



Journal Divided – “Why Lincoln Won in 1860”

Excerpt from Chapter 16 of Michael Burlingame’s *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* (pgs 1859-1862)

Link to full Chapter Sixteen

<http://www.knox.edu/documents/pdfs/LincolnStudies/Burlingame,%20Vol%201,%20Chap%2016.pdf>

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Another Sucker denied that “honest Old Abe Lincoln” thought “a nig[g]er is as good as a poor man” and insisted that the candidate “is a working man” who “respects the poor man a good deal more than drunken old Stephen A Douglas or any of the democratic clique.”¹ On the stump, Henry S. Lane of Indiana called Lincoln “an apt illustration of our free institutions.” This “obscure child of labor spent a large portion of his life in the humble vocation of farm laborer, and when I look over this vast assembly, composed in part of young men, my heart grows stronger and my hope grows brighter. There listens to me, perhaps, this day, some honest son of toil who will yet reach the . . . position of President.”² Frank Blair claimed that by choosing a candidate with such a humble background, Republicans demonstrated “that their hearts are with the people.”³ Lincoln “is the representative of the great idea of the Republican party – labor – free labor,” Richard Yates told a crowd at Springfield “The poor boy . . . can point to Abraham Lincoln, and straighten himself up and say, ‘I have the same right and same opportunity to be President as any other boy.’”⁴

¹ James Ruston to Mattie Kirkpatrick, LaSalle County, Illinois, 17 September 1860, Vertical Files, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland.

² New York *Tribune*, 11 June 1860.

³ Speech of F. P. Blair, Jr., St. Louis, 22 May 1860, New York *Times*, 26 May 1860.

⁴ Speech of Richard Yates, Springfield, 7 June, New York *Tribune*, 20 June 1860.