no 'nigger equality' where there are no 'niggers,' and as the Republican party propose[s] to save the Territories for free white men, while the Democracy leave[s] a way open for their introduction, it is difficult to see how the slang phrase here quoted applied to any other party than themselves."[72]

As the last two quotations suggest, Illinois Republican strategy was not simply to counter Democratic charges of racial equality by holding up a mirror. Rather, Republicans went on the offensive by declaring that they were the true standard-bearers of white interests. This approach was not unique to Republicans in Illinois. With the exception of the radical wing of the party, many mainstream Republicans across the nation were predominantly concerned with slavery as a threat to white freedom. Yet because of the racial conservatism of the lower Midwest, Republicans living there highlighted and deepened this aspect of their party's ideology. Early in 1857, Republican state legislators and party supporters met in Springfield to define their principles. Included among their resolutions was a declaration that "the Republican party is emphatically the white man's party, owing its first and highest fealty to him."[73]

This sentiment remained paramount three years later. In an article titled "A Short Talk About Republicanism," the *Chicago Tribune* stressed, "Republicanism seeks rather to protect the rights of the white race than to redress the wrongs inflicted upon the negro. . . . As a political organization it has nothing to do with the question of abolishing slavery, or bettering the condition of the slaves."[74] Republicans in Illinois stressed that opposition to the spread of slavery was not based on moral concern for slaves but was instead motivated by the conviction that free labor was superior to slave labor because it allowed for social mobility, economic independence, and equality of opportunity. Slavery was free labor's antithesis; it stifled innovation, precluded the development of a middle class, and stigmatized hard work. The *Tribune* pledged that the Republican Party could save whites from the "degradation which always follows from close contact with slavery."[75]

These defenses of white freedom were fundamental to the Republican vision of westward expansion and propagation of free labor. Without the safety valve of westward expansion, Republicans feared that urban areas would mushroom into teeming centers of destitution, violence, and vice.

More importantly, they believed the West was a beacon for wage laborers that would allow them to become landowners and achieve economic independence. For Republicans, this was not simply an economic philosophy; it was essential for the survival of democracy. Because slavery was incompatible with free labor, the contest over western lands meant that the survival of one worldview depended on the extinction of the other.[76] As judge Friedrich Hassaurek, a native German living in Ohio, declared when he stumped in Illinois in July, "the question to be decided by the suffrages of the people at the coming election, is not a question of negro slavery; but it is a question whether those vast and beautiful Territories, now free, shall be preserved to the free labor of white men, or whether they shall be surrendered to the blight of slavery. It is not a black, but a white question."[77] When in 1858 Lincoln famously said, "this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free," his words were not hyperbole. He and many in his party believed that the country would eventually "become all one thing, or all the other."[78] As the West went, so went the nation.

Consequently, Republicans championed public land reform through homesteading. This would allow settlers to obtain federal land for free or at low cost in exchange for improving the land and maintaining residency for a minimum length of time. Homesteading gained momentum in the mid-1840s when Horace Greeley, editor of the influential *New York Tribune*, embraced the cause as a way to alleviate poverty in the East. A few years later, the Free Soil Party's platform included a plank endorsing the "free grant to actual settlers . . . of reasonable portions of the public lands," thereby linking homesteading to the antislavery movement. Land reform found a natural and powerful ally with the Republican Party.[79] Pennsylvania Representative Galusha A. Grow, a leading proponent of homesteading, explained how it was not a form of charity but vital for the enjoyment of natural rights: "For if a man has a right on earth, he has a right to land enough to rear a habitation on. If he has a right to live, he has a right to the free use of whatever nature has provided for his sustenance—air to breathe, water to drink, and land enough to cultivate for his subsistence; for these are the necessary and indispensable means for the enjoyment of his 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'" Moreover, homesteading was a way to reign in speculation, which privileged "dollars and cents" over "bones and sinews."[80] Republicans envisioned the

western tracts being populated by yeoman farmers, artisans, and small businessmen. Pro-slavery advocates feared such an outcome. In addition to the dearth of arable land in the West, 160-acre farms would be unfavorable to the establishment of plantation slavery. Homesteading would disproportionately attract Northerners and small freeholders, which would ultimately increase the number of free states and threaten the political ascendancy of the slave states.[81]

Understanding the political and ideological importance of the West and its role in the struggle over slavery helps explain why Illinois Republicans appealed to white self-interest throughout the 1860 campaign. They assured voters that the West would be reserved not just for non-slaveholders but specifically for *white* non-slaveholders. Speaking in front of the Young Men's Republican Club in Chicago in February of 1860, Leonard Swett, anticipating a run for governor, stated that "the cardinal doctrine of Republicanism" is to keep the West "for the poor white men of this country, for your children and mine, for the white men of the North and white men of the South."[82] The *Daily Warsaw City Bulletin* asked whether the "vast and beautiful expanse of Western Territory now free, shall be peopled solely by free white men, or by a mixed population of white men and negro slaves."[83] A sign at a Republican rally in Lebanon conveyed this sentiment more succinctly: "The Territories—'For free white Men—not for Slaves.'"[84] Out on the hustings James Cunningham, campaigning for U.S. representative in the Seventh District, told his audience that "I am for giving our Young Men and Women a chance in life, and preventing anything like negro equality or amalgamation—keeping the negroes out of the way in all the territories which will soon be States."[85] The same abhorrence for living alongside African Americans that motivated Illinois voters to endorse a ban on black immigration in 1848 translated into a desire for black exclusion from the territories.

Yet, even more than the 1848 vote, excluding African Americans from the territories had less to do with anxiety about interacting with blacks than it did with affirming white Northerners' vision for the country. If the West represented the nation's future, it was one that had no place for blacks, free or enslaved. Take, for example, Owen Lovejoy's idyllic portrait of the West. Arguing in favor of a homestead bill before the U.S. House of Representatives on March 26, 1860, Lovejoy conjured up the image of a pioneer "who during the day cultivates the soil which he owns,

and returning in the evening to meet the 'wee ones' running out to meet their father, and to enter the white painted cottage to partake of the frugal evening meal with the mother and children; and who, ere seeking the repose of the night, bows in silent adoration or in out-spoken prayer, and implores Heaven's blessing on the loved circle of which he is the constituted protector and provider."[86] This imagined settler is the embodiment of the free labor ideology: independent, hard working, thrifty, sober, patriarchal, and pious. He is, in Lovejoy's words, a member of the "middle class." Lovejoy did not have to explicitly state that his settler was white for it to be understood as such. Many Northern whites viewed free blacks as inherently servile and dependent, incapable of social mobility.[87] And in case this implicit recognition was not sufficient, the Homestead Bill of 1860 (which was ultimately vetoed by President Buchanan) limited its privileges to U.S. citizens, so African Americans would most likely have been ineligible.[88]

During the debate over homestead legislation in 1860, one Republican senator declared that restricting western lands to whites would result in the "final settlement of the whole negro question."[89] Many Republicans believed that isolating slavery would ultimately asphyxiate it. But this far from settled the "negro question." For what would become of manumitted slaves in a country that excluded them physically from the territories (as well as some northern states, Illinois included) and ideologically from membership in the nation? This was not a new question. Unable to envision free blacks as productive, equal members of society, early nineteenth-century emancipation schemes were frequently premised upon racial separation. The American Colonization Society (ACS) was founded in 1816 to settle free and manumitted blacks in Africa, thus providing a path to gradually ending slavery while maintaining a homogenous racial population in America. As one white supporter of colonization remarked about free blacks, they are "separated from us by the insurmountable barrier of colour, they can never amalgamate with us, but must remain forever a distinct and inferior race, repugnant to our republican feelings, and dangerous to our republican institutions."[90] Although the ACS faltered during the later antebellum period due to financial and logistical hardships as well as attacks from both abolitionists and pro-slavery partisans, the organization sent more individuals to Liberia between 1848–1860 than during any other period.[91]

During the 1850s, some blacks increasingly embraced emigration as a means of liberating themselves from white oppression or as an opportunity to establish an independent black nation.[92] H. Ford Douglas, who escaped slavery and moved to Illinois in the early 1850s, became an impassioned emigrationist in the years leading up to the war. He held out little hope that the condition of free blacks could be ameliorated in a country where they existed "by the sufferance" of whites and were "slaves of the community . . . placed under a despotism more absolute, if possible, than that exercised by a slave driver south, over his victim."[93] The Republican Party, in Douglas's view, offered nothing to change that. At a speech on July 4, 1860, in Framingham, Massachusetts, Douglas derided Republicans for their "barren and unfruitful" pretense of freedom: "No party, it seems to me, is entitled to the sympathy of antislavery men, unless that party is willing to extend to the black man all the rights of a citizen. I care nothing about that antislavery which wants to make the territories free, while it is unwilling to extend to me, as a man, in the free states, all the rights of a man."[94] Douglas spent the following year working as a traveling agent in the Northwest, soliciting emigres for James Redpath's Haiti campaign.[95]

While emigration gained traction among blacks in Illinois in the decade before the war, it remained a divisive issue and most rejected it. The first Illinois black state convention, held in Chicago in 1853, adopted a resolution lambasting colonization as a scheme "directly calculated to increase pro-slavery prejudice, to depress our moral energies, to unsettle all our plans for improvement, and finally to perpetuate the wicked and horrible system of slavery."[96] In response to the Illinois Colonization Society's plans to seek funding from the legislature, a group of blacks met in Springfield early in 1858 to convey, in no uncertain terms, that they did not wish to be expelled from the "land of our nativity" and only desired to be "*let alone,* and simply protected in our 'inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' as are other citizens of the state."[97] A few months later, black Chicagoans met to discuss the merits of colonization. H. Ford Douglas's resolution stating that emigration was the only path to the elevation of the race was rejected by all but one participant. Instead, the group adopted a resolution avowing, "we have already planted our trees in the American soil, and by the help of God, we mean to repose under the shade thereof." Another resolution stated, "we believe nature has not prescribed any particular locality on this broad and beautiful

earth for the special benefit and peculiar privilege of any one class to the entire exclusion of all others, not purely Anglo-Saxon, consequently in this important regard, all men have a natural right to live where it may seem best to them."[98] An announcement in the *Chicago Tribune* in August 1860 about a meeting in Jacksonville to organize a colony of Illinoisans in Liberia met with a sharp rebuke the following day. In a letter to the editor, Joseph Stanley wished to

> inform those wiseacres that the colored people of the State of Illinois repudiate *in toto* any movement or scheme on the part of those who favor emigration to Liberia or elsewhere. . . . As American born citizens we are opposed to it, because it gives to our political enemies an opportunity to make capital, and encourages them in expatriating us from our land of birth. . . . In spite of our oppressors we are rising in education and respectability, and as we cleave with firmness and pertinacity to our native homes, attracting sympathy and friends, the aiders and abettors of this emigration scheme will be hated and shunned by every lover of humanity.[99]

The "political enemies" Stanley referred to included a number of Illinois Republicans. As a corollary of gradual emancipation, many Republicans strongly supported colonization, and the question of what to do with freed slaves was a politically charged issue during the 1860 election. In Illinois, a number of Republican papers and organizations endorsed plans to remove the black population from the country. In an article supporting the non-extension of slavery, the *Belleville Advocate* felt it necessary to inform its readers that "our instinctive repulsiveness to a mixture, and equality of the two races, will always refuse a liberation of negro slaves to remain in this country."[100] As a panacea for the nation's ills, the *Bloomington Pantagraph* proposed that the government institute a homestead plan for blacks in Central or South America. This would, the paper argued, promote voluntary emancipation among slaveholders, relieve the midwestern states of the "free black population, which they do not want amongst them," and be an "act of kindness" for the colonized by removing them from the "feeling of repulsion" that naturally existed between the races. The editorial urged the Republican Party to adopt colonization as a plank in their platform.[101]

Although neither the state nor national Republican platform did endorse colonization, some local Illinois clubs did. The Randolph County

Republicans' platform included a plank resolving "that the African element in our population is productive of small advantage to the negro, and of great detriment to the white race, and that we hail with gratitude the progress of the colonization scheme, by which the blacks may be placed in a separate and independent position."[102] The liberal-leaning *Aledo Weekly Record* rejected the premise that freed slaves had to be colonized overseas. Rather, it believed that this "great problem . . . of the 19th century" could be remedied by carving out an "asylum" somewhere in the supposedly boundless and unoccupied western frontier. There, African Americans would be relieved of the "wicked prejudice" that impeded their progress in the U.S. and the government could provide "encouragement and assistance as would lead to their elevation . . . even if political equality should not be granted."[103]

During the campaign of 1860, Illinois Republicans did not obfuscate their commitment to white supremacy. Their stance on race was integral to their election strategy. Beyond denying Democratic allegations of racial equality, mainstream Illinois Republicans explicitly and repeatedly advanced a racially homogenous vision of the country where blacks were obstacles to free labor and republican virtue. Their conservative racial stance was a fundamental component of mainstream Illinois Republican ideology in the 1860 election.

1860 Election Results

Cannon shots greeted the sunrise on November 6, 1860, in Springfield. A record number of Illinoisans went to the polls that day, 40 percent more than in 1856. Despite accusations by both of the major parties in Illinois that the other transported groups of voters from secure to doubtful counties in order to gain an illegal advantage, the day passed without any major disturbances. Lincoln spent much of the evening reading returns at the Illinois & Mississippi Telegraph Company office on the Capitol Square, leaving alone sometime after 1:30 a.m. once his election was assured.[104]

Republicans in Illinois had much to celebrate once the election results were finalized. Although their victories did not come with overwhelming majorities, they were victories nonetheless and left no doubt that the Republican Party was a formidable power in Illinois. With 50.7 percent of the votes, Lincoln bested Douglas by a margin of 12,000 in Illinois. He received 63 percent of the vote in the thirty-three northernmost counties,

47 percent in the central region, and 32 percent in southern Illinois.[105] By comparison, Frémont had mustered only 13 percent of the vote in southern Illinois four years earlier.[106] The partisan make-up of the congressional representatives remained unchanged (four Republicans and five Democrats), but Republican candidates received a higher percentage of the vote compared to 1858 in all but one congressional district, including the two southernmost ones. The entire executive Republican state ticket was elected and, perhaps most significantly, the party captured majorities in both houses of the state legislature for the first time in its short history.[107]

A closer look at how Republicans captured the state legislature confirmed predictions that central Illinois would play a decisive role in the election's outcome. The Democrats previously controlled the Illinois senate 14–11. The 1860 election gave Republicans a 13–12 majority. The two seats that Republicans picked up were from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth districts, which fell within and adjacent to the geographic center of the state.[108] Richard Oglesby, the Republican candidate from the Sixteenth District and future governor of the state, won by 244 votes out of 22,890 cast. The Republican candidate in the Seventeenth District won by 137 votes out of 14,647 cast. At the county level, both districts exhibited the partisan divide along the north-south axis that characterized the state as a whole. The northernmost counties of each district gave the Republican candidate a majority, the southernmost ones went Democratic, and the counties in the middle were split by close margins.[109]

The returns for state representatives are even more compelling. While thirteen of twenty-five Senate seats held over from the previous election, the entire lower chamber of the state legislature was up for election, thus providing a more precise assessment of Illinois voter preferences in 1860. The preceding Illinois house had a Democratic majority of five (40–35). In 1860, Republicans lost a seat in Edgar County but captured seven Democratic ones to give them a majority in the house (41–34). Four of those seats gained were in central and west central Illinois, one was in a district comprising Wayne and Edwards counties in the southeast, and two seats were from Madison County in the southwest.[110] The Republican candidate in the district composed of Wayne and Edwards counties won by only fifteen votes. A Democrat running as a third-party independent split the Democratic vote, thus enabling a Republican to capture a legislative seat

in the heart of Egypt. In Madison County, which had two representative seats, the two Republican candidates beat their two Democrat rivals by a total of 118 votes. The large population of German immigrants in Madison County, whom the Republicans aggressively courted during the campaign, most likely tipped the scales in favor of the Republicans. The margins of victory in the central districts were similarly narrow.[111]

Although the legislature now had a combined Republican majority of seven, the party's dominance in Illinois was tenuous. All told, fewer than 1,500 votes accounted for the margin of victory for the two senate and seven house seats that switched from Democrat in 1858 to Republican in 1860. While many of the conservative Whig and Know-Nothing voters who rebuffed the Republican Party in 1856 joined its ranks in 1860, their future loyalty was not assured.[112] That future became even more precarious with the secession of South Carolina in December. Facing an unprecedented national crisis, Illinois Republicans were poised to take control of a state about which a *Chicago Tribune* correspondent had remarked three years earlier, "there is not between South Carolina and Massachusetts—representative of the two opposing principles in our government, slavery and freedom—a more deadly hostility than between the ninth and first Congressional districts in this State."[113] Illinois Republicans' response to southern secession and their actions during the upcoming legislative session would demonstrate how committed they were to the principles upon which they came into power.

The Twenty-Second General Assembly

By the time the Illinois legislature convened in Springfield on January 7, 1861, South Carolina had already seceded. Six additional states followed over the next few weeks. In his inaugural address to the legislature, incoming governor Richard Yates expressed his desire for a non-violent resolution to the crisis but spurned any potential compromise that would concede that "slavery is a blessing—that we must love and praise it—that we may not hope for its ultimate extinction."[114] During the secession winter Republicans throughout the state remained unwavering in their pledge to preserve the Union but only on the basis of the non-extension of slavery. This was the mandate upon which they had been constitutionally elected and they remained resolute to uphold it, as the *Chicago Tribune* affirmed,

"*at whatever hazard and whatever cost*."[115] In early February, William Kellogg, Republican U.S. representative from the Peoria congressional district, proposed a compromise measure that would permit the admittance of new slave states to the Union. His fellow party members in Illinois vociferously condemned Kellogg as a turncoat and the measure as an act of surrender.[116] The only acceptable action for Republicans to take at the present time, advised the *Illinois State Journal*, was "to do nothing."[117] Any retreat from the Chicago platform would legitimize the doctrine of secession. As Lincoln understood the stakes in the winter of 1860–61, "if we surrender, it is the end of us, and of the government."[118]

The secession crisis did impinge on the business of the Illinois legislature during its opening session. In response to Virginia's call for a peace conference, to be held in Washington, D.C., in February, the legislature passed a resolution calling for the governor to appoint five commissioners to represent Illinois. The language of the resolution incited acrimony between the two parties. In their minority report, Democrats advocated the adoption of a constitutional amendment safeguarding slavery to resolve sectional strife while Republicans, in their majority report, repudiated such a measure. Moreover, Democrats failed to secure a guarantee that at least two Democrats would be appointed to the commission. Partisan rancor surfaced again later in the session when house Republicans sent a resolution to the senate pledging "the whole resources of the State of Illinois . . . to Federal authorities." Democrats pounced on it, renouncing the use of military force to coerce reunion. They also tacked on numerous resolutions of their own, including, to the chagrin of Republicans, an endorsement of Kellogg's compromise plan. The looming prospect of war prompted Yates to request that the legislature pass a militia organization bill, but no agreement could be reached on it before the end of the regular session.[119]

However, contrary to Arthur C. Cole's claim that the secession crisis impeded the Republicans from repealing the state's black laws, the vast majority of the body's labors were spent dealing with state and local matters. The legislature passed more than 500 laws during its term, the majority of which were private bills.[120] It even adjourned for three working days (out of a forty-one day session) to travel to Bloomington for the dedication of the State Normal University.

Republicans in the senate made no attempts to amend the state's black laws, although they twice stymied Democratic legislation relating to runaway slaves, inspired most likely by the highly publicized "Ottawa Rescue Case." In October 1859, a group of white abolitionists in Ottawa forcibly liberated a runaway Missouri slave from the custody of a United States deputy. The most severe sentence handed down to the participants by the district court of Chicago was a $100 fine and ten days in jail.[121] On the fourth day of the legislative session, Andrew Kuykendall, Democratic senator from far southern Johnson County, introduced a bill that imposed harsh mandatory fines and jail time on anyone convicted of obstructing the capture of runaway slaves. The penalties surpassed those dictated by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.[122] The following day, William Underwood, a Democrat representing St. Clair and Monroe counties, introduced a similar bill titled, "An Act to Preserve the Peace and Prevent Lawless and Revolutionary Conduct."[123] It called for a jail sentence of up to seven years for anyone harboring or secreting a fugitive slave. The *Chicago Tribune* assailed Kuykendall's bill as a "contemptuous disregard" of personal liberty,[124] while the *Belleville Advocate* rhetorically asked, "who introduces the nigger?"[125] Most Republicans conceded the constitutionality of fugitive slave laws but had no inclination to strengthen them with severe penalties for white offenders. Both bills died in committee.[126]

The house confronted race more directly during its proceedings. On January 11, Democrat William Green of Massac County, a far southern county bordering on Kentucky, offered a resolution relating to Illinois' black laws. He began by asserting, "it is the policy of this State to encourage its population by the white race, and to prevent its population by all or any of the darker races." He then proposed that the judiciary committee investigate whether additional legislation was needed to "increase the effectiveness" of the 1853 Black Exclusion Law. Without any discussion, Green's resolution passed the house 65 to 7.[127] Far from being too occupied with national events to overturn the state's black laws, Green's resolution demonstrates that house Republicans supported them. The roll call reveals that thirty-two out of thirty-nine Republicans voted for the resolution. The seven votes against it all came from Republican representatives of far northern counties (Kane, DeKalb, Boone, McHenry, Lake, Winnebago, Bureau, LaSalle, Livingston, Grundy, and Lee).[128] Although

the Judiciary Committee never reported back on the resolution (possibly because the chairman was one of the seven who voted against it), this vote clearly shows how committed Republicans were in 1861 to upholding the principle of racial exclusion.

Another opportunity for house Republicans to amend the state's black laws came later that month. On January 30, 1861, representative John Newport of Grundy, a native Ohioan and former Free Soil Party member, introduced a bill to "repeal certain acts therein named, regarding negroes, mulattoes and Indians."[129] The exact substance of this bill was not recorded but the only contemporary statute that mentioned "negroes, mulattoes and Indians" together was one that prohibited their giving testimony or evidence in court where a white person was a party. Therefore it is likely that Newport's bill proposed to allow non-whites to testify against whites. However, before it could be read a second time, the bill was tabled by a 52–15 vote.[130] Mirroring the voting patterns of those who opposed Green's resolution, the fifteen Republicans who voted against tabling Newport's bill all represented northern Illinois counties; Harvey Hogg of McLean County represented the southernmost support for the bill. The majority of Republicans, twenty-three out of thirty-eight, voted to table Newport's bill.[131]

The liberal *Waukegan Weekly Gazette*, printed in northeast Lake County, expressed hope at the beginning of the legislative term that the time was opportune to do away with the black laws: "we have now got both branches of the Legislature and all the State Officers, and if those infamous laws are not repealed the present winter, the Republican party of the State will in future be held responsible of their existence on the statute book. . . . *We will wait and see*." It did not have to wait long. The *Gazette*'s Springfield correspondent wrote a few weeks later, "no repeal of the black laws will be carried during this session. Our Legislature is too conservative for that."[132]

It is therefore no minor feat that just four years later Republicans in the Illinois legislature voted unanimously to repeal the state's most extreme black laws.[133] They did so less than a week after becoming the first state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. Five years later, a new state constitution removed all references to race. In a very short span of time, the legal barriers that excluded blacks from participation in civic and political life weakened. Although racial discrimination in various forms

persisted throughout Reconstruction and beyond, the war had produced a new understanding of freedom in Illinois.

The vast majority of Illinoisans who enlisted in the Union army did so to preserve the Union, not to end slavery. However, many quickly recognized how central the institution was to the cause and continuation of the war and supported emancipation as a military policy. It did not follow that soldiers who supported ending slavery also supported black rights. Yet, as Illinois troops labored, collaborated, and fought alongside former slaves, some became aware of the disjunction between their deep-seated prejudices and their lived experiences. Many developed respect for and solidarity with their black comrades in arms. Long-held ideologies were not hastily discarded, but some members of Illinois' fighting force emerged from the war with a newfound support for black citizenship.

A similar transformation occurred on the home front. By the end of the war, many Republicans in Illinois saw the need to not simply restore the nation but to remake it without the corrosive influence of slavery. This meant recognizing the natural rights and basic civil liberties of the four million blacks who would soon become members of free society. Moreover, it meant guaranteeing these rights for Illinois blacks by repealing the laws that bound the state to the "man-seller and woman-whipper."[134]

None of these changes in Illinois' legal code could be anticipated at the start of the war. On the eve of the firing on Fort Sumter, the majority of Illinois Republican legislators showed no inclination to alter the legal code that discouraged blacks from moving to the state and restricted the rights of those who had. They had stated so much during the 1860 campaign by envisioning a future free of slavery and of blacks. By positioning themselves as the conservative protectors of a white West, Illinois Republicans appealed to white supremacy and black exclusion to rise to power. While most Republicans across the North at this time were far from racial egalitarians, those in Illinois toed an especially conservative line when it came to issues of race. Once elected, they stayed true to this doctrine by sanctioning a legal code that denied blacks the right of free movement and equal protection under the law. It would take a revolutionary civil war to begin the process of demolishing the legal foundations of white supremacy as Illinoisans, black and white, contested what freedom meant in the absence of slavery.

Notes

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3. *Great Speech of Hon. Lyman Trumbull, On the Issues of the Day* (Chicago: n.p., 1858), 8.

4. Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 290–99 with the quoted material at 299.

5. Abraham Lincoln, "First Debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Ottawa, Illinois," August 21, 1858, in Basler, *Collected Works*, 3:16.

6. A discussion of these different categories of rights can be found in Herman Belz, introduction to *A New Birth of Freedom: The Republican Party and Freeman's Rights, 1861–1866* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); and Kate Masur, *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle over Equality in Washington, D.C.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 7–10.

7. Arthur C. Cole, *The Era of the Civil War, 1848–1870* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987[orig. publ. 1919]), 388.

8. Allen Guelzo, "Houses Divided: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Political Landscape of 1858," *The Journal of American History* 94 (September 2007), 415–16.

9. *Quincy Whig Republican*, July 7, 1860.

10. *Chicago Tribune*, May 14, 1860.

11. William Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852–1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 417.

12. *Bloomington Pantagraph*, May 15, 1860.

13. Richard Yates to J. T. Eccles, December 7, 1859, Joseph T. Eccles Papers, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL (hereafter ALPL).

14. *Chicago Tribune*, May 12, 1860; James McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: Volume One, The Coming of the War*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2001), 131–32.

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16. John Hearsher to David Harrower, August 26, 1860, David Harrower Papers, ALPL.

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19. *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1860.

20. *Chicago Tribune*, June 11, 1860.

21. Jon Grinspan, "'Young Men for War': The Wide Awakes and Lincoln's 1860 Presidential Campaign," *Journal of American History* 96 (September 2009), 357–61.

22. *Chicago Tribune*, October 3, 1860.

23. Harold Preston James, "Lincoln's Own State in the Election of 1860," (PhD diss., 1943, University of Illinois), 330–31.

24. *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 1860.

25. (Springfield) *Illinois State Register*, August 9, 1860.

26. *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1860; *Jonesboro Gazette*, September 1, 1860; *Quincy Whig Republican*, September 15, 1860.

27. *Quincy Herald*, September 10, 1860.

28. (Springfield) *Illinois State Register*, November 5, 1860.

29. *Quincy Herald*, October 1, 1860.

30. (Fairfield) *Prairie Pioneer,* October 26, 1860.

31. Reuben B. Hatch to Ozias M. Hatch, May 23, 1860, O. M. Hatch Papers, ALPL.

32. *Chicago Tribune*, August 7, 1860.

33. (Springfield) *Illinois State Register*, September 14, 1860.

34. *Belleville Advocate*, February 17, 1860.

35. *Amboy Times*, July 26, 1860.

36. *Bureau County Republican*, January 12, 1860.

37. James, "Lincoln's Own State in the Election of 1860," 303.

38. Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850s* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 6.

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43. *Congressional Globe*, Senate, 36th Cong., 1st sess., February 29, 1860, 920.

44. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, November 2, 1860.

45. *New York Times*, September 19, 1860.

46. Lovejoy, *His Brother's Blood*, 218.

47. Lovejoy, *His Brother's Blood*, 240.

48. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, July 24, 1860.

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50. "B.," letter to the editor, *Illinois State Journal*, August 16, 1860.

51. *New York Times*, September 19, 1860.

52. Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Chicago Giant: A Biography of "Long John" Wentworth* (Madison: American History Research Center, 1957), chapter 10, 178–80.

53. For example, see the *Chicago Daily Democrat*, June 2, July 31, October 6, 7, 9, 20, 22, 1860.

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57. "A Republican," letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, October 9, 1860.

58. *Chicago Tribune*, October 13, 1860.

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60. "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," July 10, 1858, in Basler, *Collected Works*, 2:501.

61. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, August 17, 1860.

62. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Sixteenth General Assembly of the State of Illinois, at Their Regular Session, Begun and Held at Springfield, January 1, 1849* (Springfield: Charles H. Lanphier, 1849), 510–11, 15, 480, 494–95.

63. *Scott County News*, reprinted in (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, July 28, 1860.

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65. *Illinois Statesman*, reprinted in the (Springfield) *Illinois State Register*, August 9, 1860.

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67. *Aledo Weekly Record*, October 23, 1860.

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69. *Belleville Advocate*, September 28, 1860.

70. *Bureau County Republican*, June 7, 1860.

71. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, October 1, 1860.

72. *Chicago Tribune*, September 5, 1860.

73. *Chicago Tribune*, February 21, 1857.

74. *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1860.

75. *Chicago Tribune*, February 25, 1860.

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78. "'A House Divided': Speech at Springfield, Illinois," June 16, 1858, in Basler, *Collected Works*, 2:461.

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81. Benjamin Arrington, "'Free Homes for Free Men': A Political History of the Homestead Act, 1774–1863" (PhD diss., 2012, Department of History, University of Nebraska), 154–64.

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85. *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1860.

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88. *A Political Textbook for 1860: Comprising a Brief View of Presidential Nominations and Elections*, eds. Horace Greeley and John F. Cleveland (New York: Tribune Association, 1860), 190–91.

89. Stephenson, *Public Lands*, 199.

90. Streifford, "American Colonization Society," 207.

91. Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 29; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 267–80.

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93. (Windsor, Canada West) *Provincial Freeman*, March 8, 1856.

94. (Boston) *The Liberator*, July 13, 1860.

95. Robert L. Harris, "H. Ford Douglas: Afro-American Antislavery Emigrationst," *The Journal of Negro History* 62 (July 1977), 217, 228.

96. "Proceedings of the First Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of Illinois," in *Proceedings of the Black State Conventions, 1840–1865*, vol. 2, eds. Philip S. Foner and George E. Walker (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 60.

97. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, February 18, 1858.

98. *Chicago Tribune*, August 31, 1860.

99. Joseph Stanley, letter to the editor, *Chicago Tribune*, August 31, 1860.

100. *Belleville Advocate* April 20, 1860.

101. *Bloomington Pantagraph*, April 4, 1860.

102. *Belleville Advocate*, April 13, 1860.

103. *Aledo Weekly Record*, February 21, 1860.

104. *New York Tribune*, November 10, 1860; James, "Lincoln's Own State in the Election of 1860," 460–61, 428–30; William Gienapp, "Who Voted for Lincoln?," in *Abraham Lincoln and the American Political Tradition*, ed. John L. Thomas (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 50–51; Harold Holzer, *Lincoln President-Elect: Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter, 1860–1861* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 32–45.

105. Richard Steckel, "Migration and Political Conflict: Precincts in the Midwest on the Even of the Civil War," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 28 (Spring 1998), 588.

106. Gienapp, "Who Voted for Lincoln?," 82.

107. *Illinois Elections, 1818–1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives*, eds. Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University and Press, 1992), 11–12.

108. The Sixteenth District was composed of Champaign, Christian Dewitt, Macon, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt and Shelby counties. The Seventeenth District was composed of Cass, Logan, Mason, Menard, and Tazewell counties.

109. Secretary of State, "Record of Election Returns," Record Series 103.033, Illinois State Archives. The returns from Champaign County in the Sixteenth District are missing in the official returns. These numbers were found in the (Champaign) *Central Illinois Gazette*, November 7, 1860.

110. The central Illinois districts that became Republican included half of the Twenty-Sixth (Sangamon County—the two seats were split between each party); the Thirty-Second (McDonough County); the Thirty-Fifth (Mason and Logan counties); and the Thirty-Ninth (Tazewell County).

111. Secretary of State, "Record of Election Returns," Record Series 103.033, Illinois State Archives; Cole, *Era of the Civil War*, 123–24, 190.

112. Gienapp, "Who Voted for Lincoln?," 67.

113. *Chicago Tribune*, February 14, 1857.

114. *Journal of the Senate of the Twenty-Second General Assembly of the State of Illinois, at Their Regular Session, Begun and Held at Springfield, January 7, 1861* (Springfield: Bailhache & Baker, 1861), 73.

115. *Chicago Tribune*, February 23, 1861.

116. James M. Rice, *Peoria City and County, Illinois: A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress, and Achievement*, vol. 1 (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1912), 205–207.

117. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, February 7, 1861.

118. Lincoln to James T. Hale, January 11, 1861, in Basler, *Collected Works*, 4:172.

119. *Journal of the Senate of the Twenty-Second General Assembly*, 225–30, 359–64.

120. *Laws of Illinois*, 1861.

121. *Chicago Tribune*, October 9, 1860; Darrel Dexter, *Bondage in Egypt: Slavery in Southern Illinois* (Cape Girardeau: Center for Regional History, Southeast Missouri State University, 2011), 289–95.

122. For the text of Kuykendall's bill, see the (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, January 11, 1861.

123. For the text of Underwood's bill, see the (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, January 12, 1861.

124. *Chicago Tribune*, January 11, 1861.

125. *Belleville Advocate*, January 18, 1861.

126. *Journal of the Senate of the Twenty-Second General Assembly*, 38, 42.

127. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second General Assembly of the State of Illinois, at Their Regular Session, Begun and Held at Springfield, January 7, 1861* (Springfield: Bailhache & Baker, 1861), 51–52. Three members were absent during this vote: one Democrat and two Republicans.

128. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, January 12, 1861.

129. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, February 7, 1861.

130. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Second General Assembly*, 274. Eight members were absent during this vote: five Democrats and three Republicans.

131. (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, January 31, 1861.

132. *Waukegan Weekly Gazette*, January 19, February 9, 1861.

133. The laws that were repealed in 1865 included the 1853 Black Exclusion Law, the prohibition against blacks and Native Americans testifying in court cases involving whites, and the obsolete set of laws regulating black indentured servants.

134. *Chicago Tribune*, February 6, 1865.