

Preparing for Greatness: Abraham Lincoln's Failed Term in Congress

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Abraham Lincoln represented the state of Illinois in the Thirtieth Congress from 1847 to 1849 as a Whig. According to historian Charles Strozier, Lincoln focused on three specific issues during his time in Congress: he came out “strongly against the Mexican War; he tried to introduce a bill in Congress to abolish the slave trade in Washington, D.C.; and he worked against Henry Clay and for Gen. Zachary Taylor in the 1848 presidential struggle. Lincoln was, in other words, antiwar, anti-slavery, and anti-Clay.”¹ Lincoln would only successfully accomplish one of his three specific tasks he set out to do as Congressman, as Zachary Taylor would be elected president. Lincoln's time in Congress has typically been only a footnote or passing topic in the life of the man who saved the Union, and historians have rarely dedicated more than a section of an article or chapter of a book to his first time in the District of Columbia. Lincoln failed as a Congressman, but his time in Congress and campaigning for Taylor in the 1848 presidential campaign were politically important and personally shaping for the man who would go on to lead the nation as president. Despite his failings, Lincoln's time in Congress was a transformational moment in his life that saw the beginnings of the fine-tuning of his speaking and writing style, the sharpening of his political aptitude, and the solidifying of his views on the extension of slavery.

One of the three specific issues Lincoln worked on during his time in Congress was the Spot Resolutions. The Spot Resolutions requested that President James Polk provide Congress with the exact location or spot upon which blood was spilled on American soil. Polk had claimed in 1846 that blood was spilled first on American soil and thus justified the war that way.² Lincoln introduced the Spot Resolutions on December 22nd, 1847, which was extremely late into the conflict. The war would officially end in early February of 1848, essentially only one month after Lincoln introduced his resolutions. Specifically, Lincoln asked in the resolutions “whether the spot of soil on which the blood of our *citizens* was shed, as in his messages, was, or was not, within the territories of Spain, at least from the treaty of 1819 until the Mexican Revolution,” and “whether that spot is, or is not, within the territory which was wrestled from Spain, by the Mexican Revolution.”³ Historian Charles Strozier argues that “Lincoln over-lawyered himself” and that the type of probing questioning that he was posing to President Polk was good for a

¹ Charles B. Strozier, “Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings” in *The Historian's Lincoln* ed. Gabor Borritt (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 230.

² David J. Gerleman, “Representative Lincoln at Work: Reconstructing a Legislative Career from Original Archival Documents,” *The Capitol Dome*, vol. 54, no. 2 (2017-2018): 33-46.

³ Charles Strozier, “Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings,” 231.

courtroom but not so good for the halls of Congress.⁴ Though Lincoln had served in the Illinois State Legislature from 1834 to 1842, he was the most experienced in the field of law and in making legal arguments that fit into the courtroom. The language and nature of the Spot Resolutions made them ineffective and irrelevant in the grand scheme of things, as Strozier points out that “in the end the worst indignity of all occurred -- no one really seemed to hear or care.”⁵ Polk ignored him and instead allowed pro-war Democrats to respond to Lincoln. Additionally, not a single Whig openly supported him on the House floor.⁶ Lincoln’s Spot Resolutions failed, and his first grand undertaking as Congressman blew up in his face. But Lincoln recognized he had been defeated, and he removed himself from further debates surrounding the war that would end very soon after his resolutions. Lincoln would step back from things in Congress for a period before moving on to his next challenge, though not much time would pass between his Spot Resolutions and his bill to abolish the slave trade in D.C. as his time in Congress was limited to only two years.

The Abolition of Slavery in D.C.

Lincoln’s second big initiative that he undertook as Congressman was the introduction of a resolution that would have abolished slavery in the District of Columbia. According to Strozier, “All sensitive observers, including some Southerners, agreed that it was unseemly to allow slaves to be publicly traded in the nation’s capital.”⁷ With the seeming agreement among a majority of those in Congress that the practice in the nation’s capital was an abomination or at the very least “unseemly” shows that Lincoln’s introduction of this bill was not without its merits. Additionally, in his speech on the House floor introducing the piece of legislation, Lincoln stated

That he was authorized to say, that of about fifteen of the leading citizens of the District of Columbia to whom this proposition had been submitted, there was not one but who approved of the adoption of such a proposition. He did not wish to be misunderstood. He did not know whether or not they would vote for this bill on the first Monday of April; but he repeated, that out of fifteen persons to whom it had been submitted, he had authority to say that every one of them desired that some proposition like this should pass.⁸

⁴ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union” 231.

⁵ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union,” 231.

⁶ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union,” 231.

⁷ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union,” 232.

⁸ Abraham Lincoln, “Speech on the House Floor” in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 2:20-22.

It seemed as though the bill was heading for success. Strozier notes that the fact that Lincoln went through the trouble of rounding up support among those in the district shows that he might have had a decent amount of support for the resolution in Congress.⁹

On January 13th, 1849, Lincoln made his intentions to introduce the resolution himself clear to his colleagues in the House. This was after his earlier efforts to introduce the bill did not amount to anything significant, including his aforementioned floor speech. Lincoln would not reintroduce the bill, though, and, according to James Quay Howard, Lincoln stated “finding that I was abandoned by my former backers and having little personal influence, I *dropped* the matter knowing that it was useless to prosecute the business at that time.”¹⁰ Strozier supports this claim, stating “Three days later [following his initial statement of support for the bill] he gave further notice of his intention to introduce the bill, but he never brought it up.”¹¹ Whether his support for the measure faded because Lincoln was a lame duck and was set to leave Washington in a few months or another reason is unclear. However, this failure by Lincoln signaled the end of a relatively useless stint in Congress. Lincoln had failed at nearly all he set out to do in Congress viz. the Spot Resolutions and this bill. Additionally, his support for Taylor would turn out to be all for naught. His letters to Taylor regarding a position were never returned, and he was forced to return to his law practice once his term in Congress concluded.

1848 Presidential Election

The 1848 Presidential election, following the nominating conventions, would be a three-person contest among the Whig nominee General Zachary Taylor, the Democratic nominee Secretary of State Lewis Cass, and Free Soiler former President Martin Van Buren. Without the entrance of the Free Soil Party and their accomplished nominee, it seems unlikely that Lincoln would have had as big of a role in the Taylor campaign as he did. This is because of Lincoln’s ability to relate with the Free Soilers and their party platform opposing the extension of slavery, a view that Lincoln also held.

The creation of the Free Soil Party was spurred by the extremely divided Democratic Party Convention which met in Baltimore in 1848. Historian Michael Holt explains that the main division among Democrats was between the Barnburners and Hunkers who split the powerful New York delegation.¹² The Barnburners were radical Democrats who were anti-slavery, while the Hunkers were conservative Democrats who were pro-slavery. Holt explains that “The Hunkers seized control of the party in 1847, and the Barnburners, who probably represented the

⁹ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union,” 232.

¹⁰ David H. Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 388.

¹¹ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union,” 232.

¹² Michael Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 67.

majority of New York Democrats, held a separate convention and ensured Hunker defeat in the general election. In 1848, the two factions again held separate conventions and sent separate delegations to the Baltimore convention national convention.”¹³ With this split within the Democratic Party, the nomination of Secretary Cass, an ardent proponent of popular sovereignty, led to many defections away from the Democratic nominee in November 1848.

Even before the nominating conventions, Free Soil support was at its peak and the presidential campaign was beginning to heat up. Historian Holman Hamilton explains that “the campaign was off to a sizzling start. Even before the Buffalo convention, Free-Soil meetings were held in Geauga, Lake, Butler, Columbiana, Madison, Mahoning, Cuyahoga, Trumbull and Knox counties [Ohio]. If some anti-extension Democrats fell away from Cass, a majority of Ohio’s Free-Soilers were Whigs--and it was small satisfaction to know Democrats also had troubles.”¹⁴ The “troubles” Hamilton refers to have been made clear on the Democratic side. On the Whig side though, the Free Soil Party’s role in taking votes from Taylor remained to be seen. On the one hand, Taylor, a slaveholding Louisiana resident who had not taken really any clear positions on anything political in his career, had an appeal to some Southerners who feared Cass’s popular sovereignty was anti-extensionism in hiding. On the other hand, free soil Whigs like Lincoln might have been more inclined to support Martin Van Buren and the Free Soil Party because of their clear opposition to the extension of slavery.

In Massachusetts, the Free Soil Party appeared to present more of a challenge to the Whig status quo than anywhere else. According to Holman Hamilton, Bay Stater “Samuel Hoar guided a Whig minority faction [at the Free Soil Convention], which repudiated Cass and Taylor and made C.F. Adams Van Buren’s running mate.”¹⁵ Furthermore, Hamilton recounts another Bay Stater at the Free Soil convention who was “Waving the Buffalo banner ‘Free Soil—Free Speech—Free Labor—Free Men.’”¹⁶ This Bay Stater waving the banner was Charles Sumner, a future United States Senator for Massachusetts. The Free Soil Party had some of its most notable Northern support in Massachusetts. Though Van Buren would only carry one county in the state (not to mention not win a single electoral vote), there was no polling and appearances made a difference.

Because of the (at least) appearance of Free Soil Party strength in Massachusetts, Lincoln would be dispatched there several times as Congressman in 1848. Lincoln was a member of the “Young Indians,” the “pro-Taylor congressional group.”¹⁷ Lincoln was not the only member of

¹³ Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development*, 67.

¹⁴ Holman Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier in the White House* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc, 1941), 110.

¹⁵ Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor*, 111.

¹⁶ Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor*, 111.

¹⁷ Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor*, 63.

this newly formed group supporting Taylor for President. Included among the group's ranks were Congressman Truman Smith of Connecticut as well as "two Whig representatives from Indiana, three from Ohio, five from Pennsylvania, and four from New Jersey."¹⁸ This wide array of support for Taylor among congress members was echoed at the Whig Convention as "not only did virtually all southern Whigs support the military hero rather than a known advocate of Whig measures, but so too did fully three-fourths of the northern Whigs."¹⁹ Lincoln's political calculation that Taylor was the better candidate to support in 1848 over his idol Henry Clay seemed to be heading in the right direction as the general election campaign began to heat up.

Historiography

Although Lincoln's time in Congress has not dominated an entire book as other points of his life have, historians have dedicated chapters and essays on the interesting case of Congressman Lincoln. Possibly most notably, David Herbert Donald's all-encompassing book *Lincoln* spends a respectable amount of time on Lincoln's time in Congress as well as the lead up to the 1848 election. Although they had a very successful midterm election, Donald argues that the Whigs were in disarray leading up to the 1848 election.²⁰ Donald writes that "[Lincoln] found his party in disarray . . . [P]arty leaders were troubled by the outlook of the 1848 presidential election."²¹ What truly troubled the Whigs, Donald argues, was which issues they would be able to use to advance their cause against the Democrats. To Lincoln's benefit, Donald argues that "the only issue on which the Democrats appeared to be vulnerable was the President's role in originating the Mexican War."²² As Lincoln began to find his way in the halls of Congress, this thinking (which was, according to Donald supported by Whig Party leaders) led to Lincoln's Spot Resolutions and open opposition to the war in 1847.

Unlike Charles Strozier, who argues that the Spot Resolutions were a complete and utter failure, Donald paints the Spot Resolutions in a much different light. Donald explains that a few days after Lincoln's resolutions, Representative George Ashmun of Massachusetts "introduced a resolution declaring that the war had been 'unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States.'"²³ Furthermore, Donald explains that a few days later the

¹⁸ Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln*, 197.

¹⁹ Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development*, 198.

²⁰ Donald, *Lincoln*, 122.

²¹ Donald, *Lincoln*, 122.

²² Donald, *Lincoln*, 122.

²³ Donald, *Lincoln*, 123.

resolution was adopted “by the votes of eighty-five Whig representatives, including Lincoln’s.”²⁴ This is juxtaposed with Strozier who argued that Lincoln’s Spot Resolutions suffered “the worst indignity” by being ignored.²⁵ Contradictorily, Donald seems to backtrack from the apparent success of Lincoln’s resolutions as he later states that “In Washington nobody paid much attention to his [Lincoln’s] resolutions, which the House neither debated nor adopted, or to his speech. The President made no response to Lincoln’s interrogatories; he never mentioned Lincoln’s name, even in his voluminous diaries.”²⁶ This view from Donald is much more in line with that of Strozier, which aligns with Donald’s seeming retraction.

Kenneth Winkle, in his book *The Young Eagle*, agrees with Donald’s assessment of the aftermath of Lincoln’s Spot Resolutions, which greatly weakened the Whig Party in Lincoln’s Congressional District. Winkle argues that Democratic criticism of Lincoln’s opposition to the Mexican-American War was detrimental to the Whig Party’s chances of retaining Lincoln’s seat.²⁷ The real sign of bad things to come for the Whigs in Lincoln’s Congressional District, Winkle and Donald argue, came when Whigs did not retain the seat. Donald explains that “Condemnation from Democrats was to be expected, and discounted, but Lincoln was troubled by the faintness of praise he received from fellow Whigs.”²⁸ In that same vein, Winkle writes “Lincoln’s position proved a tremendous liability during the next congressional election.”²⁹ Donald and Winkle are in agreement regarding the political damage done by Lincoln to his local Whig Party. Donald and Winkle do not share the same reasoning for Lincoln’s views regarding the war though, as Winkle argues that Lincoln stood against the war on principle while Donald argues that Lincoln’s opposition was a political calculation aimed at securing the presidency for the Whigs in 1848. Donald argues that “Lincoln, working closely with Alexander H. Stephens and the small group of other Whigs in the House who called themselves the Young Indians, thought he could resolve the difficulty [preventing the Whig opposition to the war from being a handicap in 1848]. Whigs could assail the Democrats for having wrongly begun the war—and then demonstrate how loyally they supported their country’s cause by nominating a general who was winning that war [Zachary Taylor].”³⁰ Winkle argues, in Lincoln’s own words, that the reasoning for the Spot Resolutions was for personal gain. Quoting a letter from Lincoln to his

²⁴ Donald, *Lincoln*, 123.

²⁵ Strozier, “Lincoln’s Quest for Union,” 231.

²⁶ Donald, *Lincoln*, 124.

²⁷ Kenneth J. Winkle, *The Young Eagle: The Rise of Abraham Lincoln* (Dallas: Taylor Trade Publishing), 242.

²⁸ Donald, *Lincoln*, 124.

²⁹ Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 242.

³⁰ Donald, *Lincoln*, 126.

law partner Herndon, Winkle writes “‘As you are all so anxious for me to distinguish myself, I have concluded to do so, before losing.’ About a week later, he introduced his famous ‘Spot Resolutions.’”³¹ This interpretation by Winkle fits with his overarching thesis, which looks more critically at the myths of Lincoln. Donald’s interpretation of Lincoln being a cunning politician in his first year in Congress falls in line with a traditionalist view of the mythos of Lincoln. It should be noted that these differing interpretations may not be as different or uncommon, as other authors, including Strozier, have differing opinions on the reasoning for Lincoln’s Spot Resolutions.

In sticking with his detailed approach to covering the political life around Lincoln, Winkle covers the 1848 Congressional election in Lincoln’s district extremely well. Winkle explains that Lincoln, who was bound by a gentleman’s agreement that meant the local Whigs would rotate holding the Congressional seat, bowed out of the race while his law partner Stephen Logan ran in his stead.³² Winkle is extremely detailed here in outlining the political climate of Lincoln’s Congressional District following Lincoln’s unsuccessful stint as representative, stating that “Whigs lost the district for the first time in a decade. Logan lost an extremely close election by a mere 106 votes. Ominously, however, Logan ran 7 percent behind Lincoln’s total in 1846 and lost ground in all eleven counties in the district.”³³ This detailed recounting of what occurred in the aftermath of Representative Lincoln helps to further Winkle’s thesis that Lincoln was not infallible and offers a much more objective look into Lincoln’s political career.

In his two-volume biography of Lincoln, Michael Burlingame offers more insight into Lincoln’s personal life while serving in Congress than his predecessors or contemporaries. In describing some of Lincoln’s pastimes and relationships with colleagues in Washington D.C., Burlingame writes that “Lincoln’s humor won him friends all over Capitol Hill. Around Christmas of 1847, he began to frequent the small post office of the House of Representatives, where members often gathered to swap yarns. After diffidently remaining silent for a while, he eventually started to tell stories and quickly outstripped all competitors.”³⁴ Lincoln seemed to be developing great relationships with colleagues, and, as Burlingame points out, even gained the favor of some journalists upon his arrival to the capitol: “Colleagues in the House admired not only Lincoln’s humor but also his character and personality. In May 1848, a Washington correspondent reported that “no member of whom I have any knowledge, possesses in a higher degree the respect and confidence of the House” than Lincoln— heady praise for a newcomer.”³⁵

³¹ Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 241.

³² Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 244-245.

³³ Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 244.

³⁴ Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 1:261.

³⁵ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 261.

It seems, at least according to Burlingame, that Lincoln was gaining quite a bit of favor among his colleagues and felt that these relationships might be able to be leveraged for him to actually get some work done.

According to Burlingame, Lincoln's prowess in the social sphere did not translate to significant accomplishments in Congress. One of the main reasons for this lack of accomplishment by Lincoln was due to the fact that he was a mere freshman congressman placed in the back row. Burlingame explains that "As a lowly freshman, Lincoln occupied an undesirable seat at the back of the House chamber in what was known as the "Cherokee Strip" on the Whig side of the aisle. He also was assigned to unimportant committees (those on Expenditures in the War Department and on Post Offices and Post Roads)."³⁶ Not in the ideal position to make a "magnus opus," Lincoln's first speech on the House floor was about a mail contract. Although pertinent to his committee assignments, it was not an inspiring topic.

On the subject of the Spot Resolutions, Burlingame's position on their success (rather their lack of success) is close to the positions of the other historians named here. Namely, Burlingame argues that the Spot Resolutions were ineffective and a failure. Burlingame also discusses reactions to the resolutions and describes them as largely partisan, stating that "reaction to the speech was predictably partisan" and echoed the sentiments of Winkle that Lincoln was expecting the Democrats to pounce on his speech. Pounce the Democrats did, as the most critical remarks on his resolutions came from Illinois Democrats. Burlingame states that "The shrillest criticism came from the Illinois Democrats. In Sangamon County, they met to condemn Lincoln for supporting 'the schemes of . . . apologists and defenders of Mexico, and revilers of their own country.' A mass meeting in Clark County denounced Lincoln for his resolutions "against his own country" and urged that they 'be long remembered by his constituents.'"³⁷ Similar to Winkle and Donald, Burlingame argues that the Spot Resolutions and the immediate political after effects of them severely damaged Whig prospects in Lincoln's congressional district.

In his article "Always a Whig in Politics," Joel Silbey discusses the political astuteness of Lincoln and describes Lincoln as a strict partisan who put many hours of work into shaping the Illinois Whig Party into a modern political organization.³⁸ Silbey writes that "As part of his explicit commitment to Whiggery, Lincoln also was a staunch articulator and promoter of Whig attitudes, values and policies. He helped codify, institutionalize and perpetuate his party's policy stances."³⁹ Silbey explains that Lincoln's articulate manner of speaking made him an easy choice to speak across the country on behalf of the Whig Party. Silbey importantly notes that in addition to the speaking tours Lincoln carried out in Illinois every election year starting in the 1830s and

³⁶ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 263.

³⁷ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 269-70.

³⁸ Joel Silbey, "'Always a Whig in Politics': The Partisan Life of Abraham Lincoln," *Papers of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, vol. 8 no. 1 (January 1986): 26.

³⁹ Silbey, "'Always a Whig in Politics,'" 25.

going into the 1850s, Lincoln traversed the country as well.⁴⁰ This experience and his proven speaking abilities are no doubt a large reason why Taylor and the Whigs selected Lincoln to travel to Massachusetts during the 1848 Presidential Campaign.

On the topic of Lincoln's only term in Congress, Silbey points out that "His voting record over two sessions of the Thirtieth Congress showed no policy ambiguity when he responded to the range of issues considered. Lincoln, the lone Illinois Whig congressman, voted as he spoke. 'A faithful party man,' he never 'skulked' a vote on touchy issues,' proving himself to be 'a mainstream Western Whig.'"⁴¹ While the majority of Lincoln's time in Congress was very uninspiring, he did toe the party line, which his voting record reflects. In regard to Lincoln's more memorable efforts, Silbey explains that Lincoln's Spot Resolutions were a highly politically calculated move. Silbey argues that "Even his most famous action in those years followed the partisan norm. He was the focal point, as is well known, for a sustained assault on President Polk's Mexican War policy. Opposition to 'Mr. Polk's War' was a party issue."⁴² Silbey's considerations of partisan motivations when detailing Lincoln's actions in Congress offers insight that the previously discussed historians neglect or fail to mention. Specifically, for example, Strozier lacks any mention of political considerations made by Lincoln leading up to the introduction of the Spot Resolutions and instead focuses solely on the political reverberations caused by the resolutions.

Mary Todd's and Lincoln's Relationship

During his time in Congress, Lincoln and Mary Todd were apart from each other for the longest period of their marriage. Mary Todd joined Lincoln in Washington D.C., but she did not stay for the entire two years as she left shortly after their journey to D.C. Lincoln and Mary Todd rarely corresponded during their time apart until 1848, when they corresponded three times. In these letters to Mary Todd, Lincoln professes his regret for sending her away from him in D.C. and expresses his desire for her to rejoin him. The letters, though few in number, give insight into Lincoln's state of mind while in Congress and offer a look into his opinion of the type of work he was doing as Congressman. Overall, in the letters Lincoln paints a pretty depressing view of his life and work and harbors some regrets and longing for his wife who he had not seen for over a year.

On April 16th, 1848, Lincoln wrote and sent a letter to Mary Todd expressing his deepest regret for her not being present with him in D.C. and the lack of mental stimulation in his work. Lincoln wrote that "In this troublesome world, we are never quite satisfied. When you were here, I thought you hindered me some in attending to business; but now, having nothing but business—no variety—it has grown exceedingly tasteless to me. I hate to sit down and direct

⁴⁰ Silbey, "Always a Whig in Politics," 25.

⁴¹ Silbey, "Always a Whig in Politics," 26.

⁴² Silbey, "Always a Whig in Politics," 26.

documents, and I hate to stay in this old room by myself. You know I told you in last Sunday's [sic] letter, I was going to make a little speech during the week; but the week has passed without my getting a chance to do so; and now my interest in the subject has passed away too."⁴³ Lincoln was clearly very lonely in D.C. and expressed that though he initially thought Mary Todd would be burdensome to his work, his work had become burdensome to his mental well-being. It seems, in this letter, Lincoln felt as though Mary Todd would have offered some much needed company and much needed relief from his monotonous tasks as a Congressman. Outside of the beginning of the letter expressing his feelings of loneliness and boredom, the remainder of the letter features little to no insight into the thoughts of Lincoln and deals with non-consequential "small talk."

On June 12th, 1848, Lincoln wrote another letter to Mary Todd which seems to be responding to a lost letter from her in which she expresses her desire to come back to D.C. to be with Lincoln. In the letter, Lincoln writes

On my return from Philadelphia, yesterday, where, in my anxiety I had been led to attend the Whig convention I found your last letter. I was so tired and sleepy, having ridden all night, that I could not answer it till to-day; and now I have to do so in the H.R. The leading matter in your letter, is your wish to return to this side of the Mountains. Will you be a *good girl* in all things, if I consent? Then come along, and that as *soon* as possible. Having got the idea in my head, I shall be impatient till I see you. You will not have money enough to bring you; but I presume your uncle will supply you, and I will refund him here. By the way you do not mention whether you have received the fifty dollars I sent you. I do not much fear but that you got it; because the want of it would have induced you [to?] say something in relation to it. If your uncle is already at Lexington, you might induce him to start on earlier than the first of July; he could stay in Kentucky longer on his return, and so make up for lost time. Since I began this letter, the H.R. has passed a resolution for adjourning on the 17th. July, which probably will pass the Senate. I hope this letter will not be disagreeable to you; which, together with the circumstances under which I write, I hope will excuse me for not writing a longer one. Come on just as soon as you can. I want to see you, and our dear—*dear* boys very much. Everybody here wants to see our dear Bobby. Affectionately A. Lincoln.⁴⁴

An interesting point made by Lincoln in this letter is the phrase "The leading matter in your letter, is your wish to return to this side of the Mountains. Will you be a *good girl* in all things, if

⁴³ Abraham Lincoln, "Letter to Mary Todd Lincoln," 16 April 1848, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 1:465.

⁴⁴ Abraham Lincoln, "Letter to Mary Todd Lincoln," 12 June 1848, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 1:477.

I consent?”⁴⁵ This seems to be a bit of manipulation from Lincoln, who most certainly wants his wife and children to come visit him, as he knows that Mary Todd is also very interested in coming and visiting him. It seems as though Lincoln made a point to say this in order to have a reasonable explanation for asking Mary Todd to leave D.C. if she were to become too much to handle. In addition to serving a functional purpose, the phrasing in the letter is humorous and offers some insight into the marriage of Lincoln and Mary Todd.

While Lincoln and Mary Todd’s marriage was likely strained during his time in Congress, if for no other reason than distance, Lincoln’s correspondence with Mary Todd while in Congress offers insight into their relationship as well as Lincoln’s feelings regarding the type of work he was doing in Congress. No doubt, Lincoln longed for Mary Todd to join him as his term was coming to a close. By 1848, it had been over a year since he had last seen his wife. Lincoln’s political shortcomings also likely played a role in his longing for his wife to rejoin him in D.C. As Lincoln’s Spot Resolutions and bill to abolish slavery in Washington D.C. failed, his opinion regarding the type of work and the meaning of work as Congressman was weighing heavily on him.⁴⁶ The timing of the two letters discussed here took place in the Spring and Summer which means Lincoln had not yet embarked on his journeys to Massachusetts to stump for Taylor. Had he known in advance he was going to be doing that, he might have offered Mary Todd a chance to meet him there. Additionally, as the campaign season wore on in 1848, Lincoln’s opinion of his work began to shift back to some form of meaningfulness, and he might have been interested in Mary Todd joining him for electioneering activities.

The Stump Speeches

As Abraham Lincoln tried to find his way in Congress, he was called on by General Zachary Taylor, the Whig Party candidate for President in 1848, to speak on behalf of Taylor across the country. Lincoln delivered a total of six speeches on behalf of Taylor in 1848, the majority of which were given in Massachusetts and outside of Illinois. It made sense for Lincoln to be chosen to deliver stump speeches in a northern state like Massachusetts, where Lincoln’s views on slavery would have tempered northern Whig fears about Taylor, who owned slaves. It also made sense for Lincoln to deliver these speeches on behalf of Taylor as he had already begun to develop into quite a good orator in Congress.⁴⁷ While the actual transcriptions of the speeches have been lost, reporters covered each of the six speeches in varying detail.

The best coverage of one of Lincoln’s stump speeches, which features quotes, comes from the *Bristol County Democrat’s* coverage of Lincoln’s speech in Taunton, Massachusetts. While the paper is politically opposed to Lincoln’s positions, the account offers insight into Lincoln’s own rhetorical style through the paper’s commentary on the contents of the speech.

⁴⁵ Lincoln, “Letter to Mary Todd Lincoln,” 12 June 1848.

⁴⁶ Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 244.

⁴⁷ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 262.

The *Bristol County Democrat's* account begins with a description of the event held in Union Hall and a synopsis of the crowd's reaction, stating

The Taylor men were well entertained Wednesday evening, the 20th inst., at Union Hall, by an address from the Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. The address as well as the speaker was such as to give unlimited satisfaction to the disheartened Taylorites. Such a treat it is indeed seldom their good luck to get, and they were in ecstasies [sic]. At former meetings their spirits were too low for a good hearty cheer, but on this occasion 'the steam was up.' It was reviving to hear a man speak as if he believed what he was saying and had a grain or two of feeling mixed up with it; one who could not only speak highly of Taylor, but could occasionally swell with indignation or burst in hatred on the Free Soilers. When political spite runs high nothing can be too pungent or severe, and the speaker is appreciated in proportion as his statements are rash and unscrupulous.⁴⁸

The argument that Lincoln laid out in his address to this particular Whig club in Taunton sought to showcase the principles of Zachary Taylor, a Mexican-American War veteran who had no political experience. It seems as though the principles of Taylor were to be what would get him elected because of Taylor's lack of pronounced platform points. Lincoln argued that "General Taylor, *has* principles, though he has not given expression to them on the Tariff, Bank and other questions of policy."⁴⁹ The author of the account of the speech rebukes this though, by quoting a letter from Taylor stating "As regards the second and third inquiries (about a bank and tariff), I am not prepared to answer them. *I could only do so after investigating them.* I am no politician; near forty years of my life have been passed on the Western frontier and in the Indian count[r]y."⁵⁰ In an effort to shore up support for Taylor among his fellow Whigs, Lincoln stated that "We can't go for General Taylor because he is not a Whig. Van Buren is not a Whig; therefore, we go for him."⁵¹ This quote showcases Lincoln's position on Taylor's candidacy and offers a bit of humor. Lincoln was an anti-slavery Whig who, like many of those he was talking to in Massachusetts, were a bit nervous of Taylor's positions (or lack thereof) especially regarding slavery. Lincoln was a partisan who had seen and been disaffected by Whig defections from their presidential candidates in the past, namely with Henry Clay in 1844. This quote by Lincoln points out the hypocrisy of Whigs who would go for Van Buren over their own party's nominee.

In his speech to a Whig delegation to the convention in Worcester, Massachusetts, Lincoln utilized allusions to being an "everyday" man who pulled himself up by his bootstraps, a

⁴⁸ Lincoln, "Speech at Taunton Massachusetts," 21 September 1848, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 1:53-61.

⁴⁹ Lincoln, "Speech at Taunton Massachusetts."

⁵⁰ Lincoln, "Speech at Taunton Massachusetts."

⁵¹ Lincoln, "Speech at Taunton Massachusetts."

method he had used in some of his best speeches. This was also coupled with his Midwestern sensibility and showcased by his quip that it was good to be on “this side of the mountains.”⁵² In this speech, Lincoln also discussed slavery and his Whig position on slavery, arguing

. . . that the people of Illinois agreed entirely with the people of Massachusetts on this subject, except perhaps that they did not keep so constantly thinking about it. All agreed that slavery was an evil, but that we were not responsible for it and cannot affect it in States of this Union where we do not live. But, the question of the *extension* of slavery to new territories of this country, is a part of our responsibility and care, and is under our control.⁵³

This was not a new position by Lincoln on slavery and was one that would not change until much later in life when he became a strong proponent of the 13th Amendment as president in 1865. In fact, that same year Lincoln introduced a resolution that would have banned slavery in Washington, D.C., under the clear discretion of the federal government. The sentiment behind his resolution is felt in this speech as well and showcase his commitment to the prevention of the extension of slavery into new territories as being under the purview of the federal government.

The speech would end with similar notes regarding Taylor as a principled man: “We had a candidate whose personal character and principles he had already described, whom he could not eulogize if he would. Gen. Taylor had been constantly, perseveringly, quietly standing up, *doing his duty*, and asking no praise or reward for it. He was and must be just the man to whom the interests, principles and prosperity of the country might be entrusted.”⁵⁴ These points about Taylor being a principled man would show up in all of his stump speeches for the general and presidential candidate and showcased the type of apprehensions other Whigs felt for Taylor as their nominee.

An interesting point of interest in regard to these speeches is the fact that Lincoln never spoke to anyone other than people within his own party. Another point of interest is that, as far as we can tell, all of the speeches he delivered on behalf of the Taylor campaign were delivered in Massachusetts save for two, with one being delivered in Lacon, Illinois, and the other being delivered in Chicago. Taylor would not win Illinois in the general election, but he would win Massachusetts. It seems that the purpose of these speeches to Whigs and potential Free Soil deserters was to showcase a Western Whig who held similar views about the prevention of slavery’s extension into territories, the Free Soil party’s single issue. While this raises questions about why Lincoln did not join the Free Soil party (likely due to his ambitions for future office), Lincoln was utilized as a campaign representative in a state that he had no connections to except

⁵² Lincoln, “Speech at Worcester Massachusetts,” 12 September 1848, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 2:1-5.

⁵³ Lincoln, “Speech at Worcester Massachusetts.”

⁵⁴ Lincoln, “Speech at Worcester Massachusetts.”

similar politics. This was a strategically sound strategy by the Taylor campaign, and it also allowed Lincoln to gain experience on a national stage where he was able to sharpen his rhetorical skills.

Two years after the presidential election of 1848, Zachary Taylor died and Lincoln was selected to deliver a eulogy. While some of the stylistic improvements and elements that are not seen in prior Lincoln speeches can be attributed to the topic of the speech, Lincoln's eulogy of the former president offers insight into the development of his speaking style. Most notably, Lincoln posits "I fear the one *great* question of the day, is not so likely to be partially acquiesced in by the different sections of the Union, as it would have been, could Gen. Taylor have been spared to us. Yet, under all circumstances, trusting to our Maker, and through his wisdom and beneficence, to the great body of our people, we will not despair, nor despond."⁵⁵ This section of the speech is extremely wordy but it does echo some of Lincoln's most famous speeches such as his First Inaugural Address and the Gettysburg Address. This section of the eulogy truly sounds like a rough draft of the final remarks of Lincoln's First Inaugural Address where he proclaimed

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.⁵⁶

Specifically, the "all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature," rhetorically sounds like a polished version of the section of the Taylor eulogy outlined previously through the mention of the Union, divine Providence's hand, and the appeal to one's sensibilities. Though these themes are not outwardly apparent in Lincoln's eulogy of Taylor, when looking at the two speeches side-by-side, the development of rhetoric is clear.

As with all writers and speakers, refinement comes with time and practice. Lincoln was no different in this regard. His eulogy of Taylor featured some hints of his great oratorical ability, such as when he wrote that "the Presidency, even to the most experienced politicians, is no bed of roses; and Gen. Taylor like others, found thorns within it. No human being can fill that station and escape censure. Still I hope and believe when Gen. Taylor's official conduct shall come to be viewed in the calm light of history, he will be found to have *deserved* as little as any who have succeeded him."⁵⁷ This excerpt from the eulogy of Taylor features some semblance of

⁵⁵ Lincoln, "Eulogy of Zachary Taylor," July 1850, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 2:84-90.

⁵⁶ Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address," 4 March 1861, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 4:262-271.

⁵⁷ Lincoln, "Eulogy of Zachary Taylor."

the “plain-speak” Lincoln would adopt later in his political career but also a more rigid tone. This rigidity is not only present in Lincoln’s early works. In his First Inaugural address, Lincoln writes “I now reiterate these sentiments, and in doing so I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming Administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause—as cheerfully to one section as to another.”⁵⁸ This excerpt possesses rigidity in its own right as a product of the multiple commas present. The style that both of the excerpts have, though eleven years apart, is “sidetracking,” which is showcased through the breaks in the initial thought pattern and introduction of qualifying phrases.

Nonetheless, the flow of Lincoln’s First Inaugural address is certainly an improvement when compared to his eulogy of Zachary Taylor. To a certain extent, the momentous occasion that accompanied his First Inaugural shapes the narrative and readings of it. Conversely, Taylor was less than two years into his first term as president and was already a reluctant politician; this was nowhere near as momentous an occasion as the prospects of southern secession and Civil War that were facing Lincoln’s words in his First Inaugural. Regardless of the moment in time, the words written and spoken by Lincoln beginning with his stump speeches for Taylor, to his eulogy of Taylor, to his First Inaugural Address, show rhetorical improvements and a fleshing out of his ideas of America (idealism, freedom, etc.) while also offering structural writing improvements with fewer noticeable sidetracks, or at least the writing possesses sidetracks with a purpose.

In 1852, Lincoln was again tasked with delivering a eulogy. This time though, Lincoln was charged with delivering a eulogy for one of his political inspirations and fellow Whig, Henry Clay. In his eulogy of Clay, Lincoln began by stating “On the fourth day of July, 1776, the people of a few feeble and oppressed colonies of Great Britain, inhabiting a portion of the Atlantic coast of North America, publicly declared their national independence, and made their appeal to the justice of their cause, and to the God of battles, for the maintenance of that declaration.”⁵⁹ This opening was used as a way to date just how encompassing Clay’s life was. About eleven years later in 1863, Lincoln would be tasked with delivering another eulogy of sorts, this time at the battlefield of Gettysburg. Many historians declare the Gettysburg Address to be the pinnacle of Lincoln’s rhetorical genius and plain-speaking style. At only two hundred and seventy-two words, the speech truly elicits patriotism and the idealism that Lincoln felt for the Union. Not unlike Lincoln’s eulogy of Clay, the Gettysburg Address begins by dating the topic of his speech. Instead of a person though, in the Gettysburg Address Lincoln dates what he

⁵⁸ Lincoln, “First Inaugural Address.”

⁵⁹ Lincoln, “Eulogy of Henry Clay,” presented in Springfield, 6 July 1852, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler.

believes to be the cause of Union. In a similar stylistic fashion, Lincoln begins the Gettysburg (famously) with “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”⁶⁰ In both of these speeches, in both of these eulogies of sorts, Lincoln points back to the signing of the Declaration of Independence as the starting date of the American Republic and the Union he was fighting to preserve. This theme is further underscored in his eulogy of Clay as he paints Clay as someone with a deep devotion to these same causes by stating “Mr. Clay’s predominant sentiment, from first to last, was a deep devotion to the cause of human liberty—a strong sympathy with the oppressed everywhere, and an ardent wish for their elevation.”⁶¹

Lincoln confirms his view that the “birth” of the United States occurred with the signing of the Declaration of Independence and that the Declaration itself codified one of the most important principles of our nation: “that all men are created equal.” In his “Response to a Serenade” which he delivered on July 7th, 1863 he underscores the importance of the Declaration when he states “How long ago is it? — eighty odd years — since on the Fourth of July for the first time in the history of the world a nation by its representatives, assembled and declared as a self-evident truth that ‘all men are created equal.’ [Cheers.] That was the birthday of the United States of America.”⁶² In addition to showcasing the importance that Lincoln placed on the Declaration of Independence, many historians and scholars declare his “Response to a Serenade” as being a quasi-first draft of the Gettysburg Address. The importance of the Declaration of Independence to Lincoln is shown as early as 1852 in his eulogy of Henry Clay. Although his views are not as expressly stated in the eulogy, for obvious reasons, a close reading of the eulogy followed by close readings of the Gettysburg Address and “Response to a Serenade” show clear similarities. Differences are also apparent though, and Lincoln much more eloquently places the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in his Gettysburg Address than he does in his eulogy of Clay. The reason for this is because of the natural development of Lincoln’s writing and rhetorical skills.

These speeches, with typically over a decade between them showcase the development of Lincoln’s writing ability and rhetorical capacities. There are clear similarities among several of the speeches listed throughout this analysis, most notably between Lincoln’s “Eulogy of Zachary Taylor” and his First Inaugural Address and among his “Eulogy of Henry Clay” and his Gettysburg Address and “Response to a Serenade.” Beyond these similarities, these early Lincoln speeches, which include his stump speeches for Taylor during the 1848 Presidential

⁶⁰ Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address,” presented in Gettysburg, 19 November 1863, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 7:234-238.

⁶¹ Lincoln, “Eulogy of Henry Clay.”

⁶² Lincoln, “Response to a Serenade,” 7 July 1863, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 6:319.

Campaign, highlight a clear progression of his speaking talents and rhetorical abilities. From 1848 to 1852, Lincoln was beginning to find his footing regarding what would become his more pronounced view of the Union and the bond that bound the states together: the Declaration of Independence, and, more specifically, the statement that “all men are created equal.” Lincoln’s earlier speeches during his time as Congressman and campaign deputy, and his eulogies that came later, were at times clunky and wordy, with many side-tracks and qualifying statements throughout, which distracted from the point he was making.

Lincoln’s time in Congress, while not his first time in public office, provided the first opportunity Lincoln had at becoming a national figure. Unfortunately for Lincoln, his time in Congress was extremely restricted due to a gentleman’s agreement he made with two other Whig politicians in Illinois.⁶³ The rotation agreement he made to hold office only every other cycle meant that his window of opportunity to develop a national profile was rather small. Good signs abounded, though, as he was tasked with stumping for Zachary Taylor in order to shore up support among Free Soilers in New England who wanted to stop the expansion of slavery, much like Lincoln.⁶⁴ Even though he was presented with this great opportunity to begin to build a larger profile, when he was speaking to the Whig groups in Massachusetts and elsewhere, it seems his timidity and lack of a rhetorically gifted presidential candidate held him back. Lincoln was among the policy-focused and was, according to Joel Silbey, intensely partisan.⁶⁵ Because of this, Lincoln was a good choice to stump for Taylor, who had little to no outwardly expressed political opinions. Lincoln’s expertise in toeing the party line would have been extremely helpful for Taylor.

Lincoln played an integral role in the success of the Taylor campaign in 1848. Although he was not the first Taylor supporter, Lincoln was among the first. Lincoln’s placement in Taylor’s campaign was a logical one as he had travelled the state of Illinois every election year prior since the 1830s stumping for candidates.⁶⁶ This meant that he had plenty of experience making political speeches on behalf of other Whig candidates. In addition to this skill, Lincoln also was a free soiler and vehemently opposed the extension of slavery. The Free Soil Party, led by former president Martin Van Buren, seemed poised to poach other anti-extension and free-soil Whigs, especially considering Taylor was a slaveholding Southerner. While in reality, according to Michael Holt, “Democrats lost votes to the Free Soilers in New York, Ohio, Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts, and some may even have defected to the Whig Taylor in Alabama, Virginia, and Georgia.”⁶⁷ Even though the Free Soil Party did not have nearly the impact on Whig votes as

⁶³ Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 246.

⁶⁴ Winkle, *The Young Eagle*, 246.

⁶⁵ Silbey, ““Always a Whig in Politics,”” 26.

⁶⁶ Silbey, ““Always a Whig in Politics,”” 26.

⁶⁷ Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development*, 70.

many may have thought heading into the November election, the perception that Free Soil votes would have otherwise been Whig votes was a strong sentiment felt by many Whig partisans. Because of this perception, the Whigs deployed Lincoln to Massachusetts (where Free Soil Party support seemed at its highest) to show that the Whig Party was the party advocating for free soil.

Conclusion

On February 27, 1849, Abraham Lincoln sent a short correspondence to President-elect Taylor stating “Yesterday you were so kind as to say it would be convenient for you to receive the papers recommending [sic] Col. Baker for a Cabinet appointment, through the mail. I herewith transmit them in that way, with the request, that my name be considered as added to the recommendation. Your Obt. Servt. A. Lincoln.”⁶⁸ As his term in Congress was expiring, Lincoln sought a role in the Taylor administration. It is not clear which appointed office Lincoln was referring to in this short letter. This was not the only letter he sent to Taylor inquiring about a position. Heading into the 1850s, Lincoln’s role in Whig politics was uncertain. He had just completed an uninspiring term in Congress that saw both of his major legislative efforts fail. On the other hand, he had been a helpful hand in the electing of Taylor as President, though not an integral piece of the campaign. It was not unreasonable for Lincoln to have hoped that Taylor would find a place, no matter how small, in his administration. A postmaster position or surveying role would not have been out of the question. Unfortunately for Lincoln, Taylor would not appoint him to any position, and Lincoln was left to return to Springfield empty handed. What lay ahead for Lincoln, though well known to everyone now, was very much unknown to him.

With the election of Taylor to the Presidency, Lincoln was completely flooded with requests for patronage positions (which he could help them secure by writing a letter of endorsement to the President-elect).⁶⁹ Eventually, Lincoln would be involved in an attempt to secure himself a new position as well. Burlingame points out that

At first, Lincoln had not planned to ask for an office at all, because, as he explained to Joshua Speed, “there is nothing about me which would authorize me to think of a first class office; and a second class one would not compensate me for being snarled at by others who want it for themselves.” He could, he said, “have the Genl. Land office [a position in the Department of Interior] almost by common consent,” but he did not wish to antagonize other Illinoisans who sought that lucrative post, which paid \$3,000 a year. (The governor of Illinois earned \$1,000 annually, and an Illinois Supreme Court justice

⁶⁸ Lincoln, “Letter to Zachary Taylor,” 27 February 1849, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Basler, 2:30.

⁶⁹ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 294.

\$1,200.) In due course, however, Lincoln did become a candidate for that job and thereby found himself embroiled in a complicated and often mean-spirited struggle.⁷⁰

Although he had not initially wanted to get involved in an appointment fight, Lincoln saw the writing on the wall that he was not in a favorable position among his Illinois Whig colleagues.⁷¹ Though he did take a one term pledge, he wanted to inquire about his chances at re-nomination in 1848 for his seat in Congress. Only one delegate stated that he would support Lincoln's re-nomination, and so the convention nominated someone else.⁷² So after the election of Taylor, it seemed as though Lincoln really only had two options: the first was to return to Springfield and go back on the law circuit, and the second was to land an appointed position with the Taylor Administration. Burlingame suggests that "perhaps, Lincoln may have had little desire to return to provincial Springfield after consorting with leading lawyers and politicians in sophisticated Washington."⁷³ Unfortunately for Lincoln, returning to Springfield was the only option as he failed to receive any patronage position with the Taylor Administration.

Lincoln's only national political experience before becoming president had come to an end in 1849, and he returned to Springfield. Lincoln failed to accomplish anything of note as Congressman, including securing a patronage position for himself. As Burlingame notes, "Five years would pass before he again sought public office. During that political hiatus he underwent a painful introspective ordeal from which he emerged a different man."⁷⁴ Despite his failings, Lincoln's time in Congress was a transformational period in his life. While his Spot Resolutions, his bill to abolish slavery in the D.C., and his effort to secure a patronage position in the Taylor Administration were all failures, Lincoln gained a good deal of political experience and was given opportunities to refine his speaking and writing abilities. Additionally, Lincoln was a member of the winning Taylor campaign for president. Through his role on the Taylor campaign, Lincoln was given the opportunity to speak on behalf of Taylor's candidacy, most notably in Massachusetts. In an attempt to shore up Whig support for a presidential candidate who had very few known political positions and in the face of a serious third party bid for the White House, Lincoln delivered Massachusetts and the presidency for Taylor. Though Lincoln would not be rewarded by Taylor for his efforts, Lincoln would use his experience as Congressman and campaign surrogate for Taylor during his five year political hiatus to develop his skills and run an extremely energetic and principled campaign for the United States Senate in 1854. Though often overlooked, Lincoln's time in Congress was crucial in the political and rhetorical development of the Great Emancipator.

⁷⁰ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 296.

⁷¹ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 294.

⁷² Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 290.

⁷³ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 306.

⁷⁴ Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 308.

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