

LINCOLN LORE

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

Number 877

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

January 28, 1946

A HOOSIER CONGRESSMAN'S PROPHECY

A mass meeting was held in Independence Square, Philadelphia, on May 26, 1860, to ratify the nomination of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin. One of the principle speakers was a congressman from Indiana by the name of William McKee Dunn, a graduate of Indiana University who also received a master's degree at Yale in 1835. The Lincoln National Life Foundation has recently acquired a copy of this rare pamphlet containing the address of Dunn.

The subject of Mr. Dunn's remarks were entitled: *The Republican Party and the Republican Candidate for the Presidency.*

"MY FELLOW-CITIZENS: I am deeply impressed with the significance of the popular enthusiasm demonstrated here this evening. This is the inauguration of the great contest of 1860 in the city of Philadelphia and the State of Pennsylvania; and, fellow-citizens, I am impressed with the idea that the result of the contest in Pennsylvania depends, in a great degree, upon the result in this city, and that the result of the contest in this State will most probably be decisive of the struggle on the battle-field of the nation. If there be not in the great movement which now possesses the hearts of the American people some great predominating principle, if there be not some sense of outraged right, if there be not some deep conviction of wrong and corruption in the administration of the Government, I ask you what is the meaning of this excitement and these popular demonstrations? The nomination made at Chicago has struck the great popular heart. The people realize that the man whom the times demand is coming. They realize that the man who, springing from the body of the people, has struggled his way up through poverty, through all the difficulties and privations incident to the settlement of a new country, to be the candidate of a new country, to be the candidate of the great organization in opposition to the Democratic party, must be a man of mark, must be a man of talent, must be a man of integrity, must be a man upon whom the great public trust can rest in security. (Loud applause.)

"In Mr. Lincoln we have a candidate who comes not before you as the result of party machinations and party arrangements. Two weeks ago he was scarcely looked upon as a possible candidate, not because he was not equal to the demands of the times, but because other names were more prominently before the public, and because in his modesty, in that simplicity of character, which has ever distinguished him, he stood back knowing that when the public wanted him, the public would call for him. (Applause) It is such men who climb up to high position by daily struggle, with the eye always fixed upon that elevation, but the men who go bravely forward in the discharge of the daily duties of life, without reference to what may be the effect upon their own advancement. Such a man is Abraham Lincoln or "Old Abe," as he is familiarly and endearingly called by his neighbors and friends. Out West, fellow-citizens, we use that word old not as signifying "aged," but as a word of friendship and endearment. This man whom we commonly call "Old Abe," is only fifty-one years of age. He is in the very prime of manly vigor, ready to take hold of the helm of State, and guide it with firmness in every emergency. (A voice. "Just like old Jackson.") Yes he is of the Old Hickory stamp. He was trained in the same kind of school as that in which General Jackson grew up. He was a Western pioneer. He grew up among the big trees that stood thick in the Western forests. His early struggles were with the giant oaks. But he triumphed over those giants of the forests as he has triumphed over all the giants he has since encountered.

(Applause.) Here is a man who, in early life had no opportunities of education; who, when he was a boy, was a common hired laborer to the farmers of his neighborhood. He was the son of a poor man, and had a family early thrown upon him for support. In the woods of Indiana he went around helping his neighbors to roll logs, to raise their houses, to husk their corn, and took part with them in all the avocations of life. It was such an experience that made his heart big. His heart was first educated, and afterwards his head. (Applause.) He now stands an acknowledged leader ranking with the first men of his State; and he will soon be recognized as among the first men of this nation and of the world. (Loud applause. "Three cheers for 'Old Abe'.")

"I heard some gentlemen inquire a while ago what kind of a statesman he was. Now there are some men who have an idea that nobody can be a great statesman unless he has been a great brawler before the people; that no man can be a great statesman unless he has been a long while in Congress—in my judgment, not a very good school in which to train our Presidents. (Laughter.) I tell you that in this nation our virtues grow up strongest in the country, on the fields, and in the shops.

"What is Mr. Lincoln's position on another question which is regarded as a matter of great interest in Pennsylvania? How does he stand in regard to the protection of American industry? Fellow-citizens, a few days ago, a friend of mine remarked to me, that in 1844 he was down in the southern part of Indiana, making a speech for Henry Clay. While he was addressing a crowd, a stranger came in, and when my friend had concluded, this stranger was called upon to speak; 'and,' said my friend, 'he made one of the clearest, fullest, most conclusive arguments in favor of Clay's great American system that I ever listened to.' Who was that man, who, sixteen years ago, was supporting your interests? It was the same 'old Abe Lincoln.' He does not assume a tariff guise today; he does not avow such principles now, to get votes in Pennsylvania, or in Massachusetts, or any other manufacturing State of the Union but for a long period of years he has been a tariff man from principle. He is a disciple of Henry Clay. (Loud applause.) He has borne the flag of Clay from county to county, from district to district, all over the State of Illinois. In 1844, when Clay was a candidate for the Presidency, Lincoln was on the State electoral ticket, and no man in that contest did better, more hearty, more effective service, for the Sage of Ashland, than did the man whom we now proudly present to you as our candidate for the Presidency.

"Before I conclude these hurried and interrupted remarks, I must call your attention, gentlemen, to an important circumstance connected with Lincoln's nomination. It is this. Since the organization of the old Whig party, no candidate opposed by the Democracy has been elected to the Presidency, unless such candidate had been in some manner particularly identified with Indiana. We could not elect Clay, we could not elect Fremont, for neither of them had ever lived in Indiana or been identified with her history. But we elected General Harrison, for he had been the Governor of Indiana Territory, and had fought the battle of Tippecanoe on Indiana soil. We elected General Taylor, for he had, as a major in the United States service, defended our Western border, and commanded our Indiana volunteers in the war of 1812.

"And we can elect Lincoln, for we prepared him, in Indiana, when he was a boy, for the high duties of that responsible position. The road to the Presidency runs through Indiana, and 'Old Abe' is on it, far ahead of all competitors. (Applause.)"