Many contenders have been proposed for the role of "the man who made Lincoln president," even though it seems clear that the part cannot be filled by any one individual. In the contest for influence in bringing about this dramatic event, the claims for Thomas H. Dudley of New Jersey have been neglected despite the endorsement of Dudley's work by the person most adversely affected by Lincoln's triumph. William H. Seward, the outstanding Republican of 1860 and leading candidate for the party's nomination, was set aside by the convention in favor of the less well-known Illinois lawyer. In 1866 Orville H. Browning, Andrew Johnson's patronage secretary, had an interview with Seward during which he told Browning that

...the delegates to the Chicago convention, which nominated Mr Lincoln for the President, were expected to be, and were really for him, Seward, but that Dayton became ambitious—wanted first to be President—failing in that wanted to be vice President, and seeing that he was likely to fail in both Dudley sold out New Jersey to Lincoln, and carried the delegation from that State for Lincoln instead of for him, Seward, and made Lincoln the Presidential Candidate on condition that he should make Dayton Minister to France, and Dudley Consul to Liverpool.¹

In spite of this statement, the decision at Chicago was obviously shaped by many individuals and a wide variety of political considerations. Nevertheless, Dudley's contribution, in so far as it can be reconstructed, was of significance.

The political situation in May, 1860, indicated that the election hinged on four doubtful "border" states—Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey—all of which had gone Democratic in

¹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, eds., The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning [Illinois Historical Collections, Vols. XX and XXII] (Springfield, Ill., 1925-1933), II, 110.
Almost any good Republican could carry the states farther north, but these four states also had to be won to ensure victory. Although Seward towered above all his rivals in political strength, a majority of the Republican politicians in each of the four doubtful states felt that their state could not be carried if Seward was the party's candidate. He was too well known (i.e., he had too many enemies), he was too closely connected with the sinister Weed machine in New York, he was disliked by the former Know Nothings; above all, he was too "radical" on the slavery issue. The delegates from these "border" states were in the forefront of the opposition to Seward. But the four states were not in agreement on the candidate to whom their support should be given: Illinois and Indiana favored Lincoln; Pennsylvania, Simon Cameron; and New Jersey, William L. Dayton.

At the convention the usual behind-the-scenes horse-trading and wire-pulling were evident, and it was in the "smoke-filled" rooms of 1860 that Thomas H. Dudley played his brief role. Dudley, a prominent lawyer from Camden, had taken an active part in Whig affairs in the 1840's, and after the dissolution of that party his allegiance shifted to the Republican Party in national politics and to the "Opposition Party of New Jersey" in state matters. In the election of 1860, the Opposition Party aligned itself with the Republican Party, and Dudley served as state chairman in the campaign.

As the election of 1860 approached, there had been an active portion of the Opposition organization, especially in East Jersey, which had favored the nomination of Seward and which had sought the support of New Jersey for his candidacy. Others, however, felt that the nomination of Seward would mean the loss of New Jersey. This group, led by Dudley, Charles Perrin Smith, and James T. Sherman, began to beat the drums for the state's favorite son, William L. Dayton. It was a definite stop-Seward maneuver, de-

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2 Reinhard H. Luthin, *The First Lincoln Campaign* (Cambridge, Mass., 1944), 139-140.
signed to keep New Jersey's convention votes from Seward, but the possibility that Dayton might develop a following of his own was not overlooked. In November, 1859, Dudley accepted invitations from influential Philadelphians to have Dayton "see and be seen" by the leading men of that city. When convention time arrived, Pennsylvania put up its own favorite son, and little support for Dayton had been mustered outside of New Jersey. The Opposition Party met in March, 1860, to choose delegates to the Republican convention. The state party endorsed Dayton, but the delegation was not instructed to vote for him and Seward could count on the support of a few East Jersey delegates.

On the opening day of the convention in Chicago, May 16, 1860, Dudley was appointed to the Committee on Resolutions, which had the vital task of drafting the Republican platform. The adoption of its recommendations the following day cleared the way for the main task of the convention—the selection of the party candidate. The part played by Dudley in the nomination of the Republican leader is described in two accounts, one written by his fellow anti-Seward campaigner Charles Perrin Smith and published in *Beecher's Illustrated Magazine* in 1872, the other prepared by Dudley himself and published in *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* in 1890.

The importance of the events they portray must be accepted cautiously in the knowledge that other influences, other behind-the-scenes meetings, and other individuals also affected the final outcome. The following outline of events is based largely on these two articles.

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6 Luthin, *First Lincoln Campaign*, 113-114.
7 Knapp, 26-27.
8 Halstead, 130.
9 Smith, "The Nomination of Lincoln," *Beecher's Illustrated Magazine*, V (1872), 332-335; Thomas H. Dudley, "The Inside Facts of Lincoln's Nomination," *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, XL (1890), 477-479. Both accounts show the expected tendency to exaggerate the importance of Dudley's actions and the significance of the "Committee of Twelve." Smith's article is the more reliable simply on the basis of time, and it undoubtedly served as the basis for Dudley's account. Its detail gives it an aura of authenticity. Dudley's version, while very similar to Smith's, adds two or three side lights on the convention, but in one of these that can be checked, *i.e.*, the sequence of voting, it is not accurate.
Most of the New England delegates, Smith and Dudley relate, were pro-Seward, but they recognized the danger of losing the election with the New York senator as the nominee. On Tuesday, May 15, the day before the convention was to open officially, a committee from these states, headed by John A. Andrew, chairman of the Massachusetts contingent, visited the delegations from the four doubtful states in hopes of arranging a compromise. Andrew presented the problem:

Gentlemen, you see our difficulty; you are not agreed among yourselves, but present three different candidates. Now, if you will unite upon some one man who can carry them [the four states], then we will give him enough votes in the convention to nominate him. If you continue divided we shall go into the convention and vote for Mr. Seward, our first choice.  

Either the four states had to reach an agreement or face the probability of Seward's nomination.

At noon on Thursday, May 17, as the time for balloting approached, the four states met in a subconvention caucus in the Cameron rooms, with Andrew Reeder of Pennsylvania in the chair, to attempt to unite on a candidate. Because of his preoccupation with the drafting of the platform, Dudley did not arrive at the caucus until it was well under way. The confusion and disagreement that greeted him indicated little hope for success. Dudley thereupon proposed to Norman Judd, the Republican state chairman of Illinois, that a committee of three delegates from each of the four states be chosen to consider the question on a smaller, more workable basis. The motion was made and carried, and it was decided that the Committee of Twelve would meet later that afternoon. The Committee included David Davis of Illinois; Caleb Smith of Indiana; David Wilmot, William B. Mann, and Samuel A. Purviance of Pennsylvania; and Dudley, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, and Ephraim Marsh from New Jersey.

That same afternoon, the routine business of the full convention was completed, and a call for balloting for the party nominee was made. It is generally felt that had the motion been accepted Seward would have been nominated. But the recorders were not ready with their tally sheets, and the convention adjourned until Friday. The

Seward men left the Wigwam, confident of victory on the following day.\textsuperscript{12}

The Committee of Twelve met at six o'clock that evening in David Wilmot's room. It was in session until eleven. Each delegation tried to persuade the others that its candidate was the most available and the best qualified. At ten o'clock when Horace Greeley appeared at the door, no progress had been made. This report and information from other delegations led Greeley to send his telegram to the Tribune: "My conclusion, from all that I can gather to-night, is, that the opposition to Gov. Seward cannot concentrate on any candidate, and that he will be nominated."\textsuperscript{13}

Seeing that an impasse had been reached, Dudley suggested that the Committee determine how many votes each of the three men—Lincoln, Cameron, and Dayton—could command in the convention. David Davis of Illinois indicated how his delegation would vote if Lincoln were dropped. Representatives from the other states made similar prognostications. It became quite apparent that Lincoln was the strongest of the three. Dudley then proposed to the Pennsylvania group that New Jersey would give up its candidate if Pennsylvania would follow suit. The Pennsylvanians replied that although they could not bind their colleagues they would recommend such a course. After some discussion this procedure was agreed upon, and Lincoln was accepted by the Committee of Twelve as its selection. Before adjourning, the Committee decided to support Henry Winter Davis for the vice-presidential nomination. David Davis, his first cousin, was instructed to ascertain by telegraph whether he would accept the nomination if it were tendered to him. His refusal received the following morning prevented further efforts on his behalf.\textsuperscript{14}

The work of the Committee of Twelve had three significant results. A final blow was administered to the already forlorn hopes of Cameron and Dayton. Secondly, New Jersey was won to the Lincoln side. The policy of the majority of the delegation had been based on the desire to stop Seward and, if Dayton could not gain a satisfactory following, to set up a nominee who could win. In following this course, it was desirable to get behind the winning man as early as

\textsuperscript{12} Halstead, 144.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{14} The reference to Henry Winter Davis is found only in Dudley's account.
possible. This point had now been reached. Thirdly, the action of the Committee was one of several factors turning Pennsylvania to Lincoln.

A meeting of the members of the New Jersey delegation friendly to Dayton was called for one o’clock that night in James T. Sherman’s room. Dudley was left to present the Committee’s decision to the delegates when New Jersey’s other two committee men, for reasons that are not clear, refused to attend. At this meeting the action of the Committee of Twelve was approved, and it was decided to vote for Lincoln after the complimentary balloting had been completed.

Pennsylvania was a more important prize than New Jersey. Its delegation had been growing more favorable toward Lincoln prior to the decision of the Committee of Twelve. Although this decision alone did not cause the shift, it served as one factor adding to the cumulative effect of the pro-Lincoln movement. Cameron’s hopes for support outside the state had vanished by May 17. The Seward people had made overtures in an effort to gain Pennsylvania, but Seward had proven unacceptable to both the Cameron and the anti-Cameron factions in the delegation. By the evening of May 17 the choice had narrowed down to Edward Bates and Lincoln, and Bates’s chances had been badly hurt when Lincoln men emphasized the hostility of the German vote to his candidacy. Finally, to gain the support of Pennsylvania, Cameron apparently was promised a place in Lincoln’s cabinet if he were elected. The total effect of these developments, including the action of the Committee of Twelve, was seen when the delegation caucused early on the morning of May 18. It was decided to vote for Lincoln on the third ballot after making complimentary votes for Cameron on the first ballot and for John McLean on the second. The growing “border state” support for Lincoln, manifest even before the Pennsylvania caucus, gave the Lincoln managers a strong hand for negotiations during the remainder of the night.

The convention reassembled at ten o’clock. Dudley nominated Dayton in due course, but only Lincoln and Seward received real

15 Luthin, First Lincoln Campaign, 154–160.
16 Ibid., 158.
17 Ibid., 157.
demonstrations. On the first ballot New Jersey cast her fourteen votes for Dayton, and Pennsylvania gave $47\frac{1}{2}$ of her fifty-four votes to Cameron. On the second ballot four of New Jersey’s Seward men split off, the other ten again voting for Dayton. At this point Pennsylvania, side-tracking its plan to vote for McLean, swung to Lincoln, adding forty-eight votes to his column. On the third ballot Dudley could announce eight of New Jersey’s votes for Lincoln, and at the conclusion of this ballot Lincoln was within one and a half votes of being nominated. A member of the Ohio delegation rose to report the shift of four more votes to Lincoln, and the decision had been made.

Dudley returned from Chicago to take a prominent part in the campaign as chairman of the New Jersey Republican state executive committee. New Jersey was one of the northern states most sympathetic to the South, and Dudley was forced to solicit both speakers and funds from outside the state. The result was a qualified success for the Republicans, four electoral votes going to Lincoln and three to Douglas.

In the distribution of the spoils of victory, Dudley and New Jersey had strong claims on the administration, although the bargain spoken of by Seward, “Dudley sold out New Jersey to Lincoln . . . and made Lincoln the Presidential Candidate on condition that he should make Dayton Minister to France, and Dudley Consul to Liverpool,” had no foundation in fact. Dudley journeyed to Springfield for a conference with Lincoln on the patronage. A strenuous effort was made to obtain a cabinet post for Dayton, and Lincoln seriously considered making Dayton Secretary of State. Eventually, Dayton was appointed minister to France after Seward had blocked his appointment to the Court of St. James.

19 Davis to Dudley, Dec. 31, 1860; James T. Sherman to Dudley, Mar. 21, 1861, ibid.
the favor by recommending an appointment for Dudley, but when Dayton was in Washington, the "war fever" was so strong and the urgency of military defense so great that nothing was accomplished.22

Dudley's health had been seriously affected by the intensity of the campaign, and he sailed for Europe to recuperate. On reaching Paris, he was pressed into service by Dayton, now the United States minister, to fill the vice-consulship there until a Lincoln appointee could arrive to replace the suspected secessionist of Buchanan's administration.23 Lincoln learned of this arrangement and urged the State Department to take Dudley's incumbency into consideration when the question of the selection of a permanent consul arose.24

Nothing came of Lincoln's intimation, and when Dudley returned to the United States in the late summer of 1861, he actively sought a diplomatic appointment. By this time most of the offices had been distributed, and the President informed Dudley that the only important positions left were the Liverpool consulship and the post of minister to Japan.25 Both assignments carried a salary of $7,500, and the ministership was offered to him at once. Dudley argued that he could not obtain the necessary medical care in Japan, but Lincoln wanted to save the consulship for Governor Gustave Koerner of Illinois and preferred to have Dudley accept the alternate position. The Liverpool post was also being sought by Friend S. Rutherford of Illinois and Leonard Swett, partner of David Davis, while Thurlow Weed apparently had promised the place to Robert H. Pruyn, one of his henchmen.26 Davis recognized Dudley's claim on the President—"few men in my opinion deserve more at the hands of the administration"—and he now wrote to Lincoln in Dudley's behalf.27 Following one or two later interviews with the President, and with the aid of a barrage of letters from prominent New Jersey Republicans, Dudley was able to establish his right to the Liverpool

22 Dayton to Dudley, Apr. 23, 1861; Sherman to Dudley, Mar. 21, 1861, Dudley Collection.
24 Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, IV, 466.
25 Undated manuscript in the Dudley Collection.
26 Diary of Orville Hickman Browning, I, 452; Carman and Luthin, Lincoln and the Patronage, 96-97, 100. Pruyn was made minister to Japan after Dudley was sent to Liverpool.
27 Davis to Dudley, July 12, 1861, Dudley Collection; Davis to Lincoln, Sept. 24, 1861, Dudley File, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives.
position, and Lincoln, without consulting Seward, wrote the Secretary a note instructing him to make out the commission.

Dudley proved to be a most able consul. According to Grant’s Secretary of the Navy, Lincoln described him as “the very best [consular?] officer the Government then had abroad.”28 He took the leading role in gathering evidence concerning the construction of Confederate warships in Great Britain, and his importance in stopping the Laird rams and other Southern vessels in England was second only to that of Charles Francis Adams. The relationship between Dudley and Seward as subordinate and chief in the Department of State was embarrassed by the events in Chicago, but Seward consciously endeavored to treat the consul “kindly and justly,” and he admitted that Dudley was “really a good officer.”29 When an effort was made in 1866, after the death of Lincoln, to remove Dudley, Seward came to his defense, and he remained in Liverpool as consul until 1872.

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28 George M. Robeson to Hamilton Fish, Mar. 23, 1869, ibid.
29 Diary of Orville Hickman Browning, II, 110.