Pennsylvania and Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency

Rarely has Pennsylvania failed to cast its vote for the victorious presidential candidate. On only two occasions before 1884 did the Commonwealth decline to support the next occupant of the White House. And so it was in 1860, when Pennsylvania played an exceptionally decisive rôle in making Abraham Lincoln President of the United States.

Pennsylvania had never been wholeheartedly for or against the institution of Negro slavery—the issue about which much of the campaign of 1860 was to revolve. For the most part the state's inhabitants were conservative, giving little encouragement to the anti-slavery cause. In 1854, when most of the North became inflamed over the passage of Senator Stephen A. Douglas' "pro-slavery" Kansas-Nebraska Act, Pennsylvania was chiefly alarmed over the power wielded by the Roman Catholics and immigrants and was more interested in agitation against the liquor traffic than in the anti-slavery movement. Indeed, in the fall campaign of 1854 the opponents of the Nebraska legislation were forced to enter a coalition with the anti-Catholic Know-Nothings (now called "Americans") and with the prohibitionists to elect the Whig, James Pollock, governor.

Although in other Northern states the opposition to the Kansas-

1 In 1796 and in 1824.
Nebraska Act had precipitated a party styled “Anti-Nebraska” and then “Republican” during 1855; it was not until the following year that such an organization was fully formed in the Keystone state.\(^5\) So moderate was Pennsylvania on the slavery question that, up to 1858, the Republicans shared the anti-Democratic vote with the “Americans,” who still insisted that the Catholics and foreign-born, not the slaveholders, were the nation’s most evil forces. When Republicans and “Americans” did fuse it was under the all-embracing label of “People’s party.” The main tenets of this anti-Democratic organization became opposition to the Buchanan administration and advocacy of a protective tariff. On such a platform the People’s party carried the state in 1858.\(^6\)

It was during the campaign of 1858 that United States Senator Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, was first presented as a presidential possibility for 1860.\(^7\) During the latter part of 1859 Cameron’s supporters conducted a silent but energetic contest for delegates to the Republican National Convention, scheduled to meet in Chicago on May 16, 1860.\(^8\) The Cameron forces were most active in Illinois. And for good reason. The presidential election would be decided by four states holding conservative views on the slavery question—Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and New Jersey. Each had been carried by the Democrats for Buchanan in 1856 against the Republican John C. Frémont. Republican leaders realized this.\(^9\)

The Camerons’ efforts to court Illinois took the form of an offer to support Springfield’s popular citizen, Abraham Lincoln, for Vice-President, in return for which Illinois should aid Cameron for

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first place on the national Republican ticket in 1860. In October, 1859, the Cameron-inspired Lancaster Examiner printed an editorial suggesting the Pennsylvania senator for President and Lincoln for Vice-President. This editorial was forwarded to various Illinois newspapers and reprinted. Cameron’s Illinois manager, Dr. Charles Leib, circulated the Lancaster editorial throughout Lincoln’s state. The Chicago Press & Tribune observed: “The Lancaster Examiner’s article was printed in circular form and distributed throughout Illinois by Dr. Leib.”

There was ample reason why the Chicago Press & Tribune should watch Leib’s movements closely. Its editor, Joseph Medill, was haunted by the prospect of Democratic victories in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, and New Jersey in 1860. However, Medill saw possibilities of Republican success in Lincoln’s candidacy. On October 30 (1859) he wrote a fellow-Republican:

The Pennsylvanians will press the names of Cameron and Judge Read [Supreme Court Justice John M. Read, of Pennsylvania]. The former may have a maj. of the Pa. delegates. The friends of each desire to have Lincoln of Illinois run with them as Vice P. But the friends of the gallant Old Abe will never consent to put the tallest end of the ticket behind. If the doubtful states of Pa., Ind. and Ill. are to name the candidates the west will settle down upon the tall son of this state. He can carry the entire Northwest—Ind. included. He is a Kentuckian by birth, lived 10 years in Indiana—stumped it for Henry Clay in 44,—and 25 in Illinois, was a Clay Whig, is right on the tariff and he is exactly right on all other issues. Is there any man who could suit Pennsylvania better. The west is entitled to the Presidency and he lives in the very heart of it. How does the matter strike you? On the hypothesis that the four states lost by Fremont should name the candidate, has not Old Abe more available points than any man yet named? Personally I prefer Gov. Chase to any man—believing that he possesses the best executive ability but if he is not considered available is not Old Abe the man to win with?

There was logic in Medill’s reasoning. Lincoln was a westerner and would be acceptable to Illinois and Indiana. He was sound on the tariff and would be strong in Pennsylvania, where protection was a

10 Clipped in Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, October 13, 1859.
11 Chicago Press & Tribune, November 19, 1859.
12 For material on Leib, see Edward F. Dunne, Illinois (Chicago and New York, 1933), I, 468.
13 Chicago Press & Tribune, November 19, 1859.
14 Ibid., October 7, November 16, 1859.
live issue. In October Lincoln, in answer to a Pennsylvanian's query as to his tariff views, replied:

I was an old Henry-Clay Tariff Whig. In old times I made more speeches on that subject than on any other. I have not since changed my views. I believe yet, if we could have a moderate, carefully adjusted, protective tariff, so far acquiesced in as not to be a perpetual subject of political strife, squabbles, changes, and uncertainties, it would be better for us. Still, it is my opinion, that, just now, the revival of that question will not advance the cause itself, or the man who revives it.

Lincoln's desire to avoid inexpedient issues and to pursue a moderate policy while fighting under the banner of "Republicanism" was manifest in December, when in a speech at Elwood, Kansas, he condemned John Brown's Harper's Ferry raid. Likewise, Lincoln declined to commit himself on the overtures of the Cameron people. On November 1 (1859) he answered one query from Pennsylvania:

Yours of the 24th ult. was forwarded to me from Chicago. It certainly is important to secure Pennsylvania for the Republicans in the next presidential contest, and not unimportant to also secure Illinois. As to the ticket you name, I shall be heartily for it after it shall have been fairly nominated by a Republican national convention; and I cannot be committed to it before. For my single self, I have enlisted for the permanent success of the Republican cause; and for this object I shall labor faithfully in the ranks, unless, as I think not probable, the judgment of the party shall assign me a different position. If the Republicans of the great State of Pennsylvania shall present Mr. Cameron as their candidate for the presidency, such an endorsement for his fitness for the place could scarcely be deemed insufficient. Still, as 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.

This letter indicated that Lincoln sensed that he might be one of the nominees. He avoided making special commitments to particular candidates which would prejudice his popularity elsewhere. His disclaimer of particular interest in Cameron certainly did not


18 *Kansas Historical Collections*, VII (1901-1902), 536-38.

mean that he had no interest in Pennsylvania, as his correspondence with Jesse W. Fell proves.

Fell was a Pennsylvania-born resident of Bloomington, Illinois. While on a tour of Pennsylvania in 1858 he noticed a curiosity about the Springfield lawyer who was then so effectively debating Stephen A. Douglas in the contested senatorial election. On his return to Illinois Fell suggested Lincoln as a possible Republican presidential candidate. He proposed that Lincoln prepare a sketch of his life to be printed in a Pennsylvania newspaper. On December 20, 1859, Lincoln furnished Fell with a short autobiography. Fell sent it to his friend, Joseph J. Lewis of West Chester, Pennsylvania. From this material Lewis prepared an article for the Chester County Times. But Lewis wanted to know more and wrote Fell on January 30, 1860:

The facts in Mr L's statement are exceedingly meagre and few. I want more. I want to know when he first began to speak. What was the success of his first efforts. . . . Whether he is a good shot with the rifle—a good horseman—fond of the hunt—general [sic] in manners, entertaining in conversation. . . .

Mr. Lincoln is popular in Chester Co and would make a fine poll with our people.

On February 11, 1860, Lewis printed the expanded autobiographical material in two columns in the Chester County Times, selecting from the material at hand those elements which would count for most in the Keystone state. Lincoln's ancestors were Friends (which few in Illinois knew). They had come from Berks County, Pennsylvania. Some of the Lincoln descendants still lived in eastern Pennsylvania, Lewis continued. With an eye to the propensity of Pennsylvanians for protection, he wrote that Lincoln had been a strong Whig leader, a friend of Henry Clay, and master of "the principles of political economy that underlie the tariff." "Mr. Lincoln has been a consistent and earnest tariff man from the first hour of his entering public life. He is such from principle, and from a deeply rooted conviction of the wisdom of the protective policy;

21 Morehouse, The Life of Jesse W. Fell, 60.
22 Lewis to Fell, January 30, 1860. Jesse W. Fell Transcripts, Illinois State Historical Survey, University of Illinois. The present author is indebted to Professor James G. Randall, of the University of Illinois, for a copy of this document.
and whatever influence he may hereafter exert upon the government will be in favor of that policy.”

Lincoln was interested in Fell’s ideas. On January 15, 1860, he wrote Fernando Jones of Chicago: “Our Republican friend, J. W. Fell, of Bloomington, Illinois, can furnish you material for a brief sketch of my history, if it be desired.” Meanwhile, Medill had forsaken his friend, Governor Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, as a presidential candidate and now threw the influence of the Press & Tribune behind Lincoln.

During this time Lincoln was finding a Warwick in Norman B. Judd, Chairman of the Republican State Central Committee of Illinois. Late in December, 1859, Judd attended the meeting of the Republican National Committee in New York City. Lincoln, concerned about the selection of the Illinois delegation to the National Convention, wrote his friend, Jackson Grimshaw of Quincy:

Judd has started East to attend the sitting of the National Committee at N. Y. the 21st. Previous to going he wrote that soon after his return he would call the State Committee together; and he wished me to see some of the members, including yourself, upon a matter which I can tell you better when I see you, than I can write about it. In a general way I may say it was relative to whether Delegates to the National Convention shall be appointed, by general convention, or by districts. Perhaps it would be as well to make no committal on this, till we have a conference.

Meanwhile, in New York City, Judd persuaded the National Committee to hold the National Convention in Chicago—a decision most encouraging to Lincoln’s friends.

Some time between December, 1859, and January, 1860, Judd seems to have decided to work for Lincoln’s nomination for President. He was present at the meeting held in the winter of 1859–1860

27 Lincoln to Grimshaw, December 15, 1859. Lincoln Collection, Illinois State Historical Library.
at which Lincoln authorized his friends to work for his nomination. On February 9, 1860, Lincoln wrote an appealing letter to Judd: "I am not in a position where it would hurt much for me not to be nominated on the national ticket; but I am where it would hurt some for me not to get the Illinois delegates." Shortly thereafter Judd was engaged in vigorous activity in Lincoln's behalf. On February 10 he addressed the "Cameron and Lincoln Club" in Chicago, an organization recently formed by Leib to promote Cameron's campaign in Illinois. Judd continued his work for Lincoln, and by April was outlining strategy to Senator Lyman Trumbull:

Cannot a quiet combination between the delegates from New Jersey, Indiana and Illinois be brought about—including Pennsylvania. United action by those delegates will probably control the convention. Nothing but a positive position will prevent Seward's nomination. The movement for Lincoln has neutralized to some extent the Bates movement in our State. [Edward Bates, of Missouri, was also a contender.] It will not do to make a fight for delegates distinctly Lincoln. But state pride will carry a resolution of instruction through our [state] convention. This suggestion has been made to Mr. L.

The strategy here suggested was followed. A motion was carried through the Republican state convention held at Decatur on May 10—a motion endorsing Lincoln as Illinois' first choice for the presidency. Some of Cameron's supporters persisted in their claim that Cameron was at least Illinois' second choice. But it was wishful thinking. Illinois was first and last for Lincoln.

Cameron's strategists were in Chicago several days before the National Convention assembled, operating among the arriving delegates. They preached: "Cameron is the only man that can carry Pennsylvania." But it soon became evident that the Pennsylvania senator had no strength outside his own state. He did not represent dominant opinion on the major issue, slavery extension, and his

29 Lamon, _The Life of Abraham Lincoln_, 424.
30 Isaac N. Arnold, _The Life of Abraham Lincoln_ (Chicago, 1885), 162n.
32 _Ibid._, January 20, 24, 27, 1860.
33 Judd to Trumbull, April 2, 1860. Trumbull Papers.
35 Simon Whitely to Cameron, May 10, 1860. Cameron Papers.
36 Joseph Casey to Cameron, May 10, 1860. _Ibid._
stock in trade, the tariff, was important only in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In addition, Cameron, whether justly or not, had a reputation for sharp practices that made party leaders fear to nominate him. His selection as Republican standard-bearer could not arouse enthusiasm. Moreover, Cameron did not even command united support from Pennsylvania. His archrival, Andrew G. Curtin—who had been nominated as Republican candidate for governor of Pennsylvania—actively fought the Cameron movement in Chicago. By the second day of the Convention Cameron's managers had all but given up hope.38

When Cameron's weakness became apparent, the campaign managers of the other presidential contenders engaged in intense rivalry to attract the huge Pennsylvania delegation, second in size only to that of New York. Senator William H. Seward, of New York, had the most delegates committed to him; and his floor manager, Thurlow Weed, approached the delegates from the Keystone state, fortified with immense amounts of cash.39 But Seward was unacceptable. Cameron's followers would not support him40 and Curtin's lieutenants were even more hostile to the distinguished New Yorker. Curtin felt that he could not be elected governor in conservative Pennsylvania if with his assistance the radical Seward were placed at the head of the national ticket.41

Prior to the Convention Curtin had been in touch with Henry S. Lane, Republican candidate for governor of Indiana. Both men were determined that Seward should not be nominated, since he would weaken the party in their respective states. At Chicago Curtin and Lane were in constant communication with each other. Through


39 James S. Pike, First Blows of the Civil War (New York, 1879), 520; Murat Halstead, Caucuses of 1860 (Columbus, Ohio), 142-43.


41 McClure, Abraham Lincoln and Men of War-Times, 24ff.
their efforts the Pennsylvania and Indiana delegations met for consultation on Thursday evening, May 17. Even before the Convention assembled the Indiana delegates decided to support Lincoln as an "available" candidate.

With Seward and Cameron ruled out of serious consideration by the Pennsylvania delegation, the contest for their votes narrowed down to Lincoln and Bates. Thaddeus Stevens stubbornly backed the aged and colorless Supreme Court Justice John McLean. Bates had great strength among the Pennsylvanians because of his conservatism and high-tariff views, but the German element of the party opposed him since he had formerly consorted with the Know Nothings. The Missourian was accordingly dropped from consideration.

After hours of wrangling, the Pennsylvania delegation reached an agreement early in the morning of May 18—the day of the balloting for president. The final vote in the caucus was reported to have given Lincoln a majority of six votes over Bates. Thurlow Weed's efforts to attract the Keystone state to the Seward standard had failed, the anti-Seward Horace Greeley writing soon after: "If you had seen the Pennsylvania delegation and known how much money Weed had in hand, you would not have believed we could do so well. Give Curtin thanks for that." Probably David Wilmot helped Curtin in eliminating the New York senator from consideration among the Pennsylvanians. At the caucus it was agreed that, as a

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42 Ibid., 24ff, 138–39.
44 Francis P. Weisenburger, The Life of John McLean (Columbus, Ohio, 1937), 213.
47 Springfield (Mass.) Republican, May 23, 1860.
49 Pike, First Blows of the Civil War, 520.
50 Wilmot to Joseph Casey, March 10, 1860. Cameron Papers.
courtesy gesture, Pennsylvania should cast its vote for Cameron on the first ballot and for Justice McLean on the second before swinging to Lincoln on the third. Since neither Cameron nor McLean now had any chance of being chosen, the third ballot was really the only one that mattered.\textsuperscript{51}

Strong evidence exists to indicate that Judge David Davis and other Lincoln managers did not secure the support of Cameron's followers without promising Cameron a cabinet position in the event of Lincoln's nomination and election to the presidency.\textsuperscript{52} Davis's biographer concludes: "The support of Pennsylvania was assured to Lincoln by a promise to place Simon Cameron at the President's council table."\textsuperscript{53} This is further substantiated by Joseph Medill's biographer, who notes:\textsuperscript{54}

In Medill's account, he stated that after the Illinois delegates had gone to sound out the Pennsylvania group, he waited in the Tremont House for the final word. About midnight, Judge Davis came down the stairs and told Medill, "Damned if we haven't got them." To the query "how" was returned the answer, "By paying their price." Ray [Charles H. Ray, Medill's associate editor], who had been in attendance at the conference, told Medill that Cameron had been promised a cabinet position, remarking that such was a small price when playing for the presidency.

It is curious to note that Curtin's lieutenant, Alexander K. McClure, a participant in the midnight caucus that swung Pennsylvania to Lincoln, insisted that the shift to Illinois' favorite son was made before the promise of a cabinet post to Cameron. Later McClure declared that as soon as the Pennsylvania delegation had decided to support Lincoln, one of Cameron's confidential advisers, John P. Sanderson, of the Philadelphia \textit{Daily News}, obtained a conference with Judge Davis and Davis's friend, Leonard Swett, and secured from them this promise in behalf of his chief.\textsuperscript{55} At the midnight

\textsuperscript{53} Harry E. Pratt, "David Davis, 1815–1886." MS., Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Illinois (1930), 77.
\textsuperscript{54} Strevey, "Joseph Medill and the \textit{Chicago Tribune} in the Nomination and Election of Lincoln," \textit{op. cit.}, 59–59.
caucus the Lincolnlites also won over most of the delegates from New Jersey, who were impressed by Pennsylvania's decision to support Lincoln.56

With Illinois and Indiana lined up, and with the other two "doubtfuls," Pennsylvania and New Jersey, agreeing to vote for Lincoln after casting complimentary first ballots for their respective favorite sons, Cameron and Judge William L. Dayton, the Lincoln managers were in a formidable position. They went to work among the smaller state delegations immediately.57 Here they succeeded in attracting other delegations desirous of pleasing the four "doubtfuls."58

When the first ballot was taken, Pennsylvania cast $47\frac{3}{2}$ votes for Cameron, 4 for Lincoln, $1\frac{1}{2}$ for Seward and 1 for McLean.59 The decisive break came on the second ballot when Pennsylvania was called. Cameron was dropped. The Sewardites' spirits sagged as the Keystone state cast its vote: Cameron, 1; Seward, $2\frac{3}{2}$; and Lincoln, 48.60 Weed sickened as he perceived "the change in the vote of Pennsylvania startling the vast auditorium like a clap of thunder."61 Pennsylvania's action did more than any single thing to tip the scales in favor of Lincoln. On the third ballot the popular Springfield man was nominated as Republican candidate for President.62

Pennsylvania and Indiana were of vital importance to the Republicans in the general election. Not only did each cast a huge electoral vote—Pennsylvania cast 27 votes, second only to New York—but each had long been considered "doubtful." Moreover, each was an "October" state, holding its gubernatorial contest one month before the presidential election. Both states had been carried by Buchanan in 1856 and had thus decided the presidency against the Republican standard-bearer, Frémont. All groups exerted titanic efforts in the Keystone and, to a lesser extent, in the Hoosier state.63

56 "Reminiscences of Charles Perrin Smith," pp. 174–75. This manuscript is in the New Jersey State Library, Trenton, N. J.
58 Halstead, Caucuses of 1860, 142, 143.
59 Ibid., 146.
60 Ibid., 147.
61 Thurlow W. Barnes, ed., Memoir of Thurlow Weed (Boston, 1884), 264.
62 See especially William Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power (Boston, 1937), Chapter VI.
63 John D. Defrees to Weed, August 25 1860. Thurlow Weed Papers, University of Rochester Library, Rochester, N. Y.
Lincoln, although little known in Pennsylvania, proved acceptable to the numerous conservative, nativistic groups of the anti-Democratic coalition, since he provided an escape from the radical, "immigrant-loving" Seward. Lewis, who had printed Lincoln's autobiographical sketch with additions in the *Chester County Times* in February, could now inform his friend Fell: "The tide of enthusiasm is rising... The Americans appear well satisfied and the Bell movement is backward... Our people are happy to have escaped the infliction of Seward." The Constitutional Unionists, recruited largely from "Americans," Old Line Whigs and conservatives in general, were making little if any headway with their presidential candidate, Senator John Bell, of Tennessee. Even the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* which began the campaign as a Bell organ finally went into the Lincoln camp. Lincoln was also found acceptable to the powerful high-tariff interests, since he was a Henry Clay Whig.

Despite Lincoln's general popularity in Pennsylvania, the diverse anti-Democratic elements, which comprised the "People's party," were not marshalled under the Republican banner without serious threats of revolt. The feud between Cameron and Curtin was not entirely buried even during the campaign. In the first place Cameron hoped to secure control of the state organization. The state chairman, Alexander K. McClure, was a Curtin follower but the majority of the state committeemen were Cameron men. When the committee was to hold its first meeting, every friend of Cameron and Curtin was on hand the evening before, and a roisterous frolic ensued. Wine flowed freely. The Curtinites had pledged themselves to remain sober but apparently no such promise had been extracted from the Cameronians—with the result that on the following morning a score or more of Cameron's advocates were absent and Curtin's followers were able to control the meeting. Curtin himself was present and mapped a campaign which was quickly endorsed. Then the committee adjourned. Naturally, McClure never felt that another meeting was necessary, although Cameron's faction demanded

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64 Lewis to Fell, May 28, 1860. Fell Transcripts.
Secondly, McClure's action in raising funds aroused the ire of his opponents. "McClure is at New York, and has been since Friday, begging for money," one leader complained to Cameron. "I fear the whole crew are more active in getting money for themselves, than they are in securing success at the election."

Two of Cameron's lieutenants, James Casey and one Putnam, now consulted with Lincoln's friend, Leonard Swett, of Bloomington, Illinois, and suggested that Swett and his partner, Judge David Davis, visit Pennsylvania, obviously with the object of taming the Curtinites. Swett communicated with Lincoln, who had been closely watching the Pennsylvania developments. In mid-July Lincoln instructed Swett:

> Herewith I return the letters of Messrs. Putnam and Casey. I thank you for sending them—in the main they bring good news. And yet the matter mentioned by Mr. Casey about want of confidence in your Central committee pains me. I am afraid there is a germ of difficulty in it. Will not the men thus suspected, and treated as proposed, rebel, and make a dangerous explosion? When you write Mr. Casey, suggest to him that great caution and delicacy of action is necessary in that matter.

I would like to see you and the Judge [Davis], one or both, about that matter of your going to Pennsylvania.

Subsequently, Lincoln consented that Davis and Swett visit Pennsylvania. The two Illinois emissaries discovered that the Pennsylvania campaign was well organized. Before returning home, however, Davis and Swett met Cameron and Thurlow Weed—presumably in Saratoga Springs, New York. Unknown to Lincoln, an agreement was reached between these men that they should be the controlling element in the new administration if Lincoln should be victorious. There is some evidence that Davis' offer of a cabinet post to Cameron, made at the Chicago Convention, was discussed.

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68 J. P. Sanderson to Cameron, October 1, 1860. Cameron Papers.
69 Tracy, ed., *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln*, 152, 153, 156, 162.
Davis, Swett, and Cameron found a willing ally in Weed. Indeed, Cameron had convinced Weed that Curtin was almost solely responsible for Seward's defeat at Chicago. Naturally the Sewardites heartily detested Curtin, and McClure later complained that Weed would not deal with him when he appealed for funds for the Curtin campaign for governor.

Curtin's followers became fearful lest Davis and Swett persuade Lincoln to recognize only the Cameron faction. While Seward was on his Northwestern tour stumping for Lincoln, a Curtin associate appealed to a neutral Illinois leader: "I observe that Seward is to be at Chicago on the first. Should he visit Lincoln I hope there will be no interview between them without a witness. Lincoln however is wise enough to take care of that." The anxiety of the Curtin men was relieved only when Lincoln reassured a friend of McClure:

Yours of the 27th is duly received. It consists almost exclusively of a historical detail of some local troubles, among some of our friends in Pennsylvania; and I suppose its object is to guard me against forming a prejudice against Mr. McC—. I have not heard near so much upon that subject as you probably suppose; and I am slow to listen to criminations among friends, and never expose their quarrels on either side. My sincere wish is that both sides will allow by-gones to be by-gones, and look to the present and future only.

The Republican feud was indeed mild when compared with the Democrats' family quarrels. If the Republican troubles were grounded in the rivalry of two state leaders, Cameron and Curtin, the Democratic rupture was based on the friction between two national chieftains, President Buchanan and Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln's opponent in the presidential race.

In Pennsylvania there were two Democratic nominees for president, Douglas and John C. Breckinridge, of Kentucky—and only one electoral ticket. Which wing of the party did the electoral ticket represent? Buchanan had already thrown his administration's influence behind Breckinridge—but most Democratic leaders in western Pennsylvania supported Douglas. Ratification meetings were held for both candidates. On July 2 the Democratic State Central Committee met in Philadelphia. After heated discussion a decision

73 Allison to Trumbull, June 4, 1860. Trumbull Papers.
75 McClure, Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania, I, 419ff.
76 Lewis to Fell, September 26, 1860. Fell Transcripts.
77 Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, VI, 54.
was reached: the committee recommended that Henry D. Foster should be supported for governor. As for the presidential contest, all Democrats were to unite upon the electoral ticket formed at Reading in March, with the understanding that if the ticket should be elected and if, in view of the results in other states, it was found that Douglas’s election could be effected by having the electors cast Pennsylvania’s entire vote for him, this should be done. If, on the other hand, the state’s vote would not elect Douglas but would win for Breckinridge, the electors were to vote for him. But if Pennsylvania’s united vote could determine the success of neither, then the electors were to be permitted to divide their votes. Buchanan endorsed this arrangement.\textsuperscript{78}

But the Douglas faction, led by John W. Forney, would have none of such compromise with the Breckinridgers. Forney, ablest of Democratic editors in Pennsylvania, had broken with Buchanan during 1857–1858, when the President had refused to give him public office or control of the administration organ in Washington. At that time Forney had accepted election as Clerk of the House of Representatives at the hands of the Republicans and pro-Douglas Democrats.\textsuperscript{79} In his Philadelphia \textit{Press} Forney insisted that “no true friend of Douglas, in Pennsylvania or elsewhere, can touch an electoral ticket which contains upon it the single name of a Breckinridge Disunionist.”\textsuperscript{80}

Some anti-Buchanan Democrats, desirous of harmony, participated in the movement to place fusion electoral tickets in the field supported by both the Douglasites and the Breckinridgers. Not so Forney. Throughout the campaign he continued his vindictive campaign against “fusion,” charging the Breckinridge party with “disunionism.”\textsuperscript{81} The Breckinridge men were furious, and Buchanan’s Philadelphia organ, the \textit{Pennsylvanian}, answered:\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{81} Philadelphia \textit{Press}, July 17, August 31, October 10, 1860.
Forney, the Clerk and flunkey of the Republican House, could not have obtained the appointment without pledging himself to certain services, and that the services expected from him, and duly performed in his paper, the Press, have for their objective the disruption of the Democratic organization in order to secure in the impending election the triumph of Black Republicanism.

This was the typical view of the Buchanan-Breckinridge forces. Their editorials were often entitled, “Forney Paying Off His Debts To The Republican Party.” Forney himself later admitted: “I had done my utmost to elect him [Lincoln] President by the only way in my power, and that was by supporting the straight Douglas electoral ticket in Pennsylvania.” And thus the campaign proceeded in the Keystone state—the Breckinridge men centering their fire on Douglas and his “chief imp, Forney,” as the destroyers of the Democratic party; and the Douglasites accusing their opponents of being “seceders” who had blasted Democratic unity. The Republicans gleeefully watched the Democratic wrangling. “The Douglas and Breckinridge men,” commented one Lincoln leader, “would give it [Pennsylvania] to us to spite each other.”

All groups in the national contest centered their heaviest artillery in the fight for governor of Pennsylvania, since it was considered by all to be strategically and psychologically desirable to win the “October” election. Both wings of the Democracy had agreed on Foster to oppose Curtin. The Republican National Committee sent some of its best oratorical talent to Pennsylvania to speak for that party’s candidate. Congressmen Justin S. Morrill of Vermont and John Sherman of Ohio, because of their association with the Republicans’ protective stand, were especially welcome. Carl Schurz of Wisconsin appealed to men of his blood and speech; later he claimed that the old “Pennsylvania Dutch” followed him like children. His fee for the Pennsylvania stump ing tour was $600.

While providing forensic talent, the Republican high command did

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83 New York Herald, August 16, 1860.
86 Horace Greeley to Reavis, August 31, 1860. Logan U. Reavis Papers, Chicago Historical Society.
89 Ibid., 172.
not neglect the sinews of war. Republican National Committeeman John Z. Goodrich of Massachusetts wrote a co-worker:90

After all Pennsylvania is the Sevastopol we must take. Every needed help—so far as the help can be used legitimately and properly—should be furnished. A great deal of work must be done in that State, and it should be shared in by other strong republican States.

The legitimate and proper expenses of an election so sharply contested as it will be in that State, are heavy. Toward them New York and Massachusetts ought to contribute. I intend to devote pretty much the whole of my time to the Election. . . . I would be glad to possess myself of the fullest information from Pa. So that when I ask A. B. and C. in Mass. to contribute toward discharging such expenses as must necessarily be incurred, I may be able as far as possible to explain the actual state of things.

The Democratic press charged in October: “The Republican financial clubs of Boston, Providence and other New England cities, warned of the necessity, have been sending on their remittances to Philadelphia, by hundreds and thousands of dollars.”91 One Republican journal admitted that $5,000 was donated to Curtin’s campaign, besides payment for 200,000 documents; that $100,000 more was sent into the Keystone state by the New York Republican Committee.92 There seems to be little if any foundation for McClure’s claim that he received no aid from the Republican National Committee.93

On the other side the Breckinridge forces had financial support from the federal officeholders.94 The Republican Pittsburgh Gazette even charged that the pro-Buchanan Senator William Bigler had arrived in Philadelphia armed with $100,000 to elect Foster governor.95 The Douglasites found it difficult to raise funds, since many of the New York merchants who usually opened their purses had become convinced that Douglas stood little chance of election.96 McClure found it particularly difficult to raise funds in Phila-

91 New York Herald, October 2, 1860.
92 Ibid., October 16, 1860.
delphia, since business men believed that if Lincoln and Curtin should triumph, that city would lose its profitable trade with the South; moreover, merchants were disgusted with politics and politicians. At this time many below Mason and Dixon's line were closing their northern accounts and cancelling orders, and discriminations were made against commercial houses reputed to be tainted with Republicanism.  

This conservatism in Philadelphia and elsewhere furnished the Democrats with an effective campaign argument. They charged Republicans with radicalism. As a matter of fact, most Republican journals seemed reluctant to discuss the slavery question per se. The position of Morton McMichael's Philadelphia North American was conspicuous: between September 1 and November 6, only six editorials relating to slavery appeared; while between September 3 and October 11, sixteen lengthy editorials related to the tariff were printed.

Immediately following Lincoln's nomination, the North American proceeded to make protectionism the paramount issue in Pennsylvania. It lauded Lincoln's tariff record. It likewise demanded that Buchanan's Philadelphia organ, the Pennsylvanian, explain why the Democratic National Convention had laughed down a Pennsylvania delegate's proposal to adopt a protectionist plank. Thus began a fierce editorial controversy between the North American and the Pennsylvanian. Other important papers followed McMichael's strategy—the Philadelphia Daily News, the Philadelphia Bulletin, and the Pottsville Miner's Journal. Lincoln, pressed by Pennsylvania for his views on the subject, referred his correspondents to the national platform and pointed to the Whig papers of 1844 to prove his adherence to Clay's protective policy.

In preaching upward revision of the tariff of 1857 the Pennsylvania Republicans were following a popular line. For in 1860 the state produced more than one-half of the nation's iron. Even the

102 James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 (New York, 1893), II, 479n.
Democrats recognized the situation when, despite the low-tariff record of their national party, they inserted in their state platform a plank in favor of "adequate" protection.103

Suddenly the Keystone state Republicans were given a magnificent opportunity by the fate of their Morrill tariff bill in Congress. Shortly after Lincoln's selection as standard-bearer, the House of Representatives passed the bill of Justin S. Morrill, Republican of Vermont, which raised the rates in the existing Tariff of 1857. The vote was strictly on party and sectional lines. Of the 113 Republican members, 89 voted for the bill, 8 announced themselves as paired with opponents of it, and only 4 (three Westerners and a New Yorker) voted against it. Of the 93 Administration Democrats, only 60 voted on the measure—57 against and only 3 for the bill.104 The Pennsylvania Douglas leaders begged the Little Giant to support the Morrill legislation.105 Foster left the stump long enough to journey to Washington in an effort to persuade Democratic senators to vote for it.106 The Pennsylvania Breckinridge leaders appealed to their national chieftains not to embarrass them by voting against upward revision, lest it weaken them in their state campaign. On June 8 (1860) a Pottsville Democratic "bosslet" wrote to Senator Robert M. T. Hunter, Democrat of Virginia:107

I am the Postmaster of this place and I am the editor of an administration paper. . . . Pennsylvania has on almost all occasions decided the Presidential contests. She will decide the next. . . .

I refer to the Tariff bill now under consideration in Committee of which you are chairman. With its solution depends the success or defeat of the Democratic party, nay more—I verily believe that it will defeat it for years to come, and may indeed result in influencing the destruction of our glorious Union by elevating sectional discord. If a proper Tariff bill passes the United States Senate it will make a difference of 20,000 votes in Pennsylvania, to the Democratic Party. If it is defeated we cannot hope to succeed. This is conceded by all who know the feelings of the people. . . .

You sir, have the key to the solution. You sir, must remember how often the victorious columns of a Pennsylvania democracy have sent a thrill of joy to your

105 Ellis to Douglas, May 22, 1860; Helfenstein to Douglas, June 1, 11, 1860. Douglas Papers.
heart. With all these recollections of the past can you fail to be impressed of the necessity of saving our party from annihilation and defeat? The masses of this state think and speak of nothing else but the Tariff. It is a question sir, that rises up from every fireside, and all, all are looking with anxious eyes to the democratic Senate for its solution.

On the same day that the above was written Curtin turned up in Washington to agitate the question. He gave out the statement that he found the Republicans for the Morrill bill and the Democrats resisting "all appeals made by the friends of a Tariff in Pennsylvania." Five days later, on June 13, Hunter, as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, took action. He reported out the Morrill bill and moved that its consideration be postponed until the next session—after the election! Two days later the Senate, by a strict party vote, passed Hunter's amendment. Bigler of Pennsylvania, alone among the Democrats, opposed postponement. Fearful of the reaction in his state, Bigler made attempts to have the decision reconsidered, but without avail. A bill for increased tariff rates had passed the House under Republican leadership only to be blocked in the Senate by Democrats.

The Republicans proceeded to capitalize on the whole proceedings. They denounced Breckinridge as the "exponent of the anti-tariff party and the candidate of the radical free-traders." They treated Bell, a recognized old Whig protectionist, less harshly but emphasized that "he has no platform, and as he relies chiefly on Southern States for support, he will have to conform to a considerable extent to Southern policy, which favors free trade." The Republicans turned their heaviest fire on Douglas, Lincoln's most formidable rival in Pennsylvania. They combed the Illinois senator's tariff record in the Senate, distributing the information in a pamphlet which denounced him as the "implacable and persevering enemy" of Pennsylvania iron mines and "manufactories."

Such a campaign diet was most alarming to the Douglasites. "The Republicans, in their speeches, say nothing of the nigger question,"

one complained to Douglas, "but all is made to turn on the Tariff." This same Democratic leader advised Douglas to say something favorable on the question when he visited Pennsylvania. Again he appealed to the Little Giant on September 5: "I wrote you at Newport relative to an expression of your views respecting a Tariff for Penn. interests, Iron and Coal—If you could advert to that subject in your speech at Harrisburg or Reading it would do immense good." On September 7, Douglas arrived in the Pennsylvania capital. He came out publicly for protection to home industry. The following day at Reading he did the same. As might be expected, Douglas's solicitude for Pennsylvania's industry was denounced alike by Lincoln and Breckinridge men as "the most unblushing effrontery" and as "a signal instance of political trickery" that fooled no one.

Protectionism and the split in the Democratic party proved to be the deciding factors in the gubernatorial contest in October. Curtin defeated Foster—262,396 to 230,312. Cameron could report happily: "Our victory here caused no surprise. . . . Our people here are tired of bad times and are becoming disgusted with the miserable conduct of Mr. Buchanan; they could no longer be held by the leaders of the Democratic party, who had so often deluded them with the promise of a tariff."

Lincoln could now send the glad tidings to his friend and law-partner, William H. Herndon: "I cannot give you details, but it is entirely certain that Pennsylvania and Indiana have gone Republican very largely. Pennsylvania 25,000, and Indiana 5,000 to 10,000." Douglas was crestfallen. "Mr. Lincoln is the next

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113 Ibid.
114 Same to same, September 5, 1860. Ibid.
115 New York Herald, September 8, 1860.
117 Ibid.
119 Cameron to Thompson, October 16, 1860. Thompson Papers.
120 Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, VI, 62.
President,” he remarked dejectedly. The Little Giant was correct. The results of the gubernatorial contests in the Keystone and Hoosier states were harbingers of a Lincoln victory in the nation in November. Republican orators and editors could now emphasize to wavering conservatives that the triumphs in the two pivotal “October” states had not resulted in further moves toward secession below the Mason and Dixon line.

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122 Springfield (Mass.) Republican, October 10, 1860; Indianapolis Daily Journal, October 12, 1860.