

# LINCOLN LORE

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## AN EARLY 1860 CAMPAIGN PAMPHLET

There has come into the possession of the Lincoln National Life Foundation an item which may prove to be one of the most desirable Lincoln rarities. It is entitled, *Address of the Cameron and Lincoln Club of the City of Chicago, Illinois to the People of the North West*. It is 5½" x 8¾" and contains 8 pages. The article is signed by Fernando Jones as chairman of the Executive Committee of the Club. It was "published by order of the Club," by Charles V. Dyer, President, and Jo. W. Bell, Secretary.

This pamphlet apparently is the earliest of the 1860 campaign documents which proposed the name of Abraham Lincoln as a candidate at the Chicago Convention. It may also be recognized as the first pamphlet to present a biographical sketch of Mr. Lincoln.

Early in October 1859, an editorial appeared in the *Lancaster* (Pennsylvania) *Examiner*, proposing Simon Cameron for president on the 1860 Republican ticket. Later in the month Lincoln received a letter from W. E. Frazer, a Pennsylvania Republican, stating the purpose of the friends of Simon Cameron to sponsor his nomination at the forth-coming Republican Convention. Lincoln replied to Frazer's letter on November 1, 1859 and referred to the proposed Cameron-Lincoln ticket as follows:

"I shall be heartily for it, after it shall have been nominated by a Republican National Convention; and I cannot be committed to it before." To further clarify his position, Lincoln stated in the letter to Frazer, "I would not like the public to know, so I would not like myself to know, I had entered a combination with any man to the prejudice of all others whose friends respectively may consider them preferable."

The Pennsylvania editorial, suggesting Cameron and Lincoln as candidates, was reprinted and the circulars were distributed in Illinois. One Chicago paper in its issue of November 14, 1859 stated that the ticket should be reversed to read, Lincoln and Cameron.

The Cameron and Lincoln Club of the city of Chicago was organized late in the year 1859, or early in the month of January 1860. Fernando Jones, who had been chosen the chairman of the Executive Committee, wrote to Lincoln on January 10th asking for material for a brief sketch of his life. Lincoln replied five days later in these words:

Springfield, Jan. 15, 1860

"Fernando Jones, Esq.

"My dear Sir: Yours of the 10th was received two or three days ago; and being much engaged, I have postponed attending to it until now.

"Our Republican friend, J. W. Fell, of Bloomington, Illinois, can furnish you the material for a brief sketch of my history, if it be desired.

"I shall be happy to receive a letter from you at any time.

"Yours truly,  
"A. Lincoln."

If Mr. Jones wrote Fell, as Lincoln suggested, for the autobiography of Lincoln and received it, he did not utilize the information. The biographical sketch in the Cameron-Lincoln pamphlet gives no evidence of having been composed from the Lincoln writing. There is a possibility that the pamphlet may have been published earlier than the correspondence, although it must have been printed later than December 21, 1859, as the pamphlet mentions the Chicago Convention which was not announced until the above date.

Here follows the more personal part of the Lincoln sketch which appears in the pamphlet:

"With the history of Mr. Lincoln and political record you are already familiar. He is a native of Kentucky, and

like Gen. Cameron, from the ranks of the people, the architect of his own fortune. He had not the advantages in his youth of either schools or colleges, yet through his own exertions has obtained a most liberal and thorough education.

"Mr. Lincoln is an able lawyer, and stands at the head of his profession in the central part of the State. For more than thirty years he has been a resident of Illinois, and although he has always taken an active part in politics, has never sought office.

"When elected to the House of Representatives of Illinois, and to the Congress of the United States in 1846, it was without effort on his part. During the existence of the Whig party, he was an active and leading member of that party in this State, following in the footsteps of the illustrious Clay, who declared in 1850, 'the Constitution neither created, nor does it continue Slavery,' and on the organization of the Republican party, united with it, and is now regarded as one of the ablest among the champions of freedom and free soil.

"In his canvass in 1858 with Judge Douglas for the U. S. Senatorship, he proved himself an able debater, and a profound statesman. He has the popular heart of Illinois. The purity of his life, the nobleness of his heart, the fervor of his eloquence, the honesty of purpose for which he is characterized, and the boldness with which he has ever battled for the right, and denounced the wrong, entitle him to the confidence and respect of the American people.

"He has always been distinguished for his conservatism, and patriotism, and it is meet that the Republican National Convention should honor the Republicans of the North-west by placing upon the ticket their representative man."

Norman Judd, who had largely been responsible for having Chicago selected as the convention city and one of the earliest of the ardent Lincoln supporters for the presidency, addressed the Cameron-Lincoln Club in Chicago on February 10, 1860. Whether or not he spoke to win supporters for himself in the governor's race, or attempted to have the Club turn their ticket about face, we are not advised.

An interesting sequel occurred to the Cameron-Lincoln enterprise. On February 25th Lincoln was passing through Philadelphia on his way to New York to speak at Cooper Institute. Someone in Philadelphia, who was apparently on the lookout for Lincoln, handed him the cards of Simon Cameron and David Wilmot. The day following, Lincoln, then in New York, sent the following letter to Cameron.

"New York, Feb. 26, 1860.

"Hon. Simon Cameron:

"Dear Sir

"I write this to say the card of yourself, and Hon. David Wilmot, was handed me yesterday at Philadelphia, just as I was leaving for this city—I barely had time to step over to the Girard, when I learned that you and he were not at your room—I regret that being so near, we did not meet, but hope we may yet meet before a great while—

"Will you please forward the enclosed to Mr. Wilmot, as I do not remember his address?—

"Yours truly,  
"A. Lincoln."

The day after this letter was written Lincoln delivered his remarkable Cooper Institute speech which put him on the track for the presidency. Thereafter he was no longer willing to be considered for second place on the ticket of any candidate, but cherished for himself the honor which Cameron and others coveted.