

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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Alexander K. McClure of Pennsylvania, chairman of the Republican State Committee, testified that “Two positions in the Cabinet, one for Pennsylvania and one for Indiana, were positively promised by David Davis at an early period of the contest.”¹ McClure added that the bargain with Pennsylvania was unnecessary, for Sanderson approached Swett and Davis with an offer to switch to Lincoln on the second ballot only after the delegation had made Lincoln their third choice, thus guaranteeing that the Illinoisan would receive their support once Cameron had been given a complimentary vote.² The deal specified that Cameron would receive a cabinet post if a majority of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation would back him for it.³ McClure reported that Lincoln was unaware of the bargain until early 1861.⁴ Upon learning of it, the Rail-splitter reportedly declared: “They have gambled me all around, bought and sold me a hundred times. I cannot begin to fill all the pledges made in my name.”⁵

¹ Reminiscences of McClure, Philadelphia, 28 October 1891, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, n.d., clipping, Lincoln Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

² McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 1:406.

³ McClure to Ward Hill Lamon, Philadelphia, 8 May 1871, Jeremiah Black Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴ McClure, *Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania*, 1:407.

⁵ Hollister, *Colfax*, 147n.