

## **Journal Divided – “That Presidential Grub”**

Excerpt from Chapter 14 of Michael Burlingame’s *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* (pgs 1523-1525)

**Link to full Chapter Fourteen:**

<http://www.knox.edu/documents/pdfs/LincolnStudies/Burlingame,%20Vol%201,%20Chap%2014.pdf>

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When Fell persisted, arguing that Lincoln was more electable than Seward, Chase, and the other potential candidates being discussed, Lincoln agreed: “I admit the force of much of what you say, and admit that I am ambitious, and would like to be President. I am not insensible to the compliment you pay me . . . but there is no such good luck in store of me as the presidency.”<sup>1</sup> The following spring, when Republican editors planned to endorse him for president, he balked. “I must, in candor, say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency,” he said. “I certainly am flattered, and gratified, that some partial friends think of me in that connection; but I really think it best for our cause that no concerted effort . . . should be made.”<sup>2</sup> When William W. Dannehower told Lincoln that his name was being seriously considered by Republican leaders for the presidency, he laughingly replied: “Why, Danenhower, this shows how political parties are degenerating, you and I can remember when we thought no one was fit for the Presidency but ‘Young Harry of the West,’ [i.e., Henry Clay] and now you seem to be seriously considering me for that position. It’s absurd.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by Jesse W. Fell, Normal, Illinois, 1882, in Osborn H. Oldroyd, ed., *The Lincoln Memorial: Album Immortelles* (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1882), 473-76.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas J. Pickett to Lincoln, Rock Island, 13 April 1859, Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress; Lincoln to Thomas J. Pickett, Springfield, 16 April 1859, Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln*, 3:377. To an Ohio politician, he repeated this humble self-estimate. Lincoln to Samuel Galloway, Springfield, 28 July 1859, Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln*, 3:395.

<sup>3</sup> Seth Eyland, *The Evolution of a Life* (New York: S. W. Green’s Son, 1884), 293.