

# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN'S SECOND NOMINATION

The emphasis placed on the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for the Presidency in 1860 has largely overshadowed the importance of his second nomination on June 8, 1864. The Wigwam Convention at Chicago with all of its glamor and dramatic setting was much more colorful than the Baltimore gathering, but no more important in the light of historical events which followed.

On January 2, 1864, Harper's Weekly printed its leading editorial under the caption "Presidential Prospects." After reviewing the field the writer concludes "No man at this moment has so sure a hold of the national heart as the President... If the presidential election took place next week Mr. Lincoln would undoubtedly be returned by a greater majority than any President since Washington."

The publication of a pamphlet entitled *The Next Presidential Election*, which spoke disparagingly of Lincoln, brought forth this statement from the same editor:

"Nor is it likely that the people who elected him (Lincoln) when he was comparatively unknown will discard him because, in the fierce light of war which tries every quality and exposes every defect, he has steadily grown in popular love and confidence."

The call to the Baltimore convention was issued by a committee appointed in Chicago by the Republican Convention of 1860. Strange to say, however, they did not call a Republican convention but a Union convention. As one editorial writer put it, "We know no other party than the Union men; than the men, that is to say, who, before the war belonged to all the parties; Democrats, Republicans, and Bell-Everett men and who are now united in an un-influenced and intelligent support of the policy of the administration in conducting the war."

One editor very frankly stated that he did not consider Mr. Lincoln politically as a Republican "for he is not. He is simply a Union man, and the strongest opposition to him springs from those who were formerly Republicans."

On June 7 the Union Convention convened at Baltimore and nominated Abraham Lincoln, a former Republican for President, and Andrew Johnson, a former Democrat, for Vice President. As one writer puts it:

"Ancient party bonds are broken. When those who, four years ago, were uncompromising Republicans cordially fraternize with such undoubted old Democrats as Daniel S. Dickinson and Benjamin F. Butler and Thomas G. Alvord, and ardently support for the Vice Presidency a late slaveholding Southern Democrat like Andrew Johnson, it is clear that those party names have lost their significance, and that

the sole bond of Union is a common devotion to the country, and a common resolution that it shall be saved by all honorable and lawful means. It is idle to call a Convention which nominated Andrew Johnson a Republican Convention in any purely party sense; or to suppose that General Butler, for instance, will vote for Mr. Lincoln as a technical Democrat."

When Lincoln was nominated for the presidency at Chicago there were a number of telegrams rushed to him at Springfield. He did not learn of his own nomination at Baltimore, however, until after he had seen the dispatch relating to Johnston's nomination as Vice President. The following press account of the story explains his delay in receiving the communication:

"At half-past two o'clock yesterday, despatches were sent to the President by different persons announcing his re-nomination, but he was absent from his official room in the White House at the time, and did not see them. Some two hours afterward, ignorant of his own nomination, he called at the War Office, and accidentally saw a despatch there announcing the nomination of Mr. Johnson for Vice President.

"The President expressed surprise at the curious action of the Convention, as it seemed to him, as though it had got the cart before the horse; but was asked by an operator if he had not seen a despatch announcing his own re-nomination for the Presidency. On his replying that he had not he was informed that such a despatch had been sent to him. He then explained that probably his absence from his official room in the Executive Mansion was the reason of his not having seen it. Upon returning to the Executive Mansion the President found the despatches referred to, announcing his re-nomination at half-past two o'clock."

After the convention a committee waited on Lincoln in Washington and notified him of his nomination to whom he replied as follows:

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee—I will neither conceal my gratification, nor restrain the expression of my gratitude, that the Union people, through their Convention, in the continued effort to save and advance the nation, have deemed me not unworthy to remain in my present position. I know no reason to doubt that I shall accept the nomination tendered, and yet, perhaps, I should not declare definitely before reading and considering what is called the platform. I will say, however, that I approve the declaration in favor of so amending the constitution as to prohibit slavery throughout the nation. When the people in revolt, with the hundred days explicit notice that they could within those days resume their allegiance without the overthrow of their institutions, and that they could not resume it afterwards, elected to

stand out, such an amendment of the constitution as is now proposed became a fitting and necessary conclusion to the final success of the Union cause. Such alone can meet and cover all cavils. I now perceive its importance and embrace it. In the joint names of Liberty and Union let us labor to give it legal form and practical effect."

Members of the National Union League also paid the President a visit, and it was in addressing them that he used the political slogan which has since become famous. His reply to the members of the League follows:

"Gentlemen—I can only say, in response to the remarks of your chairman, I suppose that I am very grateful for the renewed confidence which has been accorded to me both by the Convention and by the National League. I am not insensible at all to the personal compliment there is in this; yet I do not allow myself to believe that any but a small portion of it is to be appropriated as a personal compliment. The Convention and the nation, I am assured, are alike animated by a higher view of the interests of the country for the present and the great future; and that part I am entitled to appropriate as a compliment is only that part which I may lay hold of as being the opinion of the Convention and of the League; that I am not unworthy to be entrusted with the place I have occupied for the last three years. I have not permitted myself, gentlemen, to conclude that I am the best man in the country; but I am reminded in this connection of a story of an old Dutch farmer, who remarked to a companion once that 'it was not best to swap horses when crossing streams.'"

Some days later Mr. Lincoln visited the Sanitary Fair at Philadelphia and in the course of the evening Mr. Edward Everett had occasion to make an address which he concluded by saying, "There are various kinds of traffic in these fairs, buying and subscribing. There is one kind of traffic that I hope will not be protected and that is 'in swapping horses when crossing a stream.'"

The Boston Journal in reporting the results of the Convention makes this statement: "Yesterday (June 8) at Baltimore, in a convention somewhat wider in its range of membership than that at Chicago, Abraham Lincoln received every vote cast on the first ballot. This is an anomalous fact in our politics. Yet it has come about naturally—indeed, none but the most ignorant or the most reckless would dare to affirm that an event of this magnitude could be worked out by any of the arts of political chicanery and intrigue. It is merely the utterance of the deliberate judgment of the people on the whole that Abraham Lincoln is the best man to be his own successor in the presidential chair till this great rebellion is over."