On May 28th, 1856, I became on of a party with Mr. Lincoln on our way from Danville to Bloomington to attend the first Republican state convention ever held in the state of Illinois. Our journey to Decatur was by means of a train over the Wabash railroad, and thence to Bloomington by a train over the Illinois Central railroad. As the trains then ran we arrived at Decatur some time before night and could get no train to Bloomington until the next morning, so the time had to be killed in the best way possible. Mr. Lincoln was a great lover of the woods and at once suggesyed that we go to the timber down in the Sangamon flats, which we did. The crowd was made up of young men in their twenties, except Mr. L. and very much enjoyed the stories and incidents told by him. Arriving at the timber we selected a large fallen tree for a seat and all sat down with the great man and enjoyed his talks in the most free and easy manner until near sundown. The trip next day to Bloomington, where so

Digital Images, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

manner until near sundown. The trip next day to Bloomington, where so much depended upon who came and how many entered into the new movement, showed Mr. Lincoln to be a little nervous. He looked through the cars for the faces of some of his old whig friends from southern Illinois, and finding some was cheerful over the prospect.

The convention met and Mr. Lincoln was the ruling spirit of the occasion. His old whig friends rallied around him for the formation of the new party and a ticket was nominated made up of men from both of the old parties which was subsequently elected. Mr. Lincoln greatly distinguished himself in the speech made by him which actually gave strength and direction to the campaign, pronounced by many of his friends as the greatest of his life.

From J.C. Cunningham
Urbana, Ill

Digital Images, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library