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# Lincoln and Oregon

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LINCOLN AND OREGON

(TITLE)

BY

Todd Hageman

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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26 Sept 1988  
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DEPARTMENT HEAD

To my wife Ann, for her support.

LINCOLN AND OREGON

by

Todd Hageman

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## ABSTRACT

The Civil War is one of the most significant events in American history. President Abraham Lincoln's term in office was dominated by the War, therefore the study of Lincoln has likewise been dominated by War developments. The War's battles were overwhelmingly concentrated in the eastern United States, and hence the American west has largely been ignored by Lincoln scholars. This study attempts to uncover Lincoln's policy toward Oregon, including War developments and his domestic policy, to partially fill the "western gap" in Lincoln scholarship.

Oregon was admitted to the federal Union in 1859, and by Lincoln's election in 1860 that state's population remained relatively small. Shortly after Lincoln's election the Civil War broke out, and Oregon's remoteness from Washington, D.C. made its situation difficult for Lincoln because communication was slow without a telegraph and transportation was laggard without the transcontinental railroad. A majority of Oregonians remained loyal to the Union, however a vocal minority formed a chapter of the Knights of the Golden Circle in Oregon to hinder the War's success. The Knights even allied with other individuals in an effort to separate Oregon and California from the Union and form an independent Pacific Coast Republic. Oregon consisted mainly of Democratic voters, and after the War

began Oregon's Democratic Governor John Whiteaker was hostile toward Lincoln's vigorous prosecution of the war.

The attack on Fort Sumter by the Confederates had a great impact upon the Oregonians. Most Oregonians viewed the Confederate attack as the act that initiated the War, and as a result Union sentiment in Oregon was strengthened. Lincoln acted quickly to secure Oregon for the Union by forming a regiment of cavalry to remain in Oregon to guard its frontier during the War. The cavalry performed its duties well until their term of enlistment expired and Lincoln authorized a regiment of cavalry to take its place. Although the majority of Oregonians supported Lincoln and the War, the troops were needed to suppress threatened uprisings by the Knights and Indians living in Oregon.

Lincoln's war policy toward Oregon was just one part of his overall policy. Along with forming troop regiments, initiating the construction of forts, and supplying Oregon with an iron-clad, Lincoln also had a domestic policy toward Oregon. Lincoln reformed the federal circuit court system in order to include Oregon and other states into the system. Lincoln also signed the Homestead Act, the Pacific Railroad Act, and an act to provide economic assistance for a Pacific telegraph, all of which were pieces of legislation that Oregonians had long coveted. In return Oregon shipped large quantities of its gold eastward to help finance the war effort.



Lincoln's policy toward Oregon was one of patience and prudence. Lincoln insured Oregonian support for the Union by supporting legislation that they had perennially demanded without antagonizing the Knights. He also acted decisively in his war policy toward Oregon that enabled that state to mobilize against both internal and external foes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction.....Page 1

II. Oregon From Territorial Status Through The Secession  
Crisis.....Page 7

III. Lincoln's Early War Policy Toward Oregon.....Page 27

IV. Lincoln's Domestic Policy Toward Oregon.....Page 57

V. Lincoln's Later War Policy Toward Oregon.....Page 69

VI. Conclusion.....Page 85

## I. INTRODUCTION

President Abraham Lincoln's term in office is the subject of varied interpretations. The interpretations range from Lincoln's glorification as a martyr and saint, to some revisionists' descriptions of him as a conniving, racist tyrant. These profoundly divergent interpretations exist partially because Lincoln's administration experienced American history's most tumultuous period, and that period's bitter sectional feelings linger somewhat to the present. The sheer number of people interested in the American Civil War, coupled with the intense, conflicting attitudes that Americans have concerning the War have made Lincoln's presidency the most written about administration in American history. Voluminous accounts, revisions, analyses, and interpretations have been written concerning Abraham Lincoln, and one might assume that every aspect of his presidency has been covered. However, that is not the case.

The American West is rarely mentioned in volumes concerning Abraham Lincoln. Many "definitive" sources hardly mention Lincoln's policy toward the area west of the

Mississippi River, let alone the Pacific Coast. This is because historians tend to concentrate solely on Civil War developments. The purpose of this study is to partially fill this void in the historiography of Lincoln scholarship. This study will explore Lincoln's policy toward Oregon during his presidential tenure. It will include: a brief description of Oregon's history from its exploration through the election of 1860 in order to gain a perspective on Oregon's population and political environment, Lincoln's military and internal policy toward Oregon, and public reaction to Lincoln's presidency will complete the study. This study is intended to look at Oregon's relationship to the federal government and the Lincoln administration, and it is not a detailed study of Oregon during the Civil War.

Surprisingly, the histories of Oregon and Lincoln shared more than is superficially apparent. Many migrants to Oregon were Lincoln's close personal friends, with whom he kept in contact during his presidency, and some received federal appointments. Also, Oregon's internal political situation during the War was such that it demanded Lincoln's attention and action although the state was far removed from the major military battles and political controversies. Long before Lincoln's administration, however, Oregon was a remote, western frontier that attracted intense international competition for settlement.

The famed "Northwest Passage" lured explorers into Oregon. The British, under Captain James Cook, were the first to "discover" Oregon in 1778. Although the British did not find the potentially lucrative "Northwest Passage," they did find wealth by cheaply obtaining sea otter pelts from the Indians and selling them for extremely high returns in China. By 1785 many British private trading companies, along with King George's royal company, were reaping Oregon's wealth. Subsequent English explorers, such as George Vancouver and Alexander Mackenzie "firmly established England's title to the Northwest," yet the Americans were far from being out of the picture.<sup>1</sup>

In 1787 Robert Gray and Benjamin Kindrick, lured by Cook's published journal, eagerly sailed for Oregon to enter the prosperous Oriental trade. Their voyage's successful completion hastened Gray's second expedition, in which he discovered the Columbia River. The United States and Great Britain avoided war in 1818 by agreeing to jointly occupy the Oregon Country. The emigrant exodus from the eastern United States into Oregon was slowly initiated. John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company in Astoria was viewed as a profitable, permanent American settlement in Oregon. The expectations for Astor's permanent settlement were never realized, because he was forced to sell his company to the British North West Company in 1825. The British Hudson's Bay Company then established Fort Vancouver on the Columbia

River where its financial and agricultural endeavors prospered, while American interest and prospects in Oregon dwindled. American interest in Oregon was later rekindled by a few visionary Congressmen.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. John Floyd introduced a bill in Congress in 1820 urging Oregon's annexation, but it was voted down three years later. Hall Jackson Kelly resumed the fight for Oregon by circulating pamphlets and letters around New England to heighten public enthusiasm, and by 1831 he formed the "American Society for Encouraging the Settlement of the Oregon Territory." Nathaniel J. Wyeth's published journal of his overland expedition to Oregon was also intended to induce migrants. Throughout the 1830's, however, the majority of Oregon's migrants were missionaries. These missionaries did not succeed in their goal of Christianizing the Indians, but they did succeed in keeping Oregon alive in the minds of eastern Americans. During the 1840's, a decisive chain of events and circumstances allowed the United States to reclaim Oregon from the British.

The proximity of a large number of potential American settlers was an advantageous factor for the United States, even though the British had strong claims to the territory. An adequate inducement to settle Oregon was all that Americans needed. This inducement was provided by many Oregon immigrant societies resulting in the "Great

"Migration" of 1843. British interest in Oregon, on the other hand, diminished with the decline in the fur trade as beaver hats fell out of style in Europe, and by 1846, Americans were granted exclusive rights to settle in the Oregon country. The American government responded to the emigrants' demands for protection against Indians, and the government's Manifest Destiny desire to expand the United States' territory, and passed the bill creating the Oregon Territory on August 14, 1848. The Act was signed by Democratic President James K. Polk.<sup>3</sup> Oregon Territory already possessed many distinctive characteristics by the time it was created.

Following the discovery of gold in 1849, settlers poured into the Territory mostly from the Midwest. In addition to the Midwesterners, about 21 per cent of the Territory's population emigrated from Southern slave states, another 21 per cent emigrated from the Old Northwest, 8 per cent from the Mid-Atlantic states, and just over 4 per cent from New England. The combination of an overwhelmingly rural population that was Democratic in its political outlook and the patronage of a national Democratic administration insured the entrenchment of a strong Democratic machine in the new territory.<sup>4</sup> In fact, a California newspaper correspondent to the Oregon Country was so impressed with that area's preoccupation with power politics in 1857 that

he remarked, "The Oregonians have two occupations, agriculture and politics."<sup>5</sup>



## II. OREGON FROM TERRITORIAL STATUS THROUGH THE SECESSION CRISIS

The Democratic machine in Oregon was ruled by the "Salem Clique," which ran virtually every aspect of state politics. This "Clique" was led by the new Territory's most influential men: General Joseph Lane, and Asahel Bush. Lane, a Brigadier General in the Mexican War, accepted his appointment as the first territorial governor of Oregon in 1848 and his popularity grew. He eventually became Oregon's first territorial delegate to Congress and one of Oregon's first senators. Asahel Bush, known as "Ass of Hell" Bush to his enemies, was the editor of the newspaper with the largest circulation in Oregon, the Salem Oregon Statesman. Bush promoted Democratic positions on issues to a receptive audience through the outspoken columns of the Statesman.

The "Clique" reflected a conservative political attitude due to the sectionally heterogenous population that migrated to Oregon. This diverse population placed an emphasis on the middle of the political spectrum rather than the extremes.<sup>6</sup> Oregon was forced to confront the issue of slavery before it was admitted to territorial status, and it applied this conservative approach to the issue. The question of Oregon Territory's admission to the Union was raised just as the slavery issue began to heat up nationally. As a result, slavery was an abstract issue in Oregon,

although realistically slavery was not an issue with the Oregonians.

Oregon's economy and geographic location made slavery economically infeasible and Oregonians made it clear that they did not want the peculiar institution within their borders. The provisional legislature sent a clear message concerning this issue in 1844 when it passed an act that provided:

That if any such free Negro or Mulatto shall fail to quit the country as required by this act, he or she may be arrested upon a warrant issued by some justice of the peace, and if guilty upon trial before such justice, shall receive upon his or her bare back not less than twenty nor more than thirty-nine stripes, to be inflicted by the constable of the proper country. . . . [And] that if any free Negro or Mulatto shall fail to quit the country within the term of six months after receiving such stripes, he or she shall again receive the same punishment once in every six months until he or she shall quit the country.<sup>7</sup>

It was obvious that although Oregonians did not want slavery, it was not due to a fundamental disagreement with the institution. In fact, most Oregonians endorsed slavery but, they did not want blacks within their midst. Succinctly stated, Oregonians were considerably more anti-black than anti-slavery. Oregon's shortsighted solution for its local position concerning slavery was typical of the independent attitude on the western frontier. Oregon's independent air guided its political decisions until the eve of the Civil War.

Polk remained president only a short time after the Oregon Territory was created. In the election of 1848,

the Whig Zachary Taylor was elected president and given control of federal patronage in the territories. The office of territorial governor was directly appointed by the president which usually meant if the party in power changed hands, partisan appointees would soon follow suit. Oregon, a Democratic stronghold, was a logical place for Taylor to exercise his patronage powers and repay some campaign favors. It is interesting to note that Abraham Lincoln, a young Whig upstart, was nominated for secretary of the Oregon Territory and he was subsequently nominated territorial governor. Lincoln seriously considered the position, but Mary Todd Lincoln would not tolerate such an isolated, crude home and persuaded her husband to decline the appointment. In a letter dated September 27, 1849, Lincoln expressed his gratitude for being offered the appointment, but politely declined.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately, we are only left to speculate what would have become of Abraham Lincoln had he accepted the appointment. John Pollard Gaines finally accepted the Oregon territorial governorship in August, 1850 and he encountered all the problems that a Whig Governor in a Democratic territory should have expected.

Soon after Oregon received territorial status, the residents complained that its independence was usurped. This attitude was typical of a frontier that was used to home rule. In many cases, as soon as the national

government exercised its power over a newly created territory this was viewed by the frontiersmen as an encroachment upon their independence. Oregon's demands during its territorial status in the 1850s were frequently confusing and often contradictory. Oregonians protested their loss of independence while at the same time demanding land, money, and protection from the federal government. They also complained of both being dictated to and neglected by the federal government.<sup>9</sup> Overall, Oregonians found their territorial status unacceptable. Therefore, a revolt against territorial government began in 1850, almost immediately after the recognition of Oregon as a Territory. This movement was fueled when the Whig Governor Gaines was forced upon them. If Gaines' tenure was viewed as creating a flame from a spark, further events caused a full-fledged explosion in Oregon's statehood movement.

The introduction of the infamous Kansas-Nebraska Act in Congress by Stephen A. Douglas in 1854 profoundly effected Oregon politics for over a decade. Oregonians interpreted the Act as Congressional acquiescence in allowing states greater independence. Oregonians, who began their statehood movement in 1851 for precisely that reason, complained that territorial status was tantamount to vassalage, and after the Kansas-Nebraska Act they equated statehood with independence.<sup>10</sup> By 1854 slavery was the hottest issue in national politics, therefore, Oregonians had to address

the issue in their statehood movement. The Kansas-Nebraska Act provided not only the impetus Oregon's statehood movement needed, but it also provided the parameters in which the slavery issue would be discussed. Due to the timing of the bill's introduction and the framework it contained, the Kansas-Nebraska Act had a great impact upon Oregon. It would be impossible to discuss Abraham Lincoln's policy toward Oregon without understanding the Territory's position concerning slavery. And, since the Kansas-Nebraska Act precipitated an extensive debate over slavery in the Oregon Territory, it is necessary to briefly discuss the major viewpoints represented in that debate.

The Oregon Territorial Legislature quickly addressed the slavery issue. Oregonians interpreted the Kansas-Nebraska Act only as it applied to their situation. By the 1850s, as mentioned earlier, the Oregon Territory was inhabited by many pro-slavery Democrats. The Territory outlawed slavery not because its citizens disliked the institution, but because they intensely hated blacks. Therefore, Oregonians hailed Douglas' popular sovereignty principle as a way to exclude slavery from their borders; but, they cared little if the institution spread to neighboring territories.<sup>11</sup> Representing this viewpoint in the Oregon Territorial Legislature was Democrat Delazon Smith, known as "Delusion" Smith in rival newspapers. In December 1854, Smith introduced a series of resolutions that

were adopted by the Territorial Legislature endorsing the Kansas-Nebraska Act, however, this consensus met some opposition.

Dr. Anson G. Henry, a Whig, countered Smith's resolutions with a set of his own that presented an opposing viewpoint. Henry, a former Springfield, Illinois resident, personal physician and close friend of Abraham Lincoln, argued that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise would invite the spread of slavery into every territory. He countered Smith by reasoning that slavery would be allowed to spread everywhere, even into Oregon, "if there were no laws to prevent it."<sup>12</sup> Surprisingly, Henry's conservative viewpoint was not shared by many of his partisan colleagues in the legislature. Oregon's Whigs' independence reflected the national party's split. In fact, some of the most vociferous enemies to Henry's resolutions were Whigs. David Logan, son of Lincoln's former Springfield law partner Stephen T. Logan, and an influential Whig member of the Oregon legislature, denounced Henry's proposals as "too ultra, and tinctured with abolitionism, to pledge the Whig party of Oregon to."<sup>13</sup> Such was the nature of Oregon politics. The battle over slavery in Oregon was just one front in the two-pronged offensive it launched in order to obtain statehood. The other battle was fought in Washington, D.C.

The Washington fight for Oregon's statehood, initiated in 1854 by Stephen A. Douglas, was slow, confusing, and hypocritical. The Washington debate over Oregon's admission is also relevant to this study due to its inherent entanglement in the slavery issue, and the antagonism it caused among the different sections of the country which resulted in a purely partisan struggle. To understand the controversy over Oregon's admission, it is necessary to point out that the Democrats opposed Oregon's territorial organization due to its insistence upon organizing as a free territory. The Whigs supported statehood in 1848; but by the mid 1850s when most Whigs had become Republicans, they realized that Oregon, if it was allowed to enter the Union, would be a Democratic state.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, when Oregon agitated for statehood, the national Democrats realized they could gain an ally and the national Republicans realized that the territory was sympathetic toward slavery although it remained free.<sup>15</sup> The Democratic and Republican positions concerning Oregon's admission had completely reversed and the situation was stalemated in Congress. This atmosphere frustrated Oregonians who decided to take matters into their own hands.

Oregonians felt that Congress would act quicker if they had a state constitution and government apparatus set up so that they could present statehood as a fait accompli.<sup>16</sup> On September 18, 1857 Oregon boasted a state constitution that

outlawed both slavery and free blacks within its borders. These provisions supplied an issue that Republicans used to oppose Oregon's statehood and prevent another Democratic state from entering the Union. On May 8, 1858, the Senate debated Oregon's enabling act and on May 21 passed the measure by a strictly partisan vote of 35 to 17.<sup>17</sup> The House did not reciprocate until February 12, 1859. President James Buchanan signed the bill on February 14, 1859, and the Legislative Assembly accepted it on June 3, 1859. The battle for Oregon's statehood was long and hard-fought, and when the dust settled, the Oregon Democratic party was severely damaged.

Ironically, Oregon's admission, something that seemingly all Democrats agreed upon, permanently weakened the party it was supposed to aid. Oregon's leading Democrat and sole representative in Washington, Joseph Lane, was exceedingly quiet during the admission debate. Asahel Bush did not overlook that fact in his Statesman, and soon Lane and Bush, the two most powerful Oregon Democrats, were at odds. Bush, along with some leading citizens, charged that Lane did not do everything possible to gain Oregon's speedy admission to the Union. Lane, who up to this point had been an extremely popular politician, fell into disfavor with many Oregon voters. Indignation against Lane, now a United States Senator, was initiated when he sent a letter to Oregon's Legislative Assembly that argued that the United



States' territorial system was unconstitutional.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, Lane deserved and received no credit for Oregon's admission to the Union. Furthermore, Lane's actions hopelessly factionalized Oregon's Democratic Party.

The election of 1860 irreparably split the Oregon Democratic party. Most Oregon Democrats adhered to Stephen A. Douglas' popular sovereignty principle to settle the slavery issue. Joseph Lane, however, agreed with President Buchanan's faction; and, in fact, Lane was Buchanan's handpicked choice to succeed him.<sup>19</sup> By the summer of 1859 Lane fell completely out of touch with his constituency. He used his Senate seat to ardently support slavery and the Southern viewpoint. Lane's constituents felt that the Buchanan-Lane Democrats forced slavery on Kansas and would continue to force slavery onto other territories. That prospect was intolerable to the independent-minded Douglas Democrat majority in Oregon. Even though Lane's support was slipping, his faction controlled the state machinery, and Lane picked the Oregon delegates to the Democratic national convention in 1859.

Lane instructed the delegates to nominate him for the presidency, but when it was apparent that Douglas would receive the nomination, Lane instructed his delegates to further his candidacy at the Baltimore convention. Lane's presidential hopes were futile, however, to the "bitter disappointment" of Jefferson Davis.<sup>20</sup> Lane was eventually

nominated as the vice-presidential candidate on John C. Breckinridge's Democratic ticket. However, his actions caused a storm of indignation in Oregon that resulted in Democrats identifying themselves as Bush-Douglas Democrats and Lane-Buchanan Democrats.

The election of 1860 permanently ended Lane's state and national political career because he had misjudged his constituency. Due to the communication difficulties between Washington, D.C. and the Pacific Coast, Lane fell out of touch with his constituents' sentiments. Oregonians were Unionists above everything, especially after they attained statehood, and Lane's advocacy of the secession doctrine was increasingly offensive to a majority of his constituency. Lane remained in Washington during Oregon's statehood movement, and therefore he did not realize the momentum that movement had gained since his departure. Of course this Democratic nightmare was a Republican dream come true.

As previously mentioned, the Democratic machine was solidly entrenched in Oregon from its territorial status through statehood. By 1859, however, the fledgling Republican party began to take root in Oregon, and it had high hopes for the 1860 presidential election. Oregonians began to identify themselves with national parties, but the lack of adequate communication facilities prevented Oregon Republicans from remaining in close contact with their eastern counterparts. Also, because of the time and expense

of the journey eastward, only five delegates from Oregon were able to attend the Republican national convention. Although the Oregon delegates were solidly behind Edward Bates of Missouri, Abraham Lincoln had some supporters in Oregon.

Simeon Francis first mentioned Lincoln as a presidential candidate in Oregon in February, 1860.<sup>21</sup> Francis had moved from Connecticut to Springfield, Illinois in 1831 where he edited two Whig newspapers, the Sangamon Journal and the Illinois State Journal and became a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln. In fact, Lincoln had declined the job of secretary of the Oregon Territory in 1849 partially because he supported Francis for the position. Francis moved to Portland, Oregon in December, 1859 where he promoted the Union, the Republican party, and especially Lincoln, through his editorship of the Portland Oregonian. In a letter to the Oregon Argus on February 11, 1860, Francis displayed acute political tact by stating he had a "high appreciation" for Oregon Republican favorite Bates, although privately admitting to "hating" his candidacy, he proceeded to outline Lincoln's life and career and urged his presidential nomination.<sup>22</sup> Lincoln's candidacy was not taken seriously in Oregon at this time, however. Oregon delegates, all but two of whom were proxies, carried their support for Bates to the Republican national convention at the Wigwam in Chicago on May 16, 1860.

The most influential Oregon delegate to the convention, and possibly the most influential delegate at the convention was New York Tribune editor and outspoken abolitionist Horace Greeley, who served as an Oregon proxy. Greeley's participation as an Oregon proxy was particularly ironic. In 1843 Greeley remarked that migration to Oregon wore "an aspect of insanity," yet by 1860 he used Oregon as a vehicle to influence the Republican Party platform and block William Henry Seward's presidential nomination.<sup>23</sup> Oregon delegate Greeley served on the Committee on Resolutions which drafted the Republican National Platform of 1860.<sup>24</sup> The Platform caused another Oregon proxy, Frank Johnson, to remark that it was "the most perfect and unequivocal statement of Republican faith ever written, the wisest and most diplomatic points of which I am safe in saying Oregon had the honor to contribute."<sup>25</sup> However, Greeley's most significant contribution to the convention was his influence in the nominating process.

Greeley's actions at the convention caused one historian to state, "Horace Greeley brought about the nomination of Lincoln. . ."<sup>26</sup> Although this statement may be slightly exaggerated, it cannot be denied that Greeley's influence steered the convention away from Seward and toward Lincoln. The Oregon delegates were instructed to support Bates, but they were also told to use their best judgment in the event that it was obvious that his nomination could be

secured.<sup>27</sup> The delegates followed their instructions and cast five votes for Bates on each of the first two ballots, but changed their votes on the third ballot. Greeley observantly pointed out to the other members of the Oregon delegation that Bates' candidacy had no realistic chance to win the nomination. Greeley proceeded to persuade three other Oregon delegates to join him in casting their votes for Lincoln, and on the third preliminary ballot Oregon cast four votes for Lincoln and one for Seward. These four votes put Lincoln within one and one-half votes of the number needed to obtain the nomination, and they encouraged the convention's avalanche for Lincoln, whose candidacy was eventually made unanimous. This event was romantically recalled by Frank Johnson who beamed:

During the third ballot there was tolerable order, until Oregon declared for Lincoln, rendering his nomination certain. At this point the enthusiasm become irrepressible; the Wigwam was shaken with cheers from twenty-three thousand Republicans, which were renewed as State after State declared its unanimous vote for the man who could split rails and maul Democrats.<sup>28</sup>

Although Oregon did not technically "render his nomination certain," it did initiate the snowball effect for Lincoln, therefore the historically incorrect notion that Oregon nominated Lincoln persists. Oregonians in 1860 did not shy away from that honor.

Lincoln's nomination was met with great enthusiasm among Oregon Republicans, and they strongly united behind their party's candidate.<sup>29</sup> William L. Adams, another former

Illinois resident who migrated to Oregon publicly endorsed Lincoln in the Oregon Argus which he edited. Anson G. Henry, Lincoln's old friend from Springfield, also spoke on Lincoln's behalf. Henry pointed out that Lincoln was a frontiersman, and therefore he was familiar with the needs of the Pacific Coast.<sup>30</sup> Even Lincoln, who was never accused of being an optimist, spoke confidently about his prospects for the general presidential election in Oregon. In a letter to Simeon Francis on August 4, 1860, Lincoln commented, "I should expect. . . [that the Democratic party's split] would give us a fair chance in Oregon."<sup>31</sup> Lincoln's confidence concerning Oregon stemmed from more than just the Democratic disparity in that State.

The Republican party expanded in Oregon by 1860, but it lacked a strong charismatic leader. It needed a person who could convince Oregonians who were complacent with rule by a Democratic machine, that the new Republican party was the right choice for their state. That leader came from California to Oregon in the person of Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker. Baker, a former Springfield, Illinois native and an intimate friend of Lincoln's was invited to Oregon by many leading Republicans in the state including David Logan. Baker arrived in Oregon in December 1859, however, Logan had no desire to let him have total control of the Oregon Republican party. This opinion was expressed in a letter of January 22, 1860, which stated, "Col. Baker

has removed to Oregon. I think I can keep the whip hand of the Col. Maybe not, but I will try."<sup>32</sup>

The list of former Illinois residents and friends of Lincoln who resided in Oregon was impressive. Those individuals formed a powerful, if not harmonious group and included two newspaper editors, Simeon Francis and William L. Adams, two state politicians, David Logan and Dr. Anson G. Henry, and Lincoln's closest Oregon friend, and one of the most eloquent orators of his time, Edward Baker.

The Baker-Lincoln friendship began in 1835 and grew through the 1840s. Despite Lincoln's defeat at the hands of Baker for Congressman from Sangamon County in 1844, the two men had great respect for each other's abilities. One incident in 1838 in Springfield illustrated their friendship. Lincoln heard Baker unintentionally antagonizing a mostly Democratic audience through an open scuffle in the floor of his law office. Realizing that Baker was in physical danger, Lincoln dropped through the scuffle, landed on the stage with Baker, grabbed a stone water jug and threatened, "I'll break this over the head of the first man who lays a hand on Baker!"<sup>33</sup> Baker finished his speech unmolested. Lincoln continued to think so highly of Baker that he named his second son Edward Baker Lincoln in 1846. No other man had a greater impact upon Oregon's political history from Baker's arrival in late 1859 to his death in 1861. Baker, fresh from defeat for a Senate seat

from California in 1859, aspired to win a Senate seat from Oregon after his arrival in that state.

In an August 1, 1860 letter to Lincoln, Baker wrote, ". . . I have a great hope of a Republican senator in Oregon--and of one possibly in both states [California and Oregon] in November. . ."<sup>34</sup> Baker's goal was realized after the state legislature, following some abnormalities, elected Baker and James Willis Nesmith, a Douglas Democrat, to the Senate. The legislature convened in Salem on September 10, 1860, and the election process dragged on a month until October 2, 1860. The election of Nesmith and Baker was a "revolution" in Oregon politics.<sup>35</sup> The Republicans and Douglas Democrats combined to neutralize the Lane Democrats for the first time since Oregon was organized as a territory, and the Lane faction was never a major competitor for the new "Union" alliance. On the same day that Baker was elected he informed his friend Lincoln that:

I know you will be pleased to hear that we have elected a Republican senator, Mr. Nesmith (Douglas) and myself are just announced to be senators. I hope to see you President, and if I do not mistake you will feel that you have a true and warm friend at your side, who will feel for you all the attachment in prosperity which was nurtured in adversity.<sup>36</sup>

The 1860 presidential election was pivotal for state politics in Oregon. Oregon was formerly impenetrable for non-Democrats, but those barriers began to crumble by late 1860. The fusion of Douglas Democrats and Republicans, and the election of Lincoln's friend Baker to the Senate were



encouraging to Oregon Republicans. Yet, there remained considerable opposition to Lincoln. Isaac Stevens, Governor of the Washington Territory, played on popular fears in the region and predicted Lincoln's election would precipitate slave uprisings, and that the South, from which many Oregon settlers had emigrated and still sympathized with, threatened secession if Lincoln was elected.

The political atmosphere in Oregon was restless, however. Oregonians continued their perennial demands for homestead legislation and a trans-continental railroad which their Democratic representatives had failed to deliver to them. These were included in the Republican Platform of 1860 and this attracted voters to that party. Another factor that solidified Oregon's support for Lincoln was Baker's presence in the state.<sup>37</sup> The eloquent, persuasive Colonel stumped Oregon in behalf of his old friend and the Union for which he stood. Although the Union-loving Oregonians naively thought a vote for the Breckinridge-Lane ticket was a vote for the Union, Lincoln won Oregon's three electoral votes, albeit by a scant 270 vote plurality. Oregonians' growing disfavor with the Democratic party caused many voters to vote for the emergent Republican party. Lincoln's narrow margin of victory on the Pacific Coast caused him to remark that it was "the closest political bookkeeping" he had ever known.<sup>38</sup> Baker's persuasive oratory was crucial for his friend's victory

in Oregon.<sup>39</sup> The Oregon revolution was in full stride and Joe Lane's career was ended.

Lane's defeat was a tremendous turnaround. Lane was formerly the most popular politician in the state. Even following his divorce from the Bush Democrats, Lane controlled the state machinery. However, Lane committed political suicide by falling out of touch with his Oregon constituency and endorsing the doctrine of secession. The doctrine of secession was repugnant to an overwhelming majority of Oregonians. Following Lincoln's election and the secession of the deep South, Lane used his Senate seat to lambast the "graceless, unrelenting, and hostile fanaticism" of the North while praising the action of the seceded states.<sup>40</sup> To further illustrate Lane's sympathies, twice he acted as Preston Brooks' second in that Congressman's duels with New England senators.<sup>41</sup> However, Lane's support for the Southern cause went beyond rhetoric.

During the late 1850s Lane had also advocated the forceful establishment of an independent, sovereign Pacific Coast Republic. When this fact was revealed to an appalled Oregon citizenry Lane's name became synonymous with Copperheads and traitors. The idea of a separate Pacific Coast Republic was nothing new, and in fact it can be traced to Thomas Jefferson. However, the timing of Lane's actions was horrendous.<sup>42</sup> He pushed for Oregon's independence despite the people's intense desire for statehood. Territorial

Representative Lane was Oregon's sole voice in Washington during the statehood battle, and he worked completely contrary to his constituency's desires. Asahel Bush exploited this opportunity to destroy his former ally. Not only did correspondence between Lane and Territorial Governor Curry intimate Lane's support for Pacific Coast independence, but by the summer of 1860 Bush's Statesman published documentation substantiating Lane's involvement in the movement. Also implicated in the secessionist movement was Oregon's newly elected Governor, John Whiteaker, the Governor of California, various Pacific Coast senators, and the Commander of the Department of the Pacific in the United States Army. Secessionists appeared to be in control of the Pacific Coast.

This was the situation in Oregon that President-elect Abraham Lincoln inherited. Additionally, the lower South had seceded, more Southern states were sure to follow, and a secessionist movement on the Pacific Coast seemed to have support from the region's highest military and civil officials. Lincoln was determined to maintain the Union. However, he was unfamiliar with the Pacific Coast's local authorities, and the absence of a transcontinental telegraph compounded the problem. Lincoln needed a devout Union man, who was familiar with the Pacific Coast, and who he could trust as an advisor and confidant. Nobody

was more qualified for this job than the newly elected Senator from Oregon, Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker.

### III. LINCOLN'S EARLY WAR POLICY TOWARD OREGON

Lincoln's election radically altered Oregon's political environment by crystallizing both the Unionist and secessionist movements. The vast majority of Oregonians were unified behind Lincoln and they recognized that resistance to him as a candidate was one thing, but resistance to him as president was quite another.<sup>43</sup> However, there remained in Oregon a sizable powerful minority that was not eager to zealously support the Union. The best illustration of this attitude is the amount of support for Joseph Lane's Pacific Coast Republic in Oregon.

The Oregon secessionists were a strong minority, but they acted covertly due to their hostile reception by the masses. The Knights of the Golden Circle was organized in Oregon just before the Civil War broke out. Its purpose was to secretly and systematically thwart Union efforts. The Knights, also known as "The Old Guard," and "Friends of America," had specific goals: to drill members in arms in preparation to resist the Union, to erect a Pacific Coast Republic, and, after the War broke out, to resist the draft.<sup>44</sup> The Pacific Coast Republic scheme is an extraordinary story, although it is rarely told. Surprisingly, very few Civil War studies relate the story of Pacific Coast secessionists and their definite plans.

Joseph Lane, along with other Congressmen from California and Washington Territory, advocated an independent, sovereign Pacific Coast Republic that would work contrary to the Union and support the Confederate cause either directly or indirectly.<sup>45</sup> The Pacific Coast Republic would indirectly aid the Confederacy by virtue of separation from or non-cooperation with the Union. It would also be in a position to directly aid the Confederacy with troops and finances. Wealth, in the form of gold, made Oregon and the Pacific Coast pivotal for both the North and South. The Union and the Confederacy recognized the Pacific Coast's importance and vied for that area's support. Therefore, when it was discovered that a secessionist scheme was in motion on the Pacific Coast, the situation for the Union was crucial.

The idea of a Pacific Coast Republic was mentioned at least twice during the 1850s. Rumors circulated in Oregon in 1851 concerning the formation of a separate Republic, but the incentive was lost with the election of Franklin Pierce as president in 1852. In 1856 another scheme was uncovered when an anonymous letter revealed plans to form the Pacific Coast Republic. The letter was printed in the Statesman in September, 1856.<sup>46</sup> But, by this time the idea lost popularity due to the Oregon statehood movement. By 1860 Lane had revived the Pacific Coast Republic idea, and set his plan in motion. In the Statesman's July 17, 1860 issue

the "Lane and Gwin Conspiracy" was revealed. Joe Lane, along with Senator William M. Gwin and Senator Milton S. Latham of California supported secession and independence for the Pacific Coast. More details of the Pacific Coast Republic plot were periodically revealed to a disgusted Oregon constituency. The evidence published in the Statesman conclusively proved that armed resistance to the federal government in Oregon and California was planned. The Unionists in Oregon came to grips with the fact that their Senator was a secessionist.

In James G. Blaine's Twenty Years of Congress he wrote:

[After the hostilities broke out] Jefferson Davis had expected, with a confidence amounting to certainty, and based, it is believed, on personal pledges, that the Pacific Coast, if it did not actually join the South, would be disloyal to the Union, and would, from its remoteness and its superlative importance, require a large contingent of national forces to hold it in subjection. It was expected by the South that California and Oregon would give at least as much trouble as Kentucky and Missouri, and would thus indirectly but powerfully aid the Southern cause.<sup>47</sup>

The Pacific Coast Republic would distract the federal government from concentrating solely on the Southern Confederacy, thereby weakening the national war effort. The Confederates had good reasons to believe this was a realistic goal. California Governor John G. Downey and Oregon Governor John Whiteaker were both opposed to coercion of the South and were generally sympathetic toward the Confederacy. Also, a Southern sympathizer, Albert Sidney

Johnston commanded the Department of the Pacific at the time of Lincoln's election.

On January 15, 1861, the departments of California and Oregon were merged into the Department of the Pacific with Johnston commanding.<sup>48</sup> This vast department included all of California, Oregon, Washington Territory, parts of western Utah, and western New Mexico. The Department of the Pacific was broken down into several districts, of which, one was the District of Oregon. Rumors concerning Johnston's infidelity toward the Union were widely circulated, but General Winfield J. Scott, General-in-Chief of the United States Army, dismissed them as false. Undoubtedly, secessionists' entrenchment in powerful Pacific Coast military and civil offices had the potential to work in the Confederacy's favor. However, Edward Baker was a keen observer, and he was well aware of the secessionists' scheme.

Baker left Oregon for Washington, D.C. by way of San Francisco and Panama in early November, 1860. After delivering the most famous address of his career before journeying eastward, Baker took his Senate seat on December 5, 1860. Oddly enough, Baker was at one time the only Whig Congressman from Illinois, and in 1860 he was the only Republican Congressman from the entire Pacific Coast.<sup>49</sup> Lincoln summoned Baker to meet with him in Springfield soon



after Baker arrived in Washington, D.C., and the Oregon Senator met with his old friend in late December, 1860.

The meeting between the Republican Senator from Oregon and the President-elect marked the beginning of Lincoln's policy toward Oregon. Although there is no record of what transpired during the meeting, it is logical to assume that affairs in Oregon received some consideration.<sup>50</sup> Another pertinent fact is that Baker was in favor of the immediate removal of Brevet Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston from command of the Department of the Pacific. Baker had incessantly made this point clear to Lincoln by the time he assumed the presidency, therefore it is natural to assume that Lincoln learned of Baker's position on this issue during their December meeting. But, Lincoln could not act until he had the power to do so three months later in March, 1861.

Powerless, Lincoln adopted his "watchful waiting" policy while he remained in Springfield. Lincoln had a strong faith in southern Union sentiment, and he believed the secessionists would reverse themselves in a matter of time. But, Lincoln's patience was interpreted by Oregon's Douglas Democrats as indifference, and even ineptness. These attitudes did not change following Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, 1861, despite the fact that he was introduced by Senator Baker. James Willis Nesmith, the Douglas Democrat elected Senator with Baker, wrote a

blistering critique of Lincoln on March 18, 1861, in which he stated:

It is already demonstrated that an inherent [sic] weakness pervades our government which in the end will be its ruin. In other times of trial that weakness had in some degree been compensated by the strength of the executive head, but that quality so very much needed has not of late been sought for in presidential candidates. The people have become infatuated with the notion that some damned old fool who drank cider, skinned coons, ran a flatboat, cut cordwood or made rails was the very man to be placed in the last position where those qualifications were required. . . . Whilst Lincoln and his cabinet seem undetermined, the Republic is falling to pieces, and Jeff Davis, a man of great executive mind, and experience is rapidly consolidating his strength, and establishing his Southern Confederacy.<sup>51</sup>

Mr. Nesmith's harsh critique was somewhat erroneous.

Following Lincoln's inauguration, Baker repeated the urgency of replacing Johnston, but Lincoln had gained conflicting information from another reliable source. General Scott, a friend of Johnston's and an ardent Unionist, vigorously affirmed Johnston's loyalty. Therefore, the issue was deadlocked. Two highly reliable sources respectfully differed, but neither Baker nor Scott had proof to substantiate their claims. Meanwhile, Lincoln was informed of the situation on the Pacific Coast.

Stephen J. Field, Chief Justice of the California State Supreme Court, and other loyal Pacific Coast citizens monitored the situation and communicated their observations to Lincoln.<sup>52</sup> The actions of Judge Field and the other loyal communicants were secretive, therefore Nesmith was unaware that Lincoln was taking action concerning the

Pacific Coast. In fact, Field's actions were so secretive that his work was not revealed until he mentioned it in his unpublished book, Early Days in California. However, no concrete proof of Johnston's infidelity was obtained, and Lincoln, though doing all he could about the situation, could not remove Johnston without substantiating his decision. The evidence that Lincoln needed came just eighteen days after he took the presidential oath.

James Nesmith, the man who lambasted Lincoln for his ineptness, was due to take his Senate seat on March 4, 1861. Nesmith departed from Oregon early and stayed in San Francisco for three weeks before he departed for Washington, D.C. Nesmith's Democratic background enabled him to speak freely with Brevet-Brigadier General Albert Sidney Johnston at his San Francisco headquarters. Johnston revealed that he retained command of the Department of the Pacific because he thought he "could render the Confederate cause greater service in the position he then held than in any other he could assume."<sup>53</sup> Johnston elaborated on his plan and confirmed that Southerners counted on the Pacific Coast government's sympathy for the Confederacy's success. Johnston was obviously unaware that Nesmith was elected as a direct result of his party's coalition with the Republicans, and that Nesmith was a staunch Union man. Nesmith remained mute about his discovery during his long voyage to Washington as he planned to thwart the secessionists' plans.

Nesmith sought President Lincoln and Secretary of State William H. Seward immediately upon his arrival in the nation's capital. The Oregon Senator faithfully divulged his information concerning Johnston's plans to the President on March 22, 1861.<sup>54</sup> Later that day Seward related to General Winfield Scott what Nesmith told him. General Erasmus D. Keyes, private military secretary to General Scott, narrated the following:

Mr. Seward remarked, in strict confidence, that he had received information from a high source that General Albert Sidney Johnson [sic] commander of the department of the Pacific, was unfaithful to the Union. Senator Nesmith of Oregon, was Mr. Seward's informant. After a long discussion it was determined to send me [Keyes] to the Pacific Coast to investigate matters there. I should carry orders in my pocket, to be used at my own discretion to send General Johnson [sic] to Washington and to devolve his command on Colonel George Wright.<sup>55</sup>

Lincoln moved quickly and decisively after hearing Nesmith's evidence. The situation's urgency was evident when on March 22, Lincoln ordered Brigadier General Edwin V. Sumner, instead of Keyes, to "prepare to sail from New York the first of next month [April] to relieve Brevet-Brigadier General Johnston in command of the Pacific Department," but the order "remained unpublished," until he was "on the Pacific Ocean, for confidential reasons." The order was signed by Lincoln's first military lieutenant.<sup>56</sup> In order to insure the mission's secrecy, Sumner was rowed out to the steamer after it went down the Bay of New York, to outwit reporters.<sup>57</sup> Lincoln wanted absolute secrecy so that Johnston would be so surprised when Sumner arrived

to relieve him, that he could not organize a possible rebellion. General Scott faced the fact that Johnston was a secessionist who also conspired for the establishment of an independent Pacific Coast Republic and he issued an order for his arrest.

The secessionist's were able to alert Johnston about his relief orders before Sumner arrived despite the painstaking efforts to insure the secrecy of Sumner's mission. Johnston therefore, resigned and asked to be relieved on April 9, 1861. Sumner arrived in San Francisco on April 24, and the following day he handed Johnston the president's orders and said, "I am in command of the Department." <sup>59</sup> A loyal officer commanded the Department of the Pacific and the advocates of a Pacific Coast Republic championed a lost cause.<sup>60</sup> Although Copperheadism, as expressed through the Knights of the Golden Circle did not die completely in Oregon, the secessionist movement was profoundly weakened as a result of Lincoln's actions. However, another event, simultaneous with Johnston's relief, cemented union sentiment in Oregon.

The news of Fort Sumter's fall arrived in San Francisco on the same day as General Sumner, April 24, 1861.<sup>61</sup> The news of Sumner and Sumter were shots of adrenaline for the Union cause in Oregon. Ominously, the same ship that returned Lane to Oregon, in late April, 1861, also brought the news of Sumter's fall. Fort Sumter's fall jelled Union

sentiment in Oregon and many Oregonians feeling that the South initiated the war, detested the doctrine of secession and supported the Union.<sup>61</sup> Joseph Lane's return illustrated the Oregonians' sentiment. Lane was a secessionist, and Oregonians felt that others like him were the cause of the country's problems. Previously, in a speech to the Senate, Lane stated, "I know long, well, and intimately" the people of Oregon, and they would refuse to fight a fratricidal war against the South.<sup>62</sup> Lane misjudged the Oregonians. As a result, Oregonians received Lane frigidly, and treated him as the traitor that he was. Lane had actually brought three boxes of arms with him to fight for the Pacific Coast Republic, but he was dissuaded from using them by a prominent citizen, Jesse Applegate.<sup>62</sup>

The situation in Oregon after Fort Sumter's fall was summed up in a letter from Dr. Anson Henry to Lincoln on June 21, 1861, stating:

There is a stronger secession feeling here than is generally believed. In my opinion the election of Baker and Nesmith to the Senate, and the consequent defeat of Breckinridge and Lane in Oregon in November is all that saved this coast from going with the South. --As it was - the timely appearance of Gen. Sumner at San Francisco, saved the public property of California from falling into the hands of the Secessionists. I think all is now safe notwithstanding the governors of both California and Oregon openly avow their hostility to your policy of putting down the rebellion.<sup>63</sup>

Lane's self-destruction also strengthened the Bush-Douglas Democrat - Republican coalition, which was later called the "Union" party.<sup>64</sup> Most Oregonians ardently

supported Lincoln's vigorous prosecution of the war. Oregon's Governor John Whiteaker, elected in 1858, was a glaring exception to public sentiment. In 1857, visionary Asahel Bush prophesied, "The people of Oregon are eminently national in their sentiments and attachments, and whether she enters the Union slave or free, she will be a conservative National State, and in every emergency will stand by the Union and the Constitution as they are. . ."65 Bush's prediction was correct, but Whiteaker failed to heed the advice. Following the Oregon Union Party's cohesion, everyone who remained outside of this coalition, including Lane's treasonable Democratic faction of which Whiteaker was a part, was considered a Copperhead and a traitor. Whiteaker's action did little to disprove this generalization.

Immediately after the news of Fort Sumter reached Oregon, Whiteaker condemned the policy of "coercion" against the South. In his "Address to the People of Oregon," on May 28, 1861, Whiteaker argued that the South would never stop fighting short of victory and that Oregon should not involve itself with the eastern struggle. Whiteaker argued that Oregon's geographical location exempted it from participating in the War, and he also offered a more impassioned plea. Whiteaker reasoned that Oregon's settlers emigrated from many different sections of the United States, and "it would certainly be impolitic for us, however keenly we may

sympathize with other sections, to subject ourselves to the calamities which afflict them." He accused the federal government of pursuing a war to end slavery, and pleaded, "Have a care that in freeing the negro you do not enslave the white man."<sup>66</sup>

After pleading with the Oregonians, Whiteaker unleashed his invective upon Lincoln's administration. Whiteaker referred to the War as Lincoln's "wicked and unnatural War upon the South." The Governor also clearly stated that Lincoln would receive no troops from Oregon to carry on his "fratricidal war."<sup>67</sup> Whiteaker made that remark just forty-three days after Lincoln's initial call for 75,000 volunteers. Whiteaker's popularity, already falling, plummeted after he publicized his unpopular position. The Jacksonville Sentinel, a newspaper in southern Oregon, reviewed Whiteaker's speech by saying the governor was "evidently in a quandary, his views are conflicting and his mind goes wandering as he puts his pen to paper."<sup>68</sup> The Argus simply dismissed the governor as the "biggest ass in the state."<sup>69</sup>

Most regular army troops stationed in Oregon were transferred to California or the east at the War's outset. By summer, 1861, only about 700 regulars and nineteen commissioned officers were stationed in Oregon and the Washington Territory.<sup>70</sup> However, Governor Whiteaker did not complain to the federal government that his state was



inadequately guarded, although fears of Indian attacks and Copperhead rebellions were ubiquitous and well-founded. Whiteaker's complacency in this respect was almost treasonable, and Bush's Statesman quipped that Whiteaker was too busy "fiddling" for Jefferson Davis and too afraid of correspondence with a Republican administration.<sup>71</sup> Finally, Colonel George Wright, Commander of the District of Oregon, attempted to secure Oregon's neglected frontier.

In June 1861, Colonel Wright requisitioned Whiteaker for a three year cavalry company. Whiteaker responded by appointing fellow Copperhead A. P. Dennison as recruiting officer, and his inertia effectively neutralized Wright's plan. The Lincoln administration, informed of Governor Whiteaker's effective veto of Wright's requisition, moved decisively to rectify Oregon's problem.

On September 24, 1861, an "unusual if not unparalleled" order was issued through Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas. The order was addressed to three loyal Oregon civilians: retired Colonel Thomas R. Cornelius, Honorable Benjamin F. Harding, and Reuben F. Maury. Lincoln realized he had to bypass the Copperhead controlled Oregon state government in order to obtain Oregon troop recruits. Lincoln appointed Colonel Thomas Cornelius as recruiting officer and directed him to raise one cavalry regiment to consist of ten companies for three years service. The order was later modified to designate only six full companies for

the regiment. The regiment was known as the First Oregon Cavalry.<sup>72</sup>

The Oregon situation's urgency was reflected in the almost frantic recruiting method that the order adumbrated. Harding was appointed regimental Quartermaster, who would be "Mustered into the service immediately upon receipt of this letter by an army officer in his vicinity." But, if there was no army officer in his vicinity, Harding would "muster himself into the service by taking the oath of allegiance before a civil magistrate." The order's most amazing aspect was the amount of power it granted to the three former civilians. The order nebulously stated that the regiment was formed to meet all exigencies, especially in protecting the Oregon frontier, but:

Owing to the great distance between Washington and Oregon, these instructions must necessarily be general, but the Department, acting upon the strong recommendation of the Hon. E.D. Baker, Senator from Oregon, relies confidently upon the prudence, patriotism, and economy with which you will execute this trust. Unless otherwise ordered you will be governed by any directions sent to you by Col. E.D. Baker. . . .<sup>73</sup>

The Johnston affair convinced Lincoln that Baker was acutely aware of the loyalty and disloyalty of those on the Pacific Coast. Therefore, when the recruitment problem surfaced it was apparent that Lincoln followed Baker's advice to form the First Oregon Cavalry for Oregon's state security. Lincoln's bold order, issued through Adjutant General Thomas illustrated the president's intense desire

to retain Oregon in the Union despite the non-cooperation of its state government. Lincoln's Oregon patronage appointees followed a similar pattern.

The nation's crisis magnified the importance of making sound federal appointees. Lincoln's task for filling vacated offices, removing secessionists, and efficiently placing competent officials in their proper places was acutely more difficult than any other president's. If secessionists were allowed to keep their governmental positions, as Albert Sidney Johnston almost did, the government's effectiveness in crushing the rebellion would have been hopelessly reduced. Therefore, Lincoln had to depend more than ever on trustworthy advisors to help him make proper selections in sections with which he was unfamiliar. For this reason, Lincoln knew he could give Baker a virtual "free hand" in recommending the appointment of federal officeholders in Oregon, and California, without fear of secessionists' infiltration.

Lincoln asked Baker to provide him with a list of potential appointees for offices in Oregon. Baker faithfully responded on April 8, 1861 and suggested B. J. Pengra as Surveyor General, and on June 13 he completed his list of suggestions: William T. Matlock, Receiver at Oregon City; William A. Starkweather, Registrar of the Land Office at Oregon City; John Kelly, Registrar at Roseburg; William H. Rector, Superintendent of Indian Affairs; William

Barnhart, Indian Agent; William Logan, Indian Agent at Warm Springs Reservation; and Charles Hutchins, Indian Agent at Umatilla Reservation. Lincoln approved Baker's suggestions and made the appointments as listed.<sup>74</sup> Lincoln also appointed Thomas J. Dryer, former editor of the Oregonian, as Commissioner to Hawaii on March 20, 1861. Dryer ran into some opposition, however, and Lincoln replaced him with James McBride, another Oregonian, on January 26, 1863.<sup>75</sup> William H. Bennet was appointed Marshal of Oregon on April 10, 1862 at the request of Simeon Francis.<sup>76</sup>

Dr. Elijah White was appointed Oregon's general supervisor of Indians. White had an unusual assignment from Lincoln. White proposed an industrial scheme for Oregon's Indians, and Lincoln approved the plan. He arrived in Oregon in 1861, found his plan was impracticable due to the amount of Indians that died in the area, and soon afterward White returned to California.<sup>77</sup> A. A. Bancroft was appointed Indian Agent at the Simcoe Reservation; Captain A. P. Ankeny, Surveyor of the Port of Portland; A. R. Flint, John T. Hamilton, Charles I. Parker, and R. S. Partlow were appointed postmasters at Roseberg, Salem, Astoria, and Oregon City respectively. William Tichenor and E. P. Drum were appointed collectors at Portland and Umpqua respectively; and Joel Burlingame, Postal Agent for Oregon. Lincoln also appointed Thomas Frazar to the important post of Collector of Internal Revenue at Portland; Lawrence W.

Coe, Collector of Revenue; and William L. Adams, editor of the Argus, as collector at Astoria.<sup>78</sup> Owen Wade replaced Starkweather on March 17, 1865 as Registrar of the Land Office at Oregon City after Starkweather resigned.<sup>79</sup> Baker's influence with Lincoln concerning federal appointments in Oregon and California was contested in some cases, however.

David Logan communicated his disappointment to Lincoln concerning his rebuff from the president's federal appointee list. In a letter to Lincoln on September 5, 1861, Logan moaned, "Every man this [Lincoln] administration has appointed to office in Oregon save one are favorites of Col. Baker, and they have instituted against me, politically and personally publicly and in my private affairs a system of most annoying warfare, hoping since I have done the work for the party to work me out and have the coast clear for them."<sup>80</sup> Lincoln, unimpressed, purposely did not appoint Logan to an office. Lincoln reportedly inferred that he would appoint Judge Stephen T. Logan, David's father, to any office he wanted; but, he would never appoint David to an office. Lincoln's later appointments included some of his cronies. In 1862 he appointed Simeon Francis and Dr. Anson G. Henry to the posts of Army Paymaster and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Washington Territory respectively.<sup>81</sup>

It is relevant in the discussion of Lincoln's federal appointments to ask why Baker was not selected as a cabinet member. It was the consensus of opinion that Baker would receive a cabinet post during his meeting with President-elect Lincoln in Springfield in late December, 1860. Indeed, David Wilmot of Pennsylvania who accompanied Baker to the meeting was offered a cabinet position, but turned it down. Baker's biographers explained that the "apparent slight" was probably due to Lincoln's need for support in the Senate from the Pacific Coast states.<sup>82</sup> In fact, Baker turned down more than just a cabinet position in order to give Lincoln Senate support. On May 17, 1861, Lincoln offered Baker a Brigadier General's commission, but Baker declined it as he later declined Lincoln's offer of a Major General's commission in order to retain his Senate seat.<sup>83</sup>

Baker's Senate support for Lincoln came to an abrupt end, however. Baker retained his colonel's rank, which allowed him to keep his Senate seat, formed a volunteer regiment, and was killed in action leading troops at the Battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861. Lincoln wept when he received the news about his longtime friend.<sup>84</sup> Oregon lost its first Republican Senator, and Lincoln lost a close friend and an invaluable advisor. John Whiteaker, however, did not shed a tear.

Whiteaker replaced Baker with an overt secessionist, Benjamin Stark. Mr. Stark's appointment was accompanied

by a petition from some Oregon citizens asking that the appointment not be approved. The petition, addressed to Secretary of State William H. Seward read in part:

Mr. Stark has expressed himself publicly. . . as the most prominent and bold of the advocates of secession here in this state. He has been selected by Gov. Whiteaker doubtless in consequence of his secession proclivities, thus outraging sentiment of the people of Oregon, a large majority of whom are loyal to the Union.<sup>85</sup>

The Senate accepted Stark's nomination after some hesitancy, but he was isolated by his Senate colleagues. Stark's appointment exemplified Whiteaker's attitude. The governor's non-cooperation with the Lincoln administration was most obvious in regard to troop recruitment within Oregon.

On January 3, 1862,<sup>85</sup> Adjutant General Thomas requested some information from Governor Whiteaker concerning troop strength in Oregon. The request asked the governor to report to the Secretary of War the number of volunteer regiments organized under the authority of the Oregon state government, and their status upon being transferred to the general government. Thomas also delicately referred to the First Oregon Cavalry, formed without the governor's consent, as "independent acceptances" and desired a report concerning "its, and any other independent regiment's strength."<sup>86</sup> The War Department's motivations behind issuing this request are puzzling. The Lincoln administration obviously recognized Whiteaker's hostility toward furnishing troops for the Union

cause and it was this that forced the president to bypass the state government and resort to "independent acceptances." If the War Department's motivation was to confirm Whiteaker's hostility toward the Union War effort, the Oregon governor's retort to the War Department cleared up any indecision concerning his position.

Whiteaker's non-cooperative attitude was apparent in the wording of his reply. Whiteaker's opening sentence to the War Department read, "Your communication of January 4, 1862. . . is received and without delay I make the following reply: The authorities of this state have never been called upon for any troops by the President." Although this was an obvious distortion of the truth, Whiteaker explained that Wright's requisition for troops was "countermanded" before the company was mustered into service. Whiteaker understood Thomas' subtle inquiry concerning the "independent acceptances" regiment Harding recruited without the governor's consent. In reference to that regiment's situation, Whiteaker sarcastically noted:

. . . the authorities of this state [have not] furnished any volunteers upon what you call 'independent acceptances,' unless it is meant by this to cover those cases where officers for the command of a regiment have been appointed directly from your office, and authorized to raise such troops within a State without calling upon the local authorities for them. As you must be aware, there is one such case in this State, but as to its present strength I am entirely uninformed. . ."87



On May 21, 1862, Whiteaker punctuated this statement in a reply to a similar inquiry from Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in which the governor stated, "There is not a figure or the scratch of a pen in the [Oregon] executive office which would enable me to answer your inquiries."<sup>88</sup> In fact, Whiteaker's actions countermanded Lincoln's efforts to retain Oregon in the Union so much that the governor indirectly encouraged foreign intervention.

Rumors frequently circulated in Oregon that the English encouraged the separation of the Pacific Coast from the Union. Advocates of the Pacific Coast Republic based their philosophy partially on the argument that the Pacific Coast's trade would be more profitable if it were independent from the Union.<sup>89</sup> This argument and the outbreak of the Civil War whetted the English appetite. On January 11, 1862, the Jacksonville Sentinel reprinted an article from the British Columbia British Colonist which described how a force of British Canadians planned to sweep into the Pacific Coast, "and combined with the 75,000 Secessionists in Oregon and California," they would separate the Pacific States from the Union and possibly hold the area under English "protection." The Sentinel ran the article under the sarcastic title, "What the British Expect of the Secessionists in Oregon in case of War," and further quipped, "if the Colonist will be kind enough to wait a little while before taking possession of Oregon and California, we shall feel

ourselves under everlasting obligations."<sup>90</sup> The Sentinel could afford the sarcasm because despite Whiteaker's actions the majority of Oregonians were Unionists and Lincoln was determined to hold on to them. Besides, the estimation of 75,000 secessionists in just Oregon was probably an exaggeration.

Oregon's unprotected coast line caused defense problems, however. Lincoln realized this deficiency in Oregon and other places, and he moved quickly to fortify the coast. Lincoln's costal fortification policy was addressed to the governors of seaboard and likeside states and printed in Oregon on December 7, 1861.<sup>91</sup> The announcement was entitled "Important Circular," which was issued by Secretary of State Seward. The circular warned against secessionist agents in various states who worked to gain recognition for their state from foreign countries.

The circular pointed out that an obvious precaution to guard against a foreign invasion of coastal states was to put all ports and harbors in a "condition of complete defense." But, the president could only grant as much money to the project as Congress allowed him. Although "the president [put] forth the most diligent efforts to execute these measures," the states were asked to partially fund the forts until the federal government could reimburse them. Oregonians, however, were unhappy with the way the government attempted to reimburse them for the Indian wars of the

mid-1850s, and they did not favor placing another economic burden upon themselves.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, the construction of coastal defenses in Oregon along the Columbia River moved slowly. By September, 1862, Oregon's relationship with the federal government changed dramatically.

On September 10, 1862, Addison Crandall Gibbs replaced John Whiteaker as Oregon's Governor. Gibbs, a Douglas Democrat, firmly supported President Abraham Lincoln and his vigorous prosecution of the War. In his inaugural address he stated that the only reason Oregon was not a "reenactment of the scenes of Kentucky and Tennessee," was because of the attention of Union men and the "vigilance" of the Lincoln administration.<sup>93</sup> Just as Sumner's arrival revitalized the Pacific Coast, Whiteaker's defeat in favor of Gibbs stimulated Oregonians to renewed vigor. The Oregon "Republican Revolution" was complete.

Gibbs' election did not instantly exterminate all secessionist sentiment, however. John Whiteaker's relaxed attitude toward secessionist activities during his four year term allowed the movement to take firm hold. Secessionist activities did not end with Whiteaker's term, and they were encouraged by every federal military setback in the East.<sup>94</sup> Gibbs' initial goal was to effectively reorient state government and stop secessionist activities in Oregon. Gibbs quickly and energetically launched his plans.

Gibbs authorized the suppression of six "offensively treasonable" newspapers shortly after his election.<sup>95</sup> One such newspaper was the Portland Advertiser. The Advertiser's self-admitted duty was to "invoke the Divine interposition to stay the hand of Lincoln, paralyze his efforts and thus put a stop to the unnatural, intestine war that he has inaugurated and carried on."<sup>96</sup> But, most significantly, Gibbs reorganized army recruiting procedures in Oregon, although enthusiasm for enlistment was slight. On October 16, 1862, the state legislature passed a militia law. It empowered the governor to call three brigades of militia into state service immediately to suppress insurrections, rebellions, or perform any other duty in order to insure peace on the Oregon frontier. However, the militia was specifically designed to check the Knights of the Golden Circle.<sup>97</sup>

Military reorganization was overdue in Oregon, however Lincoln's supporters did not want to embarrass him by pointing out the army's deficiencies. Lincoln's friends were reluctant to expose the army's weaknesses even though they perceived its errant structure. This attitude was exemplified in a letter from Dr. Henry to Simeon Francis on March 1, 1861:

. . . I do not think that friends as we are of Mr. Lincoln in this crisis we ought not to embarrass him. The army, as a general fact is sound. . . and if there are officers who are doubtful they will be sure, hereafter to keep their mouths close[d], or leave. . .<sup>98</sup>

The volunteer cavalry regiment's purpose remained constant throughout the War. The September 24, 1861 order directing Colonel Cornelius to organize the First Oregon Cavalry never deviated from its original intent. The order stated the regiment's purpose was chiefly to guard the frontier against any insurrections including foreign and domestic secessionist plots and Indian uprisings. The frontier's defense concerning Indians was a potentially explosive situation. Oregon had suffered through three major Indian wars between 1847 and 1858. Adequate protection from the Indians was needed to attract settlers, and the removal of Oregon troops to the East and California at the War's outbreak caused an immediate problem for Oregon citizens. But, that was only half of their problem.

Secessionists in Oregon encouraged Indian attacks. The situation was especially bleak around Fort Hoskins, near Eugene City. Thomas B. Campbell, Fort Hoskins' Post Adjutant relayed an almost unbelievable story in a letter dated November 25, 1861. Campbell was informed by a citizen that about 250 to 300 stands of arms were distributed to traitors near the Fort, and that he needed to distribute weapons to Union men, but he did not know who they were. Campbell was also informed by the citizen that the Fort's former commander "distributed to the Indians guns and revolvers and ammunition and told them to fight for Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy." The same informant

further claimed to have overheard secessionists plotting to take over the Fort by setting "fire [to] the buildings and shoot[ing] the officers as they came out."<sup>99</sup>

In spite of the threats to their state's security, Oregonians did not flock to enlist in the First Oregon Cavalry. The regiment's purpose did little to stimulate enthusiasm to join. Most men preferred to fight rebels in the East than Indians in the West. Additionally, General Alvord commented that Oregon recruitment was hindered by "the mining excitement and temptations on this coast, in the depreciation of legal-tender notes, and the absence of war stimulus."<sup>100</sup> The major difference between Oregon soldiers and Potomac veterans was their age; the Oregon volunteer being about four years older on the average than the Potomac soldier. However, except for the daily boredom that the Oregon cavalrymen experienced and the combat that eastern soldiers experienced, the garrison life of Oregon and Potomac soldiers was strikingly similar. Royal A. Bensell, an Oregon volunteer, related that the most common offenses at Fort Yamhill, Oregon, were: drunkenness, absence from camp without leave, insubordination, disrespect to superior officers, absence from roll-call without leave, turbulence after taps, sitting while on guard duty, gambling, and leaving the beat without relief.<sup>101</sup> Many officers turned down commissions in the state militia for the reason that Oregon troops would not see eastern action. Volunteer

recruitment was briefly stimulated when Colonel Baker promised that the regiment would see eastern action, but that hope died with Colonel Baker.

The Oregon cavalry did not see eastern action, but its devotion to the Union was absolute. The troops that composed the regiment did not forget their promise of eastern duty, however. The Oregon soldiers implored Lincoln to transfer them east, but the president declined. Lincoln remembered the secessionist element in Oregon and realized the necessity of protecting Oregonians, and emigrants, from resentful Indians. In October, 1864, Lincoln authorized Governor Gibbs to form a regiment of infantry to aid the First Oregon Cavalry. The first troops for the infantry regiment were not officially mustered into service until June 24, 1865, more than two months after Lee's surrender at Appomattox.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, The First Oregon Cavalry was the only volunteer regiment Oregon produced during the War and its services were needed at home. Lincoln stated its primary duty was to "guard the State from foes both savage and traitorous from without and from open treason within."<sup>103</sup>

Lincoln's policy for coastal defense moved swiftly through Congress. On February 13, 1862, the House authorized the construction of twenty iron-clads.<sup>104</sup> One week later on February 20, appropriations for Lincoln's

plan to fortify ports and harbors were passed. In regard to Oregon, the bill specified:

For defense in Oregon and Washington Territory, at or near the mouth of the Columbia River, one-hundred thousand dollars, if in the judgement of the President, the same by, or any part thereof, shall be advisable.<sup>105</sup>

The coastal fortification legislation passed within two months of Lincoln's "Important Circular" policy statement, but actual construction lagged behind the bill's passage. Brigadier General Benjamin Alvord, who relieved Colonel Justus Steinberger as Commander of the District of Oregon on July 7, 1862, deserved much of the credit for agitating for the fort's construction. In a letter to United States Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, Alvord stated, "I respectfully recommend that the President order the commencement of such defenses [as were specified in the February 20, 1862 appropriations bill concerning Oregon]."<sup>106</sup> On July 11, 1863, the Sentinel reported that the construction of the "long talked of" fort would proceed at once, and an iron-clad would accompany the fort on the Columbia River.<sup>107</sup> By November 6, 1863, Alvord could report to Thomas that the batteries being erected on the Columbia River were "near completion."<sup>108</sup> The fort was completed on the south bank of the Columbia River before the conclusion of the War. The nonagon shaped fort was surrounded by earthworks and a thirty-foot wide ditch. It was christened Fort Stevens, after General I. J. Stevens, who died in



battle on September 1, 1862; and, it was one of the best armed fortifications on the Pacific Coast.<sup>109</sup> Oregon was manned, fortified, and entrenched in the Union.

The First Oregon Cavalry served its purpose well. Although the cavalry ranks appeared meager, especially when one considers that this was the only volunteer regiment Oregon contributed, it was effective. The regiment successfully deterred both foreign and domestic secessionist plots, policed the frontier against hostile Indians, and escorted citizens across the frontier. In short, the regiment enforced peace in Oregon, which was its sole purpose. The remarkably tranquil atmosphere also illustrated the triumph of Lincoln's War policy concerning Oregon.

Oregon's situation at the time of Lincoln's election was dismal. Secessionists controlled the state government and the military and southern sympathy was strong and overt. One of Oregon's Senators was an avid secessionist who conspired to separate the Pacific Coast from the Union. But, patiently, methodically, and quietly Abraham Lincoln and his administration solved these problems and kept Oregon in the Union.

By July 1863 Oregon was out of danger from secessionists. The internal secessionists were under control, Lincoln's bold order forming the First Oregon Cavalry insured peace, his fortification of the Columbia River discouraged foreign intrigue, and Indian hostilities were

checked. The inhabitants of Oregon recognized this tremendous metamorphosis and subsequently Union Leagues, succeeded by Lincoln and Johnson clubs were formed to show support for the Lincoln administration. However, Lincoln's War policy was just one aspect of his policy concerning Oregon.

## IV. LINCOLN'S DOMESTIC POLICY TOWARD OREGON

Oregon was perhaps the state least effected by the Civil War with regard to combat, and according to Oregon's State Adjutant General Cyrus A. Reed, Oregon was "far removed from the thunder and shock of battle."<sup>110</sup> No battles were fought within the state, and no Confederate campaign came close to its borders. As late as March 22, 1862, Oregon's contribution to the Union army was reported as only 1,000 troops, and the soldiers to civilian ratio was 1:50.<sup>111</sup> As previously mentioned, some Oregon residents thought the state's remoteness from the conflict should exempt it from taking part in the War. Although President Lincoln did not agree with this reasoning, it is significant that he exempted Oregon from fulfilling a volunteer quota obligation in his Proclamation of October 17, 1863.<sup>112</sup> Lincoln possibly assumed that a quota would drain many loyal citizens from Oregon and invite a secessionist or Indian uprising. Or, Lincoln may have reasoned that Oregon's scant population could not fulfill a quota and remain a viable loyal state for an extended period of time. Whatever reason Lincoln had for exempting Oregon, one important factor for doing so was to concentrate on using its material resources for the Union effort.

Lincoln understood that a war could not be fought with only soldiers. An effective fighting machine had to be

properly financed, and the Civil War was extremely costly. But Oregon's population was small. On September 2, 1861, the Statesman reported Oregon's quota for the national revenue bill was only \$35,140.<sup>113</sup> Lincoln recognized that Oregon's wealth lay in its gold mines rather than its troop and tax potential, and the President exploited these assets for the Union benefit. Oregon's gold donation to the Union is often overlooked due to the emphasis on California gold during the mid 1800s. Oregon, the Washington Territory and Montana produced three-fourths of California's gold production in their combined peak gold production years of 1861 through 1867.<sup>114</sup>

Gold was initially discovered in Oregon in 1845, and various small discoveries were made until the major discoveries were made in the Thompson and Fraser rivers in 1856 and 1857. By 1858 the Oregon gold rush was on and Portland emerged as Oregon's major metropolitan center. Portland's population doubled to 2917 inhabitants between 1857 and 1860. In 1863 Thomas Frazar, a Lincoln appointee for collector of Revenue at Portland, reported that total gold assays in Portland was \$4,505,731. For one three month's period in 1864 Frazar reported Portland's gold assays to be \$1,376,678.<sup>82</sup> The total shipments of gold bullion from Portland by Wells Fargo express in 1864 was \$6,200,000; and in 1865 it was \$5,800,000.<sup>115</sup> Over 40 per cent of the United States total gold product between 1861

and 1867 came from Oregon and the Pacific Coast.<sup>116</sup> These figures illustrate Oregon's importance for financing the expansion of the national economy and the Union war effort.

Oregon's economic importance also reveals the partial motivation behind Lincoln's intense desire to retain Oregon in the Union. If Oregon and the other Pacific Coast states aided the Confederacy, as Jefferson Davis was promised, the course of the Civil War would have undoubtedly been altered. In fact, the Confederate Congress passed a series of resolutions on October 2, 1862 that recognized the practical neutrality of Oregon and the rest of the Pacific Coast states and territories.<sup>117</sup> The Confederacy faced the problem of inadequate funding at the War's outset. Conversely, the Union enjoyed a greater economic advantage over the Confederacy that was partially due to Pacific Coast gold even though the national debt had mounted because of the War. Had Oregon been persuaded to initiate a Pacific Coast Republic and fund the Confederate war effort, the complexion of the War would have been different. Although Oregon and the Pacific Coast would not have been enough to tip the advantage toward the Confederates, a Pacific Coast Republic could have forced the war to drag on longer by providing adequate arms and ammunition to the rebels. It would have also created an enlarged area for the Union troops to subdue. Oregon was also an important source of

woolens for uniforms during the War, a commodity greatly demanded by the Southerners.<sup>118</sup>

Oregon's gold supply and the Civil War stimulated federal support for those internal improvements that the state had voiced concern for since its territorial inception. Oregonians, inhabitants of the most remote area within the United States, perennially demanded a Pacific railroad. This request, along with many others from Oregon was typical of the western frontier. The Democrats hounded for internal improvements in Oregon, but the Republicans successfully turned the issue in their favor as part of the "Oregon Revolution" in 1860. Republicans held a state convention in Salem on April 21, 1859, and a Pacific railroad was at the top of their demands.<sup>119</sup> Oregonians realized that eastward transportation would accelerate wealth production, and Lincoln realized accelerated western wealth production was a must for the War effort. However, by early 1862 fourteen miles of portage railroads along the Columbia River was the extent of Oregon's steel rails. Also in early 1862, the Union armies were being beaten and the federal treasury was being drained. Oregon was still governed by John Whiteaker until September, 1862, and that state had heretofore been more of a problem than an asset. The Lincoln administration kept Oregon in the Union, and it was time for Oregon to repay its debt.

The federal treasury was in the red; but, gold was in the Oregon mountains and rivers. With this in mind, the federal government hastily began the internal improvements in transportation and communication that Oregonians long demanded. On December 10, 1861, a message from President Lincoln was printed in Oregon. Lincoln's statement began:

I submit a statement of the proceedings of the [Pacific Railroad] Commission, which shows the progress that has been made in the enterprise of constructing the Pacific Railroad, and this suggests the earliest completion of the road, and also the favorable action of Congress on the project now pending before them. . .<sup>120</sup>

In fact, the Pacific Railroad would have been built much earlier had the plan not been sabotaged. The Pacific Coast Republic conspirators, including Lane, concentrated their efforts on halting the transcontinental railroad while informing their constituents that other federal government officials hampered the plan.<sup>121</sup>

In July 1862 Lincoln signed a bill to aid in the construction of a railroad and telegraph line from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean.<sup>122</sup> Although this act was passed as a war measure, construction was slowed by the War. Oregon's citizens and the state legislature aided the federal government with money, land, and even a surveyor's report by 1864. However, specific plans for construction did not begin until 1866. Throughout the Civil War, gold from Oregon relied on the Wells Fargo express for its journey eastward. Lincoln initiated the railroad era in

Oregon with regard to the federal government, but it was not until after the War that the Transcontinental Railroad with branches to Oregon was completed. Lincoln had a more profound effect upon Oregon in other aspects.

The federal court system in Oregon was reorganized at Lincoln's request. In his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1861, Lincoln pointed out some systemic weaknesses in the federal judicial system.<sup>123</sup> Lincoln stated that in order to retain uniformity in the federal judicial system, a vast reorganization was needed. In particular, not all states conformed to the same federal circuit court system. The country was divided into circuits, and a United States Supreme Court Justice was picked from each circuit. The justices sat on the United States Supreme Court when it was in session, and after adjournment they returned home and presided over their federal circuits. However, this system was not applied to each state at the time of Lincoln's election.

The federal circuit court system failed to expand to accommodate new states that entered the Union. Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, Florida, Texas, California, and Oregon "never had any" circuit courts attended by Supreme Court Justices before Lincoln's term. Lincoln presented three proposals to rectify the situation and they were meant to improve the court system without creating "a court altogether too numerous for a judicial body of any sort to



function." Lincoln's proposals were: expanding the system then used by incorporating the states that did not have circuits, relieving Supreme Court Justices from circuit duty, or abolishing circuit courts in favor of expanding the power of the district courts. Lincoln added that each state had to be represented in the system or it should be abolished; and, that the adoption of any of his proposals "would be an improvement upon our present system."<sup>124</sup> Congress moved sluggishly to enact legislation concerning Oregon's federal judicial system.

Congress initially appeared to purposely ignore the federal court problem in Oregon. On July 15, 1862, Congress created nine circuits and expanded the circuit courts' powers at the expense of the district courts.<sup>125</sup> Congress also incorporated each state that Lincoln specified, except California and Oregon. It was not until March 3, 1863 that Congress incorporated California and Oregon by creating the Tenth Circuit. This Act also fixed the number of Supreme Court Justices at nine.<sup>126</sup> Lincoln was allowed to pick a Justice, and he spent his choice on a Pacific Coast citizen. Ironically, Lincoln chose Judge Stephen J. Field. Field was the California Supreme Court Chief Justice, and one of the loyal men who secretly monitored the Pacific Coast secessionist situation for Lincoln prior to Albert Sidney Johnston's removal.

Homestead legislation was another perennial demand that Oregonians made on the federal government. Lincoln touched a responsive chord in Oregon in an address of December 21, 1861. He stated that the interruption of the country's business caused by the Civil War "obstructed settlements in the new States and Territories of the Northwest."<sup>127</sup> Lincoln reported this obstruction cost the government \$1 million in receipts to the Patent Office which forced a large reduction of that office's personnel to keep it self-sustaining. Lincoln's acknowledgment of this problem, one that Oregonians were well aware of, was music to their ears.

Oregonians' demands for a homestead bill were second only to their demands for a Pacific railroad. They realized that the Oregon Trail was a long, dangerous trek that did not provide the lure that better transportation and "free land" would. A law was passed that donated free land to Oregon emigrants in 1850, but it was not a permanent homestead law. The Civil War provided incentive for the federal government to enact a national homestead law.

The Homestead Act passed by Congress on May 20, 1862 was designed to boost agricultural production. Oregon had an abundance of land, but the law did not produce the exodus for which it was intended. The Homestead Law provided that a settler could obtain 160 acres of unappropriated land for a \$10 fee. The settler obtained the land title if he lived or cultivated the land for five years. The Homestead Law

was not suitable for its purpose in the Northwest, however. The 160 acre tracts were inappropriate for efficient Northwest farming. The law was most effective for midwestern farming and the law's intent was defeated when it was applied to Western forested areas.<sup>129</sup> The act was received with measured enthusiasm in Oregon.

Some Oregonians viewed the federal Homestead Law as an overdue attempt to encourage settlement. In response to the Homestead Law, the Sentinel grumbled, "Had it not been for the war [sic], the Pacific coast would have received a larger accession to its population than at any previous year."<sup>129</sup> Due to the deficiencies of the Law's application to the Northwest, this assumption is questionable, but it was a popular sentiment. On April 30, 1862, before the land embraced in the Homestead Act was surveyed, General Wright proclaimed that all surveyors and preemptors were required to take an oath of allegiance to the Union.<sup>130</sup>

On May 28, 1862, the specifics for Oregon land sales under the Homestead Act were announced. J. M. Edmunds, Commissioner of the General Land Office, announced that by "a recent proclamation," by President Lincoln, all land west of the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, except donation claims, pre-emptions completed, and mineral lands, would be offered for sale on October 6, 1862.<sup>131</sup> On January 21, 1863 the Surveyor General of Oregon reported that 6,219.682 acres were surveyed, of which 4,442.700 acres

would be sold. Oregonians were generally pleased with the completed homestead legislation, but other federal legislation was not so popular.

Oregon's Indian War debt controversy raged from the mid 1850s through Lincoln's administration. The "Oregon and Washington Territory War Debt" controversy was a drawn out, confusing issue concerning federal reimbursement to citizens for loans to the government in order to fight Indian wars. The Oregon debt was contracted between 1855 and 1856. Oregon businessmen initially thought that government purchases would stimulate the economy, so they eagerly and liberally sold supplies to the federal commissary on credit. The idea was that the government would repay the debt fully and promptly after the wars, but this was not the case.<sup>132</sup>

Congress appointed a commission to arrive at a just compensation award for the Oregon debt after the wars were completed. The commission, which consisted of one Oregon citizen, Lafayette F. Grover, and two United States Army Captains, Rufus Ingalls and Andrew J. Smith, calculated the federal debt owed Oregon to be \$6,011,457.36.<sup>133</sup> However, on March 2, 1861, Third Auditor Robert J. Atkinson issued a report that reduced Oregon's award. Congress responded to Atkinson's report by appropriating \$2,800,000 for repayment of Oregon's war debt in twenty-year United States bonds at an annual rate of six per cent. Oregonians felt they were cheated by Congress' appropriation and they sent a petition

to President Lincoln on November 1, 1861 for redress of their grievances. The petition was signed by 701 Oregon and Washington Territory citizens, including future Oregon Governor Addison Crandall Gibbs.<sup>134</sup>

President Lincoln received the respectfully worded petition on May 1, 1862. The President obviously had no legal power concerning an appropriation grievance, so he forwarded the petition, along with a copy of the Third Auditor's report to the Senate. The petition stated that Oregonians were wronged for three main reasons. The three central grievances were that the reward was too small, that more than six years elapsed since the debt was incurred, and that the interest was not granted from the correct date. Atkinson issued a statement to Congress defending his original report against the petition. He claimed that the repayment was handled as speedily as possible, and he offered proof that if his figure was wrong, it actually "discriminated in their [Oregonians] favor." Congress was swayed by Atkinson's rebuttal, and Oregonians were repaid in 1861 in accordance with Atkinson's original recommendation. However, the debt was not paid in gold, but in depreciated greenbacks.<sup>135</sup> Though disappointed, Oregonians' faith in the Union was not shook, however.

Oregonians made many domestic gains despite their setback in the war debt settlement. The Homestead Act encouraged some migration into Oregon, and gold also

encouraged settlement while it pumped vitality into the economy. Gold also accelerated the long awaited Pacific Railroad construction, and precipitated communication advancements. The transcontinental telegraph connections with Portland crept northward from Sacramento and Yreka, California, between 1858 and 1861. Portland was finally connected to the telegraph on March 5, 1864. The first telegraph message sent east from Portland was from Governor Gibbs to President Lincoln on March 8, 1864. Gibbs' message exemplified Oregon's Union sympathies:

Our telegraph completed. Let the great Pacific Railroad with a branch to Oregon soon follow. We want no Pacific republic, no compromise with rebels in arms, and no more slavery.<sup>136</sup>

Lincoln's domestic policy toward their state kept Oregonians contented, but Gibbs' telegram also alluded that Oregon, like other states, still depended upon the federal government for protection. Gibbs' mention of the Pacific Railroad indicated that more internal improvements were needed. The telegram also intimated that Oregon's security was still dependent upon the federal military. By 1863 Lincoln's War policy generally secured Oregon from internal threats, but complacency could not be afforded. Obviously the Pacific Coast Republic and "rebels in arms" remained issues in Oregon after Gibbs' election and his telegram illustrated that Oregon still needed Lincoln's attention.

## V. LINCOLN'S LATER WAR POLICY TOWARD OREGON

The Pacific Coast Republic scheme lingered in some Oregonians' minds throughout the War, and at times the fear of the plot's success almost caused an atmosphere of paranoia. The idea of a Pacific Coast Republic was also invoked to inspire loyalty and patriotism for the Union, especially when the federals lost eastern battles. Anson Henry told Lincoln that the Statesman was the "most zealous and efficient supporter of you here in Oregon," and this paper was especially good at exploiting the Pacific Coast Republic scheme to the Union's advantage.<sup>137</sup> An eloquent editorial upholding the principles of the United States Constitution was printed under the headline, "Lane Against Madison;" and after Senator Latham of California switched his loyalty from the Pacific Coast Republic to the Union, the headline read, "Latham Brought to His Senses."<sup>138</sup> This attitude was also carried out in the government sector.

On September 9 and 10, 1862, the Oregon state legislature discussed a series of resolutions offered by John R. McBride. The resolutions were strongly pro-Union, pro-Lincoln, and anti-secessionist. The legislature pledged its support for Lincoln, and stated that any attempt to embarrass the President "should be regarded as unpatriotic and having a direct tendency to aid the traitors now fighting against the government." The legislature also

resolved that the Pacific Coast Republic met "the emphatic condemnation of the people of Oregon, and we denounce it as a development of treason favored by no man who has intelligence and patriotism."<sup>139</sup> The legislature was given a chance to prove its loyalty soon after the resolutions were passed.

By 1863 there was an open complaint from official quarters that Oregon had not raised its share of troops.<sup>140</sup> Lincoln desired to expand the First Oregon Cavalry to full strength. Colonel Thomas Cornelius initially tried to recruit eight companies for the First Oregon Cavalry; but, on February 24, 1862, the Commander of the Department only allowed for six companies to complete the regiment.<sup>141</sup> Cornelius resigned over this dispute in 1862 but by 1863 the regiment was expanded.

On January 5, 1863, Benjamin Alvord, Commander of the Oregon District wrote Governor Gibbs concerning the expansion of the First Oregon Cavalry. General Alvord carried out Lincoln's desire and "requested" that six additional companies be raised to "complete the First Regiment of Cavalry Oregon Volunteers."<sup>142</sup> The Governor responded immediately. In a proclamation printed on January 10, 1863, Gibbs informed the Oregonians that the "President of the United States" requested that six volunteer companies be recruited; and, he hoped that "the call will promptly be responded to by the local citizens of this State."<sup>143</sup> The



additional troops were needed for the same assignment for which the original regiment was formed. Not surprisingly, enthusiasm in Oregon was slight and recruitment lagged.

The standard complaint that western service with no hope of eastern action was just one of a multitude of grievances. The Oregon troops were also paid in depreciated legal tender notes instead of specie. General Wright recognized this problem, and realized that fulfilling Lincoln's request for additional troops from Oregon would be nearly impossible if they were to be paid in greenbacks. Wright officially requested from the War Department that Pacific Coast troops be paid in specie. Wright claimed that the depreciated greenbacks were worth less in the West than they were in the East.<sup>144</sup> However, the federal government responded that the greenbacks were just as worthless in the East as they were in the West, and Wright's request was denied. The military organization of the First Oregon Cavalry also discouraged recruitment.

On July 7, 1862 Brigadier General Benjamin Alvord assumed command of the District of Oregon replacing Colonel Justus Steinberger, who was immediately sent to Fort Walla Walla. Steinberger's predecessor was Reuben F. Maury, a popular resident of Oregon. Steinberger, on the other hand, was a citizen of the Washington Territory and a former infantry commander. To make matters worse, Steinberger had been an Oregon proxy delegate to the Baltimore convention

that nominated Breckinridge and Lane. No doubt some Oregonians were not excited about serving in a cavalry regiment under a "foreign" infantry commander that helped nominate a secessionist to run against Lincoln in 1860.<sup>145</sup> Steinberger remained in command of the regiment until Maury received his promotion to Colonel and ordered to relieve General Alvord as Commander of the District of Oregon on March 23, 1865.<sup>146</sup> The First Oregon Cavalry, therefore, was under an unpopular commander for most of the War.

It is not surprising that Lincoln's request to expand Oregon's mounted regiment was not quickly fulfilled. Another factor that worked against recruitment was that the request for this expansion came in January, 1863, when Union battle losses in the East had a detrimental effect on soldier morale. By March, 1863, the Argus reported that only one company, of the proposed six, was "nearly full." General Alvord expressed his impatience with the recruitment pace in a letter in which he stated, "Oregon had not raised her share of troops. California has sent nearly nine regiments, and Oregon but seven companies into the field."<sup>147</sup>

In this tense, apathetic atmosphere, General Wright issued an impassioned plea to the Oregonians for recruits. In his proclamation of April 7, 1863, Wright pointed out that Oregonians were relatively untouched by the War that "drenched in blood the fairest portion of our beloved

country." Wright also warned that unless the Pacific Coast frontiers were kept well guarded, the blessing of peace among them was in jeopardy. Wright beseeched:

Are you prepared, then to sacrifice all these blessings to prove recreant to yourselves, to the nation and to the high and holy trust transmitted to you by the founders of our republic? No. Already I hear the welkin ring with shouts of acclamation: 'The Union shall be preserved.' Although the great mass of the people on the Pacific Coast are eminently patriotic and devoted to the Union. . . we have traitors in our midst who are doing all in their power to involve this country in the horrors of civil war.<sup>148</sup>

The only ringing shouts Wright heard were entirely within his head. Only one company of recruits was mustered into the service in fulfillment of Lincoln's request for six companies. Company G, First Oregon Cavalry, was Oregon's final contribution to its mounted regiment.<sup>149</sup> Wright brought up the need to defend the Pacific Coast from traitors in his proclamation. Once again, an intimation concerning the Pacific Coast Republic was used to arouse patriotism. Although it did not succeed in enlisting many recruits, Wright's concerns were well founded because the Knights of the Golden Circle had gained additional members and momentum with every Union setback in the East.

A proposed draft supplied important impetus to the Knights' movement. The state legislature openly intimated the draft could be employed to supply men when recruitment proceeded slowly for the First Oregon Cavalry. The Oregon Knights, however, would not tolerate a draft without a

fight, and the state legislature did not antagonize this highly volatile group. The authority for a state draft was bequeathed to the legislature in the 1862 militia bill, but it was not used in Oregon during the War.

The Oregon legislature opted against conscription. The legislature's reasoning behind pursuing a non-coercive recruitment policy was pragmatic rather than philosophic. The Oregon legislature received reliable information which predicted that instituting a draft would be counterproductive to its goal of insuring peace within Oregon. Legislators were aware of the Knights' existence and its probable opposition to the draft; but, before 1863 it was not known how formidable the opposition would be. Increased intelligence concerning the Oregon Knights was available after Gibbs' election to the governorship due to the infiltration of the organization by loyal Union spies.

Union spies kept efficient tabs on the Oregon Knights.<sup>150</sup> Julius M. Keeler was appointed provost Marshal of the District of Oregon on May 22, 1863 with the responsibility of foiling the Knights' activities. Captain Keeler arrived in Oregon in 1863 with a corps of detectives who had orders to monitor the Knights and to arrest any members who actively planned any armed rebellion against the federal government. The spies, who answered to Oregon's state Adjutant General Reed supplied intelligence concerning the secretive group. Before Oregon's spy network was

implemented, loyal state authorities could only conjecture about the Knights' plans, strength, and goals. The spies confirmed that the Knights boasted approximately 2,500 members by 1864, and that at least ten separate circles existed in Oregon. The circles were mostly in southern Oregon, and there were two circles each in Portland and Salem.<sup>151</sup> The spies also discovered that the Knights were not only organized, but active.

The Oregon Knights planned armed rebellion against the federal government. John O. Shelton, a Union spy, learned that the Knights planned a rebellion in order to form the Pacific Coast Republic, and they were waiting for an opportune moment to set their plan in motion. Indeed, crates of arms and ammunition were secretly stored for this purpose. The spies also spoiled "several" attempts by the Knights to assassinate Adjutant General Reed and capture the federal arsenal.<sup>152</sup> Reed's spies also furnished him with a list of prominent Knights' members. The list included Democratic newspaper editors and politicians, including Gibbs' opponent for the Oregon governorship in 1862, John F. Miller. The Lincoln administration's perspicacity in dealing with the Oregon Knights was admirable. An attempt to crush the movement without just provocation could have incited a rebellion by supplying the Knights with the opportunity it awaited. Conversely, ignoring the highly volatile group could have been detrimental to the Oregon

Union effort. Lincoln's policy, administered through Adjutant General Reed, effectively and covertly subverted the subversives.

The Oregon legislature doubtlessly recognized the possibility of the Knights mobilizing if draft legislation were passed. The legislature realized that economic inducements for enlistment would be an effective alternative to coercive measures. The legislature could not afford to delay. Union enthusiasm for recruitment was waning in Oregon just as more troops were needed due to the Knight's consolidation of their power. A memorandum sent from Adjutant General Reed to Brigadier General Alvord on October 28, 1863 described the current atmosphere in Oregon:

This day I received a communication from Capt. Julius M. Keeler. . .by which it seems there is some danger of a resistance to the laws and an organization of men for that purpose. . . . It appears to me that measures should be taken, if possible, to prevent an outbreak, for if civil strife should once commence on this coast there is no knowing where it would end. . . . It is evident that prudence, energy, and firmness must be the governing principle of men in authority, in order to prevent a calamity that does in a measure hang over us.<sup>153</sup>

Further factors compounded Oregon's military problems.

The first four companies mustered into the First Oregon Cavalry were due to be discharged in the fall of 1864. Recruitment to replenish the cavalry ranks was hampered by Congressional bungling. When the First Oregon Cavalry was formed in 1861, the men were required to supply their own horses and equipment. On June 20, 1864, Congress passed a

law that illustrated its misunderstanding of Oregon cavalry service. After June, 1864, the men were still required to supply their own horses, but they no longer received compensation. This act demoralized Union cavalry troops in Oregon. The nature of the First Oregon Cavalry's duty required extensive excursions across the frontier which took a heavy toll on horses. The federal government, however, was oblivious at best and unfeeling at worst, toward its plight. At this juncture the federal government seemingly added insult to the Oregonians' injuries.

By October, 1864, the Lincoln administration had called on Oregon to supply an infantry regiment. On July 1, 1864 Major General Irwin McDowell relieved Brigadier General George Wright as Commander of the Department of the Pacific. Four months after McDowell assumed command, he received an order from the War Department requesting that "a regiment of infantry be raised in Oregon as soon as possible."<sup>154</sup> McDowell forwarded the president's "request" to Governor Gibbs. Later on October, 20, 1864, Gibbs forwarded McDowell's message and appealed to the legislature to emulate the example of other states and pass an economic incentive to attract volunteers.<sup>155</sup> Gibbs reasoned that this method would attract volunteers without resorting to the draft and antagonizing the Knights. The Oregon legislature responded to Lincoln's call for additional Oregon troops to replace the cavalry volunteers whose term

of enlistment were nearly expired and took a major step to induce recruitment.

On October 24, 1864 the Oregon legislature passed a bounty law. The law provided for \$150 to be paid to each three year volunteer. The bounties were paid in installments with United States bonds at seven per cent interest due in 1884 and payable in specie. Oregon volunteers who served prior to this law's enactment also received five dollars for each month of their enlistment, in bonds bearing seven percent due in 1875.<sup>156</sup> Luckily, the bounty law provided the encouragement Oregonians needed to volunteer.

Gibbs was pleased that the legislature passed the bounty law, although he felt the appropriations were too low. However, the law fulfilled its goal. Recruitment vastly accelerated in comparison to previous calls for troops, and the infantry ranks quickly filled. Adjutant General Reed also complimented the legislature for passing the law, and relayed his gratitude for additional private bounties that were donated by citizens. Company A, First Oregon Infantry, was completed within a week of the call, and the six companies that completed the regiment were mustered in on June 24, 1865.<sup>157</sup> The officers for the First Oregon Infantry were taken largely from the cavalry regiment, and cavalry Captain George B. Currey was commissioned as a Colonel and placed in the infantry's command.



The First Oregon Infantry was recruited swiftly, but problems requiring military attention surfaced before the regiment was filled. The call for the infantry regiment was made in October, 1864 in anticipation of possible violence in connection with the presidential election in 1864. By 1864, however, the Knights were more numerous and organized. Once again, Oregon officials received threats that if Lincoln were elected the Knights would rebel. They had stored their arms near polling places and were prepared to prevent Lincoln's election with force.<sup>158</sup>

Governor Gibbs took steps to neutralize the Knights' plan. The governor alerted the military and directed it to be highly visible at the polling places. Gibbs gave the First Oregon Cavalry general instructions and Oregon's Acting Assistant Adjutant General Hopkins received this order on November 3, 1864:

It has been reported to these headquarters that threats have been made of violence at the polls on the 8th instant, the day of the presidential election. . . .The general will not believe that any use of military force will be necessary. But the governor of Oregon and other officers of the civil authority having had reason to apprehend something of the kind it is proper that your command should hold itself in readiness to act.<sup>159</sup>

The governor's policy was to send an entire unarmed regiment to a polling place to allow the soldiers to vote. The troops remained at the polling place after they voted in the event the civil authorities needed help to enforce order. Gibbs stated this intention and requested Brigadier

General Alvord's compliance.<sup>160</sup> The governor's policy was a general success. The Knights never gained control of a polling place, and the election proceeded unimpaired. The 1864 election results were a clear indication of Oregonian sentiment in support of the new Union Party.

In 1860 Lincoln carried Oregon by a small plurality, but by 1864 he won by a clear majority. Oregon's official vote total in 1864 was 9,888 for Lincoln and 8,457 for his rival, War Democrat George Brinton McClellan. Lincoln defeated McClellan by a convincing 1,431 vote majority. No statement better illustrates the evolution of Oregonians' devotion to the Union during the War. The infiltration of secessionists into the Oregon Democratic party forced Oregonians to prove their Union sentiment by joining the Union party fold. The Sentinel reported in 1862 that the Oregon Democratic party was "wholly defunct," and it had "been shaken into separate elements by the convulsions of civil war."<sup>161</sup> The 1864 Oregon election-returns bore out this truth. Oregon's support for Lincoln can be misleading, however.

Oregonians supported Lincoln because he represented a vote for the Union, and it is incorrect to assume that they were his avid supporters. They supported Lincoln because they felt he was the best man to restore the Union, and they wanted the Union restored as it existed prior to the Civil War. But Oregonians finally realized that the Civil War

had ushered in permanent changes and they accepted the possibility of a new Union over no Union. It became increasingly apparent that the old Union was gone forever, and most Oregonians grudgingly accepted this fact. Oregonians realized that a permanent Union could not be maintained if the federal government did not suppress the rebellion, and Lincoln was the candidate that committed to this goal.

Oregonians fully approved of Lincoln's vigorous prosecution of the War, but they disapproved of his policy toward blacks. His Emancipation Proclamation was soundly denounced in Oregon, and only the few Radical Republicans in conservative Oregon supported the Proclamation.<sup>162</sup> In fact, the Proclamation almost caused a serious schism in the Republican-Douglas Democrat "Union" coalition in Oregon for the 1864 election. This potential problem was evaded when the Oregon delegates attended the "national convention," and omitted the word "Republican." Oregonians retained their hatred toward blacks throughout the War and most had never supported abolition. Lincoln's Proclamation even forced Asahel Bush to switch his support from Lincoln to McClellan after 1863, but this did not have a great impact upon Oregonians. Oregonians reluctantly accepted abolition as an undeniable fact only as a means to restore the Union. Even the resolutions passed in the state legislature in 1862 that

supported Lincoln and the War asserted that Oregon fought the War to preserve the Union and not to free the slaves.

Most Oregonians, excluding the Knights, were conservative throughout the War. They accepted the fact that the Emancipation Proclamation and the growing influence of the Radical Republicans "sounded the death knell" of the old Union, but they did not change their views on slavery.<sup>163</sup> The conservative attitude was best illustrated by the early utterances of two people who became leading Oregon Republicans. In 1856 David Logan wrote his sister:

The Whigs are all dead out here - they call themselves the Republican party - which means negro worshipers [sic]. I can't go the Locofocos and I'll see the Republicans to the Devil before I'll vote with them. I don't know what I am exactly, but anything but an abolitionist.<sup>164</sup>

Lincoln's friend Anson G. Henry wrote him a letter in 1859 and desired "the triumph of a conservative Republican party who will repudiate Massachusetts foolery and adopt a Non-intervention plank as part of their platform."<sup>165</sup>

Throughout the War, the Oregon Republican party more closely resembled the national Douglas Democrats than the national Republican party in regard to slavery. It is important to remember that the national Republican party was factionalized during the War, while Oregon's Republicans remained relatively solidified throughout Lincoln's administration.

Public reaction in Oregon to Lincoln's administration was exemplified after the news of Lincoln's death.

Lincoln's assassination was received with acute diversity in Oregon. Many loyal Lincoln supporters were deeply bereaved, but the Copperhead element was exuberant. The Copperheads' level of enthusiasm was so high that General McDowell labelled them "accessories after the fact." In General Order #27 issued on April 17, 1865 McDowell declared that any person who exulted over Lincoln's assassination would be arrested by any law enforcement official that had any knowledge of the case. He further threatened that "any paper so offending or expressing any sympathy in any way whatever with the act will be at once seized and suppressed."<sup>166</sup> The nature of McDowell's order illustrated that Lincoln had strong support even in death, but the need to issue the order also indicated that there remained some opposition to Lincoln.

Generally, the Oregon frontier remained secure following Lincoln's assassination. The state's ability to hold the Knights in check had been demonstrated during the election of 1864. The military's ability to thwart Copperhead rebellions was again demonstrated following Lincoln's assassination. Military officials in Oregon predicted trouble in the traditional secessionist hotbed of Eugene City, near Fort Hoskins, Oregon. In April, just after the news of Lincoln's assassination arrived, two companies of the proposed First Oregon Infantry were stationed at Fort Hoskins and alerted that they would be

ordered to disperse any rebellion in Eugene City. Although the First Oregon Infantry was not officially established until June, 1865, companies A and B were mustered in early and used for garrison duty.<sup>167</sup> The predicted rebellions never materialized, and peace on the Oregon frontier was enforced by intimidation.

## VI. CONCLUSION

A few basic premises have to be considered before an accurate analysis of Lincoln's policy toward Oregon can be made. The most important factor concerning his policy toward Oregon was the rudimentary communication facilities at the War's outset. The amount of time required for correspondence between Washington, D.C. and the Pacific Coast was roughly one month in either direction. This factor greatly strengthened the subversive secessionist movement in many ways. Secessionist plans could be implemented before the federal government could react. It was also difficult for the federal government to assess the true state of Oregon's social and political environment. The communications that Lincoln received were mostly encapsulated incidents that could easily be distorted or taken out of context. The lack of adequate communication with Oregon before the telegraph was connected at Portland in 1863 doubtlessly contributed to a lack of timely information concerning Oregon. This factor was an obvious disadvantage for Lincoln.

The communication problem also affected Lincoln's leadership style. Lincoln preferred to run the government and the War directly. Although he consulted with his cabinet and advisors on policies and orders, his ultimate decisions were his own. Generally, Lincoln personally

exercised his powers. However, the communication and distance factors required that he change his leadership style toward Oregon to an indirect delegation of power. Lincoln successfully turned this potential deficiency into an asset. The key to Lincoln's daily policy toward Oregon was the appointment of men in high positions who understood his philosophy and who would dutifully carry out appropriate actions. In this way Lincoln's policy was carried out, although he was not in constant contact with Oregon officials.

The effectiveness of Lincoln's policies in Oregon was also partially due to the wording of his orders. He issued ambiguous orders which in most cases consisted of a broad policy statement that supplied the loyal Oregon officials with sufficient latitude to attain the stated goals. John N. King, Chief Commissary for the District of Oregon summarized this atmosphere in a letter to his sister on July 24, 1863 from Fort Vancouver:

. . . We have a great many secessionists out here and many more are coming, but we are not apprehensive of any outbreak, should they do so they will have a very rough time of it, and war can be carried on here without the military officers, being interfered with by politicians, and orders from Washington - I think we would carry on a war in earnest, make it short and decisive, and pay no respect to persons who have any sympathy with the rebels or . . . with the Copperheads.<sup>168</sup>

Lincoln's appointees, beginning with General Sumner, were unquestionably loyal Union men who understood and diligently carried out their assignment. The initial



quality of Lincoln's appointees was, of course, due largely to Edward Baker. Baker's knowledge and advice concerning Oregon and its inhabitants was invaluable to Lincoln's policy. Fortunately, Baker advised Lincoln concerning many appointments until his abrupt death in 1861. Baker's usefulness was never equalled, although by 1865 Anson G. Henry claimed, "The whole Pacific Coast Delegation don't hesitate to acknowledge their obligation to me in securing them the ear of the President when they could not obtain it through the ordinary avenues, and thus I saved them important interests politically and personally."<sup>169</sup>

Lincoln's problems with Oregon secessionists were twofold. He had to remove Southern sympathizers from federal offices to prevent them from encouraging a secessionist rebellion. However, Lincoln had to remove these Copperheads without appearing too harsh so as not to provoke a rebellion among the masses. Carrying out some policies without offending many Oregonians was a difficult task before Fort Sumter's fall solidified Union sentiment. Had Lincoln rashly removed General Johnston before he received evidence that he was a traitor, militant secessionist sentiment could have been mobilized. Lincoln's patience concerning the Johnston situation prevented this. Lincoln's success in this respect was due largely to his informants, mainly Baker and Senator Nesmith. Baker and Nesmith assured Lincoln that Oregonians' Union devotion was dominant over

secessionist sentiment. This assurance allowed Lincoln to implement his effective policy. Lincoln's policy toward Oregon was as cautious as it was effective.

The composition of Oregon's population resembled that of Union states bordering the Confederacy. The state's political atmosphere made it abundantly clear that Oregon was neither a purely pro-slave nor an anti-slave state and its prewar sympathies were split between the North and South. Lincoln realized this and ascertained that it behooved him to treat Oregon cautiously, and not antagonistically. Oregonians historically detested federal appointments granted to non-Oregonians within their state. With this in mind, Lincoln's political plums in Oregon went mainly to Oregonians. It was impossible to fill all military appointments within the state with its residents; but, the popular Oregon Indian war hero George Wright was commissioned Brigadier General. Wright briefly commanded the District of Oregon, and the Department of the Pacific from November 19, 1861 to July 1, 1864.

Lincoln's faith in Oregon's Union sentiment was well-founded. Before Fort Sumter's fall, most Oregonians genuinely vacillated concerning their philosophical support for either the North or South. But after Fort Sumter was attacked many clearly felt the South was wrong. Lincoln's unantagonistic policy toward Oregon also magnified the perception of Southern rashness. The majority of Oregonians

clearly identified Lincoln and the Union as the right side in the War. Simeon Francis relayed this thought in a letter on June 21, 1862:

. . .The democrats are trying to Union dodge here [Washington Territory]. The shrewd ones are getting on platforms to read every way - to be explained just to put the different phrases and doctrines of democracy - or to keep the dear speck of that flock together. The same scheme was tried in Oregon and it didn't work. . . . [Oregonians] won't be diverted from an honest and patriotic cause when they understand what that is.<sup>170</sup>

Lincoln's successful courting of Oregon hinged on the successful retention of the state in the Union. Southerners realized that Oregon's distance from Washington, D.C. and the War's epicenter, might aid their cause if Lincoln had to subdue the Oregonians with eastern troops. Lincoln also realized this and tried to avoid that scenario. Lincoln's patience and understanding toward Oregon insured its loyalty and eliminated the need for eastern troops to subdue the state. Oregon was kept in the Union by its own troops throughout the War which enabled eastern troops to actively fight the War; and, Lincoln was freed from many distractions that would have surfaced if the secessionists gained control. Lincoln's policy during the War allowed Oregonians to take care of matters within their state while he concentrated on the War in the East.

Oregonians attained many of their domestic demands during Lincoln's administration. Lincoln incorporated Oregon into the federal circuit court system. He also fortified the state's coastline and signed the long awaited

Homestead Act. Wartime finances and Oregon's gold also encouraged Lincoln to initiate transportation and communication advancements. The zeal with which most Oregonians supported Lincoln's prosecution of the War was also evident by the state's generous contributions to the Sanitary Commission.

Oregon was one of the few states that was systematically organized and canvassed for donations to the Sanitary fund. In almost every public gathering a collection was taken for the fund, and often the more spontaneous the collection, the more money was received. Amory Holbrook, a Republican state legislator, was Oregon's chief Sanitary Commission agent. Oregon donated a total of \$79,371.19 to the fund, according to the Commission's official report. Oregon was the fifth largest contributor, behind only California, New York, Massachusetts, and Nevada respectively. The Commission's report noted Oregon's exceptional donation, and what made it more extraordinary was that the armies that Oregonians' donated to were fighting thousands of miles from their state. The support that Oregon and the Pacific Coast gave the Sanitary Commission enabled the Commission to prove itself a truly national organization.<sup>171</sup>

Oregon's potential importance to both the North and South, coupled with its vacillation between each side made that state an unpredictable swing state for the Union

effort. But, in the end, Oregon's fidelity to the Union was strong. Oregon's generous monetary donation and its provision of troops vastly aided Lincoln's War effort. Oregon's devotion to the Union was a direct result of Lincoln's patience and sagaciousness. If Lincoln had antagonized the Oregonians during the secession crisis, Albert Sidney Johnston and Joe Lane could have possibly obtained increased support and formed a Pacific Coast Republic or at least hampered the Union effort. The fact that Oregon's part in the War is relatively unmentioned in Civil War studies attests to the success of Lincoln's policy toward Oregon and the Pacific Coast. Lincoln effectively but quietly insured Oregon's support for the Union.

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