

Journal Divided – “Make No Contracts”

Excerpt from Chapter 15 of Michael Burlingame’s *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* (pgs 1680-1684)

Link to full Chapter Fifteen

<http://www.knox.edu/documents/pdfs/LincolnStudies/Burlingame,%20Vol%201,%20Chap%2015.pdf>

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According to Henry C. Whitney, Baker “related that when he read the note to the delegates and workers gathered at the Lincoln headquarters he was greeted with a burst of laughter.” Davis, who guffawed louder than anyone else, said: “Lincoln ain’t here, and don’t know what we have to meet, so we will go ahead, as if we hadn’t heard from him, and he must ratify it.”¹ Davis and Swett negotiated with the leading Cameron operatives, John P. Sanderson and Joseph Casey, “in the wee small hours of Friday morning.”² Before the convention met, Sanderson had predicted that Lincoln, unlike other contenders, might be able to carry the Keystone State.³ Cameron was allegedly offered a cabinet post in return for the votes of the Pennsylvania delegates on the second ballot.⁴ The Cameron representatives, wary because their counterparts had no authorization from Lincoln to act, were reassured that the Rail-splitter would never repudiate a promise they made.⁵

¹ Jesse W. Weik, “Indiana at 1860 G. O. P. Convention in Chicago,” undated clipping from the Indianapolis *Sunday Star*, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne; Whitney, *Lincoln the Citizen*, 289.

² Swett, “David Davis,” address before the Chicago Bar Association, *Chicago Times*, 12 January 1887; Swett to the editor, *Chicago*, 13 July, *Chicago Tribune*, 14 July 1878; McClure, *Lincoln and Men of War-Times*, 157-58; Thurlow Weed Barnes, *Life of Thurlow Weed including His Autobiography and a Memoir* (2 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884), 2:292.

³ J. P. Sanderson to Edward McPherson, Philadelphia, 20 March 1860, McPherson Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴ Sources corroborating this conclusion are listed in John D. Stewart, II, “The Great Winnebago Chieftain: Simon Cameron’s Rise to Power, 1860-1867,” *Pennsylvania History* 39 (1972): 26n26. Cf. E. T. Bainbridge to Joseph Holt, [Louisville, Kentucky], 28 January 1863, Holt Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵ Whitney, *Lincoln the Citizen*, 289; Whitney, *Life on the Circuit*, ed. Angle, 101.