

# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN CAMPAIGN PERIODICALS OF 1860

Three campaign periodicals stand out as important contributions to Abraham Lincoln's successful political contest of 1860 which placed him in the President's chair. Each was published weekly preliminary to the campaign. One originated in New York, another in Chicago and the third in Cincinnati. This geographical spread allowed a fairly good coverage of the northern states.

As far as we can learn the most complete compilation of 1860 campaign periodicals now extant are to be found in the library of the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

### *Lincoln and Liberty*

The Young Men's group of New York City who made arrangements for Lincoln to speak at Cooper Institute launched a paper on his behalf at the very beginning of the campaign. The publication was called *Lincoln and Liberty* and the first issue appeared on June 19, 1860. Although the first number designated as "Tract No. 1" was limited to one sheet of two pages, all subsequent issues contained four pages. Most of the copies were 7 x 12, two columns wide, although at least one number was 9½ x 12 and was extended to three columns.

The masthead the paper featured a woodcut of an eagle holding in its bill a ribbon inscribed "Lincoln and Hamlin." Under the lines setting forth the nominees for President and Vice-President appeared the names of the officers of the Young Men's Republican Club, the Board of Control and the Advisory Board. After the New York State Republican Convention, the list of the club's officers were replaced with the names of the candidates on the state Republican ticket.

The two columns on the front page were boxed and in the top margin appeared the title with date line under it and in the bottom margin the words: "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Soil, Free Men." The left margin contained the slogan "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable," and the right margin these words, "Freedom of Public Lands to Actual Settlers." After several issues the single column masthead was changed to a double head and in the top margins of interior pages appeared, "Lincoln and Hamlin Facts for the People."

It is quite likely that these periodicals appeared up to the very week of the election but the last one in possession of the Foundation is dated October 2 and bears the number "16." It would seem as if the series contained twenty issues of which the Foundation has acquired the following numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16. The Monaghan Bibliography lists four of these as Lincoln items.

### *The Rail Splitter (Chicago)*

The first issue of *The Rail Splitter* published at Chicago was dated June 23, 1860. It was a large sheet 14 x 21 containing four pages, six columns in width. Dividing the caption appeared a woodcut showing Lincoln splitting rails in front of a log cabin. Under the caption there was printed this line ascribed to Abraham Lincoln: "The People of the United States are the Rightful Masters of both Congress and the Courts."

The editor of the publication was Charles Leib and he stated in a prospectus that "The first number of 'The Rail Splitter' will be published about the 20th of June next, and be continued weekly until after the result of

the Presidential Election shall be ascertained and announced in the columns. . . . Terms of 'The Rail Splitter'—Single copy for the campaign, (in advance) 50 cents."

The first issue of the paper announced, "Every number will contain an elegant and spirited woodcut." These cuts were two columns wide and occupied the required space at the top of the two center columns. The cartoon appearing in the issue of October 27 was eight columns wide and took up one half of the first page. It was entitled "Reception of Judge Douglas at Chicago October 4, 1860."

The Foundation collection contains a complete run of the paper from number 1 to number 16, the latter dated October 6, number 17 is missing in the foundation file but a number 18 dated October 27 is in the series. Whether or not there were two issues appearing in the interval between October 6 and October 27 we are not advised but if so there must have been some confusion in numbering. In the issue for October 27 the following announcement appears:

"Our next issue would come on Saturday but as it would not reach most of our subscribers until after election day we have concluded to postpone its issue until we can give the grand final result of this most exciting and important campaign."

The Foundation has no information about copies published later than October 27 but it does have one issue that might be called a supplement and dated September 3, 1860. It appears under the caption *The Pictorial Rail Splitter* but carries no number. The four page paper is 19 x 24 and eight columns wide and profusely illustrated with fourteen woodcuts, some of which have previously appeared in the regular issues of *The Rail Splitter*.

### *The Rail Splitter (Cincinnati)*

The prospectus for the campaign periodical published at Cincinnati states that "Each number of the Rail Splitter will be illustrated with original cuts designed to take the 'starch' out of the 'Little Giant' and other Democratic 'Dough Faces' and show them up in their true color." The prospectus also announced that the paper "will be published by an association of Republicans, and will embrace among the editors leading Republicans from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and New York."

The caption of the paper is ornamented by a woodcut made from a photograph of Abraham Lincoln taken by Hesler in June 1860. Under the cut is a shield with the inscription: "An honest man's the noblest work of God." The four page sheet is 13 x 17½ and is five columns in width. The cartoons appear on page number three and are three columns wide. This paper seems to feature articles of greater length than those in its Chicago contemporary by the same name.

The first number of the paper appeared on August 1, 1860 and in the issue of October 17 which was number 13 the editor states: "This is the last paper we shall issue until After the Election. Our next regular issue would not reach one in a hundred until after the election is over, consequently it would be of no use as a campaign document. Our next number will be issued immediately after the election when we hope to announce that 'Honest Abe is Elected.'" All the 13 editions of this paper are in the Foundation collection but if a post election number was issued we have failed to locate one.