

Senator Palmer on the Chicago Convention of 1860.

Senator Palmer was among the Illinois men who went to the Chicago ~~convention~~ convention in 1860 and helped secure the nomination of Lincoln. He was not a delegate, but he was a Republican of great prominence, having been chairman of the first Republican state convention, four years previously. Earlier he had been a Democrat, but ~~the~~ the slavery question had alienated him from the Democracy in 1854. Senator Palmer says:

"In the preliminary struggle we ~~first~~ had to contend with an Illinois man who was opposing Lincoln's nomination. This was 'Long John' Wentworth. He was for Seward, and he assailed those who were managing Lincoln's campaign. He said we had cheated Lincoln out of the Senatorship in 1855, when Trumbull was elected. Wentworth went around the hotels talking for Seward and endeavoring to discredit Lincoln, and finally we detailed a man to follow him around and denounce him.

Says Senator Palmer
"Our great struggle ^{was} was to prevent Lincoln's nomination for the Vice Presidency. The Seward men were perfectly willing that he should go on the tail of the ticket. In fact, they seemed determined that he should be given the Vice Presidential nomination. We were ~~not~~ not troubled so much by the antagonism of the Seward men as by the overtures they were constantly making to us. They literally overwhelmed us with kindness. Judge David Davis came to me in the Tremont House, greatly agitated at the way things were going. He

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said: 'Palmer, you must go with me at once to see the New Jersey delegation.' I asked what I could do. 'Well,' said he, 'there is Judge Hornblower, a grave and venerable judge, who is insisting that Lincoln shall be nominated for Vice President--and Seward for President. We must convince the judge of his mistake.' We went; I was introduced to Judge Hornblower, and we talked about the matter for sometime. Judge Hornblower praised Seward, but he was especially effusive in expressing his admiration for Lincoln. He thought that Seward was clearly entitled to first place, and that Lincoln's eminent merits entitled him to second place. I listened for sometime and then said: 'Judge Hornblower, you may nominate Mr. Lincoln for Vice President, if you please; but I want you to understand that there are 40,000 Democrats in Illinois who will support this ticket if you give them an opportunity; but we are not Whigs, and we never expect to be Whigs. We will never consent to support two old Whigs on this ticket. We are willing to vote for Mr. Lincoln with a Democrat on the ticket; but we will not ~~consent~~ consent to vote for two old Whigs.' I have seldom seen Judge Hornblower's indignation ~~expressed~~ equalized. Turning to Judge Davis he said: 'Judge Davis, is it possible that party spirit so prevails in Illinois that Judge Palmer properly represents public opinion?' 'Oh,' said Davis, affecting ~~in~~ ~~in~~ some distress at what I had said; 'oh, my God, Judge, you can't account for the conduct of these old Locofocos. Will they do as Palmer says? Certainly. There are 40,000 of them, and, as Palmer says, not a ~~d~~ one of them will vote for two Whigs.' We left Hornblower in a towering

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rage. When we were back at the Tremont House I said: 'Davis, you are an infernal rascal to sit there and hear Hornblower berate me as he did. You really seemed to encourage him.' Judge Davis said nothing, but chuckled as if he greatly enjoyed the joke. This ~~was~~ incident is illustrative of the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ kind of work we had to do. We were compelled to resort to this argument, that the old Democrats ~~was~~ ^{then} ready to affiliate with the Republican party, would not ~~we~~ tolerate two Whigs on the ticket [—] in order to break up the movement to nominate Lincoln for Vice President. The Seward men recognized in Lincoln their most formidable rival, and that was why they wished to get him out of the way by giving him second place on the ticket. *

"Lincoln's friends went to Chicago without money, and they secured him the nomination without the use of money. After the nomination had been made John B. Haskins of Albany came into our room and asked us how much money we had spent. We told him ~~we~~ we had made the fight without incurring any expense whatever. 'What!' said ~~he~~ in amazement. 'No money necessary to nominate a man for President? You had better come down to Albany and teach us fellows something.'

"I do not know of any organization of Lincoln shouters in the galleries, but I have always suspected that Norman B. Judd and his able lieutenants took pains to see that there was a preponderance of Lincoln men in the galleries. Judd had charge of the Wigwam, and it was only natural that he should use his power to promote the cause of Lincoln. It was generally understood at the time that he had

discreetly done so. Every demonstration made it quite apparent.

* Interview with Daniel Palmer made for this magazine

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that the galleries were with Lincoln."

Senator Palmer remembers no striking incident of the state convention at Decatur. He does not recall introducing the resolution instructing for Lincoln, though he says that if the statement is found in the printed report it is no doubt true. He remembers making a speech in support of the resolution. Thomas J. Turner of Freeport (Lincoln's colleague in the Thirtieth Congress) was for Seward, as many others in Northern Illinois were, and he opposed the resolution and bitterly attacked Palmer. Palmer's reply (this Senator Cullom tells me) was a speech of tremendous force, and he carried the convention with him.--J. McC. Davis.