

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 266

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

May 14, 1934

STATES CONTRIBUTING TO LINCOLN'S NOMINATION

On May 2, 1860, Abraham Lincoln wrote to Hon. R. M. Corwin with respect to the coming Republican Convention at Chicago: "I think the Illinois delegation will be unanimous for me at the start and no other delegation will. A few individuals in other delegations would like to go for me at the start, but may be restrained by their colleagues."

This gives a good picture of how matters stood two weeks before the convention opened with but one state, Illinois, positively for Lincoln. It is the purpose of this bulletin to review the part the different states took in the proceedings of the Convention which contributed in any way to the election of Lincoln.

Illinois

On May 9, 1860, the Republican State Convention convening at Decatur, Illinois, selected Abraham Lincoln as its choice for the presidency and instructed its delegates to support their favorite-son candidate. This Convention confirmed the contents of the letter written to Corwin as far as the Illinois delegation was concerned. After Illinois had nominated Lincoln at Chicago, the entire block of twenty-two ballots was cast for him throughout the voting.

Indiana

Inasmuch as Lincoln spent one-quarter of his life in the Hoosier state he may also have been considered a favorite-son choice of Indiana. This state was the only one to join Illinois in throwing all its strength to Lincoln on the first ballot and its twenty-six delegates remained loyal through the voting. It was Indiana which seconded the nomination of Lincoln by Illinois.

Summary of the First Ballot

An analysis of the vote on the first ballot reveals some interesting facts. There were 465 votes cast. The largest block, 189½, was cast for ten different individuals, favorite sons, etc.; and the next largest, 173½, for Seward; and Lincoln followed with 102. New York had given Seward all of its 70 votes, which, if deducted from Seward's total, would have given him but 1½ votes more than Lincoln. In other words, outside of the state of New York, Lincoln ran about even with the favored candidate on the very first ballot.

Vermont

The native state of Stephen A. Douglas was a large factor in contributing to Lincoln's victory. On the second ballot, coming as it did the third state on the roll call, the shift

of its entire delegation from a favorite son to Lincoln had a tremendous effect on the rest of the balloting.

Pennsylvania

The most decisive shift of votes during the Convention came on the second ballot when Pennsylvania was called. On the first ballot she had given 4 votes to Lincoln, but her total for him on the second jumped to 48, Cameron the favorite-son candidate, having been dropped.

Delaware

On the first ballot Delaware had given her block of 6 votes to Blair, but following the example of Pennsylvania, she changed to Lincoln and should be counted as contributing to the momentum of Lincoln's growing vote.

Summary of the Second Ballot

It was the shift in the New England states whose names were called first on the roll which was the best indication of the way the wind was blowing although Maine still cast 10 votes for Seward and 6 votes for Lincoln. The total New England vote on the second ballot, however, gave Lincoln a total of 36 and Seward 33.

Not only was New England giving Lincoln a majority, but the South also was in favor of Lincoln. Outside of Illinois and Indiana, the country west of the Allegheny Mountains seemed to have no inclination to follow the candidate from their own territory. Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, California, Minnesota, and Oregon had failed to cast a vote for Lincoln, and Ohio was still giving the majority of her votes to a favorite son.

Lincoln's last warning to those in charge of his political interests written in his own hand was that they should "make no contracts that will bind me." Unknown to him, however, there was evidently a conference between Lincoln's friends and some of the delegations, one in particular in which nearly the entire vote of the state and the largest block outside of New York went to Lincoln on the second ballot. The vote of Pennsylvania assured the success of Lincoln.

The interest of the delegates was at fever heat when the second ballot was announced and showed Seward still leading with a total of 184½, Lincoln had 181, and other candidates totaled 99½. Inasmuch as 233 votes were necessary for a choice the race was still hotly contested but Lincoln was gaining rapidly having added 79 votes while Seward had picked up but 11.

Massachusetts

It was a New England state again which furnished the trend towards Lincoln on the third ballot. Massachusetts had given 22 votes to Seward and 4 to Lincoln but shifted enough votes to Lincoln to give him a total of 18 which left Seward but 8, thus allowing Lincoln to forge ahead of Seward at the very beginning of the roll call.

New Jersey

On the third ballot New Jersey deserted her first choice, Dayton, and gave 8 of her votes to Lincoln. It will be recalled that it was Dayton who was successful in polling more votes than Lincoln for the vice-presidency in 1856.

Oregon

It is not known generally that Horace Greeley, who had been denied a place in the New York delegation, was chosen a member of the Oregon delegation as a substitute for an absent delegate. This gave Greeley a seat in the Convention and a vote with the Oregon representatives. That state had given all its votes on the first two ballots to Bates, but, on the third, 4 went to Lincoln and 1 to Seward.

Ohio

Although a delegate from Ohio had seconded the nomination of Lincoln, the state had divided its vote between Chase, Lincoln, and McLean. To Ohio, however, must go the honor of playing the most dramatic part in the Convention. At the close of the third ballot it was learned that Lincoln needed but 2½ votes for the nomination whereupon Ohio announced the change of 4 votes from Chase to Lincoln.

Summary of the Third Ballot

The political proverb about the way Maine goes did not hold good in this convention as she still voted 10 for Seward and 6 for Lincoln throughout the balloting. Connecticut gave the best example of a free lance delegation. On the third ballot their votes were divided between 5 of the 7 candidates. Of course when Lincoln's nomination was assured there was a rapid shifting of votes before they were officially announced, and the first total of 231½ after Ohio's announcement of a change rose to 354.

New York came forward after the final total had been announced and moved that the nomination of Lincoln be made unanimous.