

"UNCLE JOE" CANNON RECALLS LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES AND TIME WHEN HE WAS NOMINATED

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(International News Correspondent.)

Washington, Feb. 12.—Abraham Lincoln's famous series of debates with Stephen A. Douglas and his appearance at the Illinois state convention which put him forward for the presidential nomination in 1860 were intimately described today by former Speaker Josiah G. Cannon, the only living member of congress who was personally acquainted with the martyred president.

Cannon, nearly 87 years of age, and with a record of 46 years in congress back of him, was a rising young lawyer and politician in the ominous days of 1858 when "the little giant" and "the rail splitter" were contesting for the United States senate.

"I heard two of the debates between Lincoln and Douglas," "Uncle Joe" said. "One at Sullivan and the other at Charleston. I think I'd have journeyed over the state to hear the others if walking had not been poor.

"It was a wonderful contest between giants. Douglas was remarkably strong and resourceful; Lincoln failed to reach the senate but the whole country was aflame and at the end of those great debates he had a national, if not a worldwide reputation.

"When 1860 came, Illinois concluded to make him her candidate for the nomination for president.

Cannon Convention Delegate.

"We met at Decatur, Ill. I was a delegate to that convention—drove there in a farm wagon sixty miles across the prairie.

"The convention was held in a structure erected between two brick buildings with posts cut from the forest, stringers cut from the forest and covered with bows cut from the forest,—the ends open.

"Just about the time the convention was organized, a voice came: 'Make way for Dick Oglesby and John Hanks.'

"They came through bearing two walnut rails. These two rails were

set up and there was a legend on a strip of cloth: 'These rails were made by John Hanks and Abraham Lincoln!'

"The cry came for Lincoln—great, tall gaunt man that he was, they literally picked him up and passed him over the heads of the crowd.

"Somebody had asked him if it was proper for him to be there as he was a candidate for the presidency.

"A queer look came over Lincoln's face and he said: 'The truth is I am most too much of a candidate to be here, but hardly enough to stay away.'

"The Seward people were swept off their feet in that convention and a delegation unanimously chosen consisting of personal and political friends of Lincoln who went to Chicago to that convention held two or three weeks later in the wigwam.

"You know the result. Then came the campaign. Lincoln behaved very well. He did not make speeches. He answered a few letters.

"I saw him once after the election at Springfield. He was on his way, in a day coach and without companions, to go to Charleston to meet for the last time the old stepmother who called him, 'My boy, Abe.'"

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no title*