

Journal Divided – “Railsplitter”
Excerpt from Chapter 14 of Michael Burlingame’s *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* (pgs 1633-1637)

Link to full Chapter Fourteen

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

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It is not entirely clear if Lincoln was surprised by the appearance of the rails. Oglesby allegedly reported that Lincoln “hunted up the rails himself, tied them together, and made sure they were ready for that scene in the convention.”¹ The delegates may also have been prepared for the presentation of the rails; the *Illinois State Journal* had a day earlier informed readers that “[a]mong the sights which will greet your eyes will be a lot of rails, mauled . . . thirty years ago, by old Abe Lincoln and John Hanks.”²

After the ovations for Lincoln, George Schneider, an ardent Seward supporter, presciently remarked that his favorite “has lost the Illinois delegation.”³

¹ Joseph Fifer told this to Carl Sandburg. Notes of an interview with Fifer, n.d., Sandburg-Barrett Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago. Oglesby and another delegate to the convention were Fifer’s informants.

² “Viator” to the editors, Decatur, 4 May, *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield), 7 May 1860.

³ Ida M. Tarbell, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (2 vols.; New York: McClure, Phillips, 1902), 1:340.