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## **How Lincoln Secured His Re-Election**

By George Edmonds  
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Many men of this day fancy Lincoln's election to a second term proves that he was the people's choice, and was trusted and beloved by the people. In this busy age few men have the time to look below the surface and find facts. Some of Lincoln's apotheosis biographers boldly assert that Lincoln was indifferent about his re-election. Others deem it better to tell the plain truth on this question. Lamon says during his first term he was all the time anxious to secure re-election.

In his *Life of Lincoln*, McClure says, "Lincoln's desire for re-nomination was the one thing uppermost in his mind during the third year of his first term." In *Our Presidents* (page 184), McClure says, "A more anxious candidate I have never seen. I could hardly treat with respect Lincoln's anxiety about his re-nomination."

After Lincoln's nomination for the second term, but before election, the prospects of his re-election became very gloomy. Many of Lincoln's friends predicted the success of McClellan. Mr. Lincoln himself was almost in despair of re-election. In Volume I, on this subject, Morse has this:

In Lincoln's party the foremost men, as the time approached for a second term, so strongly opposed Lincoln they determined to prevent his re-election. They called a convention to be held May 21, 1864, in Cincinnati,

Ohio. The call said: "Republican Liberty is in danger. The object of this call is to arouse the people, and make them realize that while we are saturating Southern soil with the best blood of the country in the name of Liberty, we have already parted with it at home.

Nicolay and Hay's *Life of Lincoln* (Volume 2, page 249) says,

By August, 1864, Weed, Raymond and everyone, even Lincoln himself, despaired of his re-election. Raymond, Chairman of the Republican National Executive Committee, August 22, 1864, wrote Lincoln: 'I hear but one report. The tide is setting against us.'

In *Our Presidents* (page 183), McClure says:

Three months after Lincoln's re-nomination in Baltimore, his defeat by General McClellan was feared by his friends and conceded by Lincoln himself. Wade of Ohio, and Winter Davis, aided by Greeley, published in Greeley's Tribune, August 5, 1864, their bitter manifesto against Lincoln, in which they charged him with having committed a more studied outrage on the authority of the people than had ever before been perpetrated.

In Holland's *Life of Lincoln*, he says,

After Mr. Lincoln's nomination for a second term, a peculiar change came over the spirit of Mr. Lincoln's friends; the thought became prevalent that a mistake had been made; simultaneously and universally the friends of the Administration felt he ought not to have been nominated for a second term.

Morse, in Volume 2, says, "Recent local elections in New York and Massachusetts showed a striking reduction of Republican strength."

In *The True Story of a Great Life*, Weik states that Wendell Phillips made stump speeches over New England denouncing Lincoln, and holding him up to public ridicule. At Cooper Institute, 1864, before an immense audience, Phillips said, "Lincoln has overthrown Liberty. I call on the people to rise in their might and see to it that Lincoln is not elected to a second term."

On August 14, Greeley wrote, "Mr. Lincoln is already beaten. He cannot be re-elected. We must have another ticket to save us from utter overthrow. Grant, Butler or Sherman would do for President."

Chase, Winter Davis, Wade of Ohio, Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, were in sympathy with the movement to prevent Lincoln's re-election. The editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette* wrote, "The people regard Mr. Lincoln's candidacy as a misfortune. I do not know a Lincoln man. In all our correspondence, which is large and varied, are few letters from Lincoln men."

The *New York Sun* said, "The withdrawal of Lincoln and Fremont, and the nomination of a man who would inspire confidence, would be hailed with delight."

In his apotheosized *Life of Lincoln*, Holland bears witness to the strong and general dissatisfaction of the people in 1864, and their desire for a change. Fremont's name was the rallying cry with dissatisfied Republicans. Fremont boldly denounced Lincoln:

Had Mr. Lincoln remained faithful to the principles he was elected to defend, no schism could have been created, and no contest against him could have been possible. The ordinary rights secured under the Constitution have been violated. The Administration has managed the war for personal ends, and with incapacity and selfish disregard for constitutional rights, with violation of personal liberty and liberty of the press.

Miss Tarbell, who seems to have written her *Life of Lincoln* while on her knees before his image in a sacred shrine, says:

In the spring of 1863 a plot was formed and favored by all the most prominent Republican leaders to force President Lincoln to abdicate, and to put Vice-President Hamlin in his place. Greeley thought he could use such pressure on Lincoln as would force him to step down and out. Lincoln knew of this plot. Mr. Enos Clark states that in the interview President Lincoln had with the committee of seventy men from Missouri, in 1863, at the moment the committee was about to leave he saw tears streaming down Lincoln's face. On getting to the door Mr. Clark looked back, and instead of tears, Lincoln was laughing heartily and joking (Volume II, page 176).

This committee of seventy was anti-Lincoln. Next day, Secretary of the Treasury Chase gave the committee a reception, and told them he was heartily in sympathy with their mission. The committee went to New York and was given a great and enthusiastic meeting at Cooper Institute. William Cullen Bryant made a speech, and various distinguished men indulged in violent denunciation of the Administration and threatened Lincoln with revolution.

In 1863 the *New York Herald* advocated Grant for the Presidency. The great majority of the Republican leaders wanted a change. Lincoln knew of all these efforts. Again Tarbell:

The despair, the indignation of the country in this dreadful year [1863] all centered on Lincoln. The Republicans were hopeless of re-electing him. Amid this dreadful uproar of discontent, one cry alarmed Lincoln – the cry that Grant should be presented for the Presidency (Vol. II, p. 199).

Leonard Sweet, a loving friend of Lincoln, August, 1864, in a letter from New York City to his wife, wrote:

The fearful things in relation to this country induced me to stay a week. The malicious foes of Lincoln are getting up a Buffalo convention to supplant him. They are Sumner, Wade, Henry Winter Davis, Chase, Fremont, Wilson, etc. The most fearful things are probable. Democrats

preparing to resist the draft. There is not much hope; unless material changes, Lincoln's re-election is beyond any possible hope, and is probably clear gone now.

Lincoln himself believed he would be defeated. On August 23, 1864, Lincoln, fully understanding the danger, put on record his belief that he would be defeated. In a speech bitterly denouncing Lincoln at a Republican meeting in Boston, Wendell Phillips went so far as to say, "Lincoln and his Cabinet are treasonable. Lincoln and Stanton should be impeached."

The *Chicago Tribune* denounced Lincoln as the author of the Negro riots. So eager was Lincoln for a second term, so intense his anxiety, it showed in his face. Miss Tarbell describes his looks during that period, 1863-65:

Day by day he grew more haggard, the lines in his face deepened, it became ghastly gray in color. Sometimes he would say, 'I shall never be glad again.' When victory was assured a change came at once. His form straightened up, his face cleared; never had he seemed so glad.

Yet in the face of all this evidence of Lincoln's unpopularity, it now suits the Republicans to assert that Lincoln was trusted and beloved during his lifetime.

Such being the gloomy outlook for the Republican Party immediately preceding the Presidential election of 1864, what brought about the change? What lifted from Lincoln's heart its load of despair, and filled it with hope? The answer is easy. First came a few Union victories, which indicated that the poor Confederates were failing for want of numbers. Farragut captured Mobile, Sherman was taking a holiday march over the South, burning and pillaging to his heart's delight, no armed men to impede his progress; Sherman's un-resisted entrance into Atlanta, Georgia, his brilliant victory over the 15,000 unarmed women and children of that unfortunate city, his splendid strategic feat in driving at the point of the bayonet the 15,000 Atlanta women and children out of their homes, out of the city -- out into the pathless woods to wander about shelterless, foodless, and after Atlanta was tenantless, its streets all silent save where armed men trampled over them, Sherman's magnificent success in burning every house in the city, private as well as public -- these valiant deeds of Sherman's army served to expel the despair from Lincoln's head and let in fresh breezes of hope. In addition he had General B.F. Butler and others of that calibre ready and willing to do his bidding, regardless of honor or honesty. In his book, Butler relates how he obeyed orders, and, by the use of soldiers, secured Lincoln's election for a second term.

Oh, if the souls of liberty-loving men of '76 take cognizance of the workings of affairs in the land they loved, and many died to free, how must they mourn over the decadence of the men of this age -- the men who glorify the shameful fact that an American President procured his re-election to office by the use of the United States army at the polls! Hapgood's *Life of Lincoln* contains the following unblushing paragraph:

Charles A. Dana testifies that the whole power of the War Department was used to secure Lincoln's re-election in 1864. There is no doubt but this is true. Purists may turn pale at such things, but the world wants no prettified portrait of Mr. Lincoln. Lincoln's Jesuitical ability to use the fox's skin when the lion's proves too short was one part of his enormous value.

Think of it, men of America! "Jesuitical ability" to trick, to deceive, to rob the people of their right to the ballot is, by a modern Republican historian, not only condoned, but commended as of "enormous value." And any honest man, shocked at so infamous an outrage on the rights of freemen, the Republican Hapgood sarcastically terms "purist." "Purists may turn pale," etc. In his book, published in 1892, General Butler proudly relates his part in the infamous work of using the army at the polls.

The story is this: The election day was November 8, 1864. Lincoln had sent agents to New York City to spy out and report how the election would go. The report boded ill for Lincoln's success; in fact, indicated that New York would give a large majority for General McClellan. Lincoln, Seward and Stanton were alarmed. The latter instantly telegraphed General Butler to report to him at once. Butler rushed to Washington, and Stanton explained the situation at New York.

"What do you want me to do?" asked Butler. "Start at once for New York, take command of the Department of the East, relieving General Dix. I will send you all the troops you need." "But," returned Butler, "it will not be good politics to relieve General Dix just on the eve of the election."

"Dix is a brave man," said Stanton, "but he won't do anything; he is very timid about some matters."

This meant that General Dix was too honorable to use the United States Army to control and direct elections.

"Send me," suggested the shrewd Butler, "to New York with President Lincoln's order for me to relieve Dix in my pocket, but I will not use the order until such time as I think safe. I will report to Dix and be his obedient servant, and coddle him up until I see proper to spring on him my order, and take supreme command myself."

"Very well," assented Stanton, "I will send you Massachusetts troops."

"Oh, no!" objected the shrewder Butler, "it won't do for Massachusetts men to shoot down New Yorkers."

Stanton saw this also would be bad politics, so Grant was ordered to send Western troops -- 5,000 good troops and two batteries of Napoleon guns -- for the purpose of shooting down New Yorkers should New Yorkers persist in the evil intention of voting for McClellan.

When the citizens of New York saw Butler and his escort proudly prancing their horses on the streets and saw the arrival of 5,000 Western troops and the Napoleon guns, there was great agitation and uneasiness over the city. Newspapers charged that these warlike preparations were made to *overawe* (a

common term of the U.S. military later used by Nazi's as 'Shock Troops' and used as 'Shock and Awe' by President Bush in the Middle East Invasion) citizens and prevent a fair election. Butler was virtuously indignant at such charges. General Sanford, commanding the New York State militia, called on Butler and told him the State militia was strong enough to quell any disturbance that might occur and he intended to call out his militia division on election day. Butler arrogantly informed General Sanford that he (Butler) had no use for New York militia; he did not know which way New York militia would shoot when it came to shooting. General Sanford replied that he would apply to the Governor of the State for orders.

"I shall not recognize the authority of your Governor," haughtily returned Butler. "From what I hear of Governor Seymour I may find it necessary to arrest all I know who are proposing to disturb the peace on election day."

Butler well knew he was the only man in the city who intended to disturb the peace on election day. Butler's mean and cowardly soul gleefully gloated over the power he possessed to bully and insult the great State of New York, its Governor and militia officers -- power given him by Lincoln, whose orders he had in his pocket to relieve General Dix, and take command of the army under Dix, and hold himself ready on election day to shoot down New York men at the polls to secure the re-election of President Lincoln. On November 5th Butler issued Order No. 1, the purpose of which, he said: Is to correct misrepresentations, soothe the fears of the weak and timid and allay the nervousness of the ill-advised, silence all false rumors circulated by men for wicked purposes, and to contradict once for all false statements made to injure the Government in the respect and confidence of the people. The Commanding General takes occasion to declare that troops have been detailed for duty in this district to preserve the peace of the United States, to protect public property, and insure a calm and quiet election.

The citizens of New York well knew that the above was one tissue of falsehood; they knew that Butler and his 5,000 Western troops, his batteries and Napoleon guns, were there to overawe the people and force the re-election of Lincoln.

"The Commanding General," continues Order No. 1, "has been pained to see publications by some not too well informed persons, that the presence of the troops of the United States might by possibility have an effect on the free exercise of the duty of voting at the ensuing election. Nothing is further from the truth."

Who, knowing Butler's nature, does not picture to himself the Mephistophelean smile which ornamented his visage as he penned the above, and the following pretty falsehood: "The soldiers of the United States are here especially to see that there is no interference with the election."

If the reader cares to see the full text of this lying order he can find it in Butler's book (page 1097).

On November 7th, the day before the election, after Butler had placed his troops and made all arrangements necessary to control the ballot, he wrote to Secretary of War Stanton a letter in which he said,

I beg leave to report that the troops have all arrived, and dispositions made which will insure quiet. I enclose copy of my order No. 1, and trust it will meet your approbation. I have done all I could to prevent secessionists from voting, and think it will have some effect.

Secessionists meant Democrats who chose to vote for McClellan.

On page 760 of his book, Butler describes how he disposed of the troops to accomplish his purpose. On page 771, Butler gives a joyful account of a reception at Fifth Avenue Hotel tendered him in honor of his signal success in keeping Democrats from voting. Full to bursting with pride, Butler made a speech to his entertainers, explaining how, after the Union army had conquered the South, her people should be treated. "Let us," said this willing and eager tool of despotic power, "take counsel from the Roman method of carrying on war." The Roman method was to make slaves of all prisoners of war; to inflict upon them every cruelty pagan hearts could devise. Butler continued:

Let us look to the fair fields of the sunny South for your reward. Go down there in arms; you shall have what you conquer, in fair division of the lands, each man in pay for his military service. We will open new land offices wherever our army marches, dividing the lands of the rebels among our soldiers, to be theirs and their heirs forever. Rebels should no longer be permitted to live in the land of the South, or anywhere in the boundaries of the United States. Let them go to Mexico, or to the islands of the sea, or to a place I do not like to name. I know of no land bad enough to be cursed with their presence. Never should they live here again.

This pagan speech was so rapturously received by Butler's audience, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher (who a few years later was tried and found guilty by all the world except those interested in whitewashing him, of breaking up the home of one of his parishioners and blasting the reputation of that parishioner's wife), made a speech highly lauding Butler's evil work and pagan principles and naming him for the Presidency in 1868. General Whitmore followed Beecher in the same strain of eulogy, all of which filled Butler to bursting with pride. But he sorrowfully relates that these high laudations proved disastrous to all the hopes he had cherished of promotion in the army.

These fine compliments, says Butler, and the grand receptions tendered - Were the most unhappy and unfortunate occurrences of my life. I should at once have repudiated the honor intended. I should promptly have said: "Gentlemen, you do me too much honor. General Grant ought to be our next President after Lincoln retires." That would have taken the sting out of the whole affair. I could then have been put in command of the Army of the Potomac, if I wished.

Butler no doubt thought his service in New York in keeping Democrats from voting would be rewarded by promotion. As a salve to his vanity he tries to have it

appear that Grant's jealousy interfered. Butler's vanity was immense. It shines out from every page of his book.

In the year 1903, in the city of St. Louis, Missouri, two men of foreign birth and from the lower ranks of life were found guilty of having procured fraudulent naturalization papers for some of their countrymen just arrived from Italy. These two men were sentenced to serve a term of five years in the penitentiary. The St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, a staunch Republican journal, in an editorial called the offense of which these two men were found guilty, "a horribly atrocious crime against the ballot box and American citizenship."

Reader, compare the magnitude of the crime these two men committed in 1903 with the magnitude of the crime committed in 1864 by the President of the United States. Is not the one as a molehill to the mountain of the other? Yet the criminals of 1903 were condemned to wear the stripes of infamy in a state penitentiary for five years. The criminal of 1864 is held up as a model for American youths to imitate.

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