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**Trembling for the Nation: Illinois Women and the Election of 1860**

**Erika Rozinek**

On November 1, 1860, America was five days away from the election that would decide the next President, and ultimately, the fate of the nation. In Illinois, emotions ran high, and citizens had regularly turned out at political gatherings in full force to endorse their presidential favorite. Both Democrats and Republicans were confident that the election of their candidate would save the Union, and the election of the opponent would plunge the country into civil war. In Springfield, Illinois Republicans hosted a mass meeting to rally the supporters of Lincoln in the upcoming presidential election and to intimidate the “terror stricken enemy.” This meeting was attended by thousands of citizens from the city and surrounding area, drawing visitors who traveled over miles of dusty prairie roads to attend the festivities. The lucky ones took rooms at hotels or boardinghouses. The rest of the masses camped out or found hospitality among the Republican citizens of the city. The evening’s events included “a magnificent feast” prepared by “the hospitable ladies of our city,” music from a brass band and the local Glee Club, and a speech in the Hall of Representatives. “A vast crowd of ladies and gentlemen” attended these festivities, and the *Illinois State Journal* reported, behaved “with far more enthusiasm than could reasonably be expected.” Overall, this gathering drew thousands of politically minded citizens – male and female – who hoped to prevent Douglas’s “mad and suicidal” political agenda.<sup>1</sup>

The Democratic Party, too, numbered thousands of politically minded citizens. One of them, Anna Ridgely Hudson, was a staunch Douglas supporter who frequented Democratic rallies and parades. A few days before the election she recorded these words in her diary: “The election for president takes place now soon, and that long contest and strife will be decided. I suppose Mr. Lincoln will be elected but I hope not for I tremble for our nation.”<sup>2</sup>

The political rally described above and this woman’s diary entry hint at a political climate in which women, as well as men, were anxious over the national crisis, and their anxieties drove

them to fierce partisanship. Women in each party believed with men that their party embodied “the most patriotic and ennobling sentiments,” and therefore held the key to the Union’s preservation.<sup>3</sup> Significantly, then, in the 1860 election, Illinois women held partisan beliefs and were not afraid to express them, either publicly, through participation in political rallies, or privately, to friends and loved ones in conversation and correspondence. This election saw women utilizing every avenue of political participation available to them to support their presidential candidates. In becoming politically active, women expressed concern for the Union as citizens. Women’s political participation in the 1860 election was not on behalf of female suffrage or protection of the home and family, but for the preservation of the nation. Thus women were careful not to push the envelope with their political activities; they instead remained within the realm of appropriate female behavior. In this way they could, and did, become a source of pride to their political parties. As one Democratic newspaper expressed, “when the women enlist in the cause, as do our democratic lady friends hereabouts, you may be sure that success is certain.”<sup>4</sup> The cause, of course, meant the cause of electing Douglas for the ultimate preservation of the Union.

For women who wished to become involved in the presidential campaigns of 1860, much could be done to participate on behalf of one party or another. Contrary to being excluded from politics and the public sphere, and regardless of the fact that they were unable to vote, Illinois women in 1860 participated in many political activities alongside men. In addition, they politicized many traditional domestic tasks by performing them in service of a political party. In an era of politics when “parties and candidates needed the public demonstration of approval given by ratification meetings, mass rallies, and torchlight parades,” the nature of political

participation was open enough that women could participate freely, and, in doing so, create and maintain a partisan identity.<sup>5</sup>

Although only men possessed the right to vote in 1860, they by no means monopolized the public political culture. Illinois women in 1860 took an active interest in the presidential election and used several channels to create partisan identities and to participate in the campaigns. They did not participate in political events as an extension of domestic duty, but because they, like men, took an interest in the political issues of the day. As Jean Fishburne Collier argues, women, “like men, regard political prizes as important and worth having. They use what power they can appropriate to affect the distribution of prizes among those eligible to receive them.”<sup>6</sup> That power showed itself in a variety of ways in the 1860 campaign: from marching in political processions alongside men to baking, decorating campaign headquarters, sewing banners, and cheering at mass rallies. In all of these instances, women worked to show support for a particular party and hoped to influence the election’s outcome. Their motivation for political activity was the same as that of men: they were anxious about the sectional crisis and hoped to elect a candidate who would preserve the Union.

Women’s historians are beginning to investigate areas in which nineteenth-century women took an active role outside the home. This shows a reexamination of the scholarship of historians such as Barbara Welter and Carl Degler, who argue for the existence of an ideology of rigid separation of spheres between men and women.<sup>7</sup> This ideology has cast men in the public sphere of business and politics, while women were relegated to the domestic sphere. When scholars began to study women’s activities outside the home, the first wave of scholarship concentrated mainly on temperance, abolition, and moral reform. These activities were not viewed as contradictory to the doctrine of separate spheres. Rather, historians such as Anne

Firor Scott and Paula Baker argue that women's participation in such morally uplifting and edifying public activities represented a "continual expansion of the environs of the 'home.'"<sup>8</sup> They do not investigate women in traditionally male public arenas such as business, politics, celebrations, or simply public space. By emphasizing the public activities that focused on issues that were just extensions of their domestic issues, and neglecting to examine women's roles in other public arenas, these historians imply that the male public sphere and the female public sphere were as sharply segregated as the public sphere and the private sphere. Baker argues this idea in "The Domestication of Politics": "Two political cultures operated throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. The female culture was based on the ideology of domesticity and involved continual expansion of the environs of the 'home' . . . Male politics consisted of formal structures: the franchise, parties, and holding office."<sup>9</sup> This manner of thinking assumes that women had no interest or inclination to act outside the ideology of domesticity.

Recently, women's historians have begun to consider the role of women in more traditionally male arenas such as politics. While scholars agree that women were more conspicuous in political activities during the antebellum rise of the two-party system than during the early years of the nation, many scholars tend to dismiss women's roles in political campaigns. Mary P. Ryan contends that when women did participate in politics, it was through "duplicitous, dependent, and manipulative avenues," while Michael McGerr believes that "men denied women the central experiences of the popular style; not only the ballot but also the experience of mass mobilization."<sup>10</sup> These scholars view women's political participation in terms of exclusion and manipulation rather than in terms of their ability and motivation to participate.

It is only recently, with the work of Elizabeth R. Varon, Ronald and Mary Zboray, and Jayne Crumpler DiFiore, that scholars are beginning to argue that “historians have underestimated the extent and significance of women’s partisanship in the antebellum period.”<sup>11</sup> These scholars have been instrumental in fusing women’s history with political history, suggesting that, beginning with the election years of 1840 and 1844, women were an integral part of the new American political culture. They emphasize political roles that ranged from civilizing partisan competition, fostering partisan loyalty in their families, and expressing political views. These scholars, significantly, are beginning to investigate the notion that women’s political participation need not necessarily go hand in hand with female suffrage and women’s rights or agitation on behalf of domesticity.

This essay expands this new wave of scholarship by examining the participation of Illinois women in the presidential campaign of 1860 as an expression of women’s desire for the preservation of the Union. The 1860 campaign is an important one because of the intensity of the sectional conflict in the United States. Americans were very much aware that their selection of the next President would play a large part in determining the fate of the Union. Candidates’ platforms differed dramatically, and the political parties sought to play up the contrast between them as much as possible. The Democrats argued that the platform of the Republican Party meant “nothing more nor less than open defiance of the laws and authority of the United States and in the end, as a natural consequence, revolution and anarchy.”<sup>12</sup> Republicans, on the other hand, noted that Douglas’s political success rested on “a two-faced interpretation of his pet doctrine which had the advantage of appearing both to break down and to uphold the slave interest,” and argued that “no ingenuity could long keep these antagonistic elements in harmony.”<sup>13</sup> Partisan fervor ran high, and the percentage of eligible voters who cast ballots on

Election Day reached 82% - one of the highest voter turnouts in American history.<sup>14</sup> The outcome of the election, one way or the other, promised to cause repercussions that would challenge the fate of the country.

Illinois is the focus of study because of its geographic location, consequent pattern of migration, and its mix of opposing political viewpoints. Many “upland Southerners” came out of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Kentucky to settle in the Southern and Central part of the state. Similarly, many New Englanders traveled west to settle in Northern and Central Illinois. The result was a state populated by citizens who held diametrically opposite political views. Those who migrated from the South were often either former slaveholders or people sympathetic to slavery, and therefore supported the Democrats over the “Black” Republicans. Such was the case of Sarah Withers, who came to Bloomington with her husband from Lexington, Kentucky. The Withers’s owned slaves in Louisiana; in addition, they brought a slave named Henry to Illinois with them. Although Henry was legally free upon entering Illinois, he remained with the family until his death. Consequently, Sarah was very sympathetic to slavery. During the election of 1860 she found herself “vexed and impatient with the impudence of the Black Republicans” and full of contempt for “ye righteous blackhearted Abolitionists.”<sup>15</sup> Sarah was for that reason a staunch Douglas supporter and turned out at many political events to show her support.

Illinois was also the destination of many New Englanders, who brought with them antislavery and abolitionist views. One such woman was Sarah Davis of Bloomington. She came to Illinois from Lennox, Massachusetts, where she was once a pupil of Catherine and Harriet Beecher. When *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was published, Sarah read it eagerly and found its viewpoint preferable to the Southern revisionist version, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin As It Is*.<sup>16</sup> Although she



abhorred slavery, she was terrified of civil war, writing, “the fact is our people of the North and South do not love each other and I believe in a peaceable separation. Bloodshed is not at all to my taste and we shall not love each other better after stirring up the worst feelings of our natures.”<sup>17</sup> Although Lincoln was opposed to peaceable secession, Sarah nonetheless favored his platform of prohibiting the extension of slavery over that of Douglas, commenting, “I hope as Mr. Lincoln is nominated, he will be elected.”<sup>18</sup> The mix of political viewpoints in Illinois, especially in the central area of the state, combined with the fact that two of the major presidential candidates hailed from Illinois make the state a natural location for study. Both Democrats and Republicans were active in the Illinois campaign of 1860, and both parties included numerous women who shared the political ideals and sought various opportunities to express them.

The political climate of the 1860 election in Illinois revived the campaign style that became popular in 1840 during the Harrison-Van Buren campaign. Although the sectional conflict of 1860 made the campaign issues more pressing in terms of the fate of the Union, the style of politics and campaigning was a reflection of those that originated in 1840. The political contest to elect William Henry Harrison represented a revolution in American political style. This contest marked the rise of the two-party system, in which American politics was democratized both structurally and ideologically.<sup>19</sup> Voter turnout during the 1840 to 1860 period was the highest in American history, and voters were fiercely partisan. Activities such as parades, rallies, mass meetings, and illuminations were common and gave the political events an atmosphere that combined elements of a circus, picnic, or camp meeting.<sup>20</sup> The new party system functioned as popular entertainment as much as it did for political enlightenment. The sheer enormity of political activity and the intensity of emotion it produced drew on the female

population and paved the way for women's political involvement. It was during 1840 that women in states such as Virginia and Tennessee were first observed turning out at political events in large numbers.

The span of women's political activism differed somewhat from state to state. In Tennessee, women's partisan sentiments and political participation became conspicuous in 1840, grew stronger in 1844, and fizzled out somewhat in the late 1840s and early 1850s.<sup>21</sup> Virginia women remained consistently politically active from the Harrison election of 1840 through 1860. In Illinois, however, women's political participation was negligible until 1856. Part of this can be attributed to Illinois's western location. During the 1840s Illinois was still a frontier state, filled with untamed prairies and small towns. Women during this time were kept busy with the struggle to survive. With the unending tasks of cooking, washing, ironing, watching children, sewing, nursing the sick, and cleaning, they had little time to spend on political activities. By the 1850s, "the most strenuous part of the frontier experience was over."<sup>22</sup> The railroads arrived in 1852-53, bringing Irish workers and, consequently, domestic servants for middle- and upper class women. This helped to lessen women's domestic burden, facilitating their involvement in activities outside the home.

Evidence suggests women's political activity in Illinois seemed to have increased in proportion to the extent of the national crisis. There is no mention of any female political activity of any kind in the accounts of the Scott-Pierce election of 1852. During the Fremont-Buchanan contest of 1856, when the country was up in arms over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, newspaper accounts sporadically mention the presence of women at monster rallies. They were often dressed to represent states of the Union, plus one woman clad in black to represent Kansas. By the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, women were more frequently present to hear speeches,

represent states, illuminate houses, and prepare food for political spectators. Often they carried banners bearing slogans such as “Our Girls Link-on to Lincoln” and “Their Mothers were Whigs.”<sup>23</sup> Illinois women’s political activism peaked during the presidential campaign of 1860. During the election newspapers consistently referred to the presence and activities of women and made a concerted effort to invite women to political events. The breadth of women’s political participation expanded to include traditionally male activities as well as domestic activities done for the benefit of political parties. This dramatic increase in political activity can be directly attributed to women’s concern for the state of the Union, a fact which is clearly illustrated in the regret and fear that resonate in Anna Ridgely Hudson’s diary when she learned of Lincoln’s election:

Wednesday morning we heard of Mr Lincoln’s election. We were disappointed for we had hoped that such a man as he without the least knowledge of state affairs, without any polish of manners would not be sent to be the representative of this great nation, but so it is... I tremble for our nation. I hope foreigners will not judge us all by our great head. I hope he will keep the peace but I am afraid that our mirror has commenced to break and will soon fall in pieces.<sup>24</sup>

This entry indicates that Anna was aware of the political and sectional issues that threatened to divide the nation and was familiar with Lincoln’s political qualifications (or lack thereof). Conscious of this information, she chose to support Douglas because she believed he would best represent the nation. She participated in several Douglas rallies and illuminations because she felt that Douglas, not Lincoln, was best qualified to prevent the nation from “breaking” and “falling in pieces.”

It is worth noting that Illinois women’s political participation in the 1860 election was not linked to a women’s suffrage or women’s rights movement. Steven Buechler observes that “in contrast to the eastern seaboard, there were no major women’s rights organizations or conventions in Illinois in the antebellum period.” There was some scattered feminist activity,

including the speaking tours of Lucy Stone and Olive Stair Wait, who lectured on women's rights, and the formation of a local women's suffrage organization in the hamlet of Earlville in 1855.<sup>25</sup> However, the exact focus of women's rights activity seemed unclear. There was little agitation for women's enfranchisement and none for political equality in office holding. The women's rights issues of the day instead dealt with equality in property holding and education, along with a brief movement to establish bloomers as an acceptable costume for women, and even these were championed by a very small segment of the female population.<sup>26</sup> That women turned out en masse to participate in the election of 1860, therefore, cannot be attributed to a movement towards female suffrage or political equality. This indicates that it was possible for women to be politically active without being feminist. Their political activity transcended self-interest and women's interest to display national interest in the politics of the day. Illinois women did what they could within the confines of "appropriate" behavior to express their partisan beliefs and help their party to victory on Election Day.

One of the most elemental ways in which women were involved with the political events of 1860 was as spectator. The campaign agenda of both parties was filled with speeches, rallies, parades, and suppers that begged for large turnouts. After a sizeable parade of the Springfield Hickory Club, the Democratic newspaper noted, "the side walks on either side of the procession as it moved along were lined with ladies whose appearance contributed not a little to add to the enthusiasm of the occasion."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the Bloomington Republican paper observed, "the Wide Awakes and the Rangers [pro-Lincoln clubs] were out in force . . . their movements were watched with much interest and pleasure by the host of ladies who were present."<sup>28</sup> Women were therefore welcomed at such events; their presence was considered a point of pride to the political party that drew them. The opposing party often derided political parties that failed to

draw female spectators. Such was the case with a Lincoln, Illinois Democratic meeting. The local Republican newspaper jeered at the speaker's nervousness, saying, "Conditions considered, we don't blame the man, as Democratic orators are unused to speaking before women!"<sup>29</sup>

Both parties' men placed great emphasis on the beauty and grace of the women in attendance. A Republican gathering in Lincoln boasted, "There were vast numbers of the finest and most beautiful ladies present."<sup>30</sup> A Democratic gathering similarly noted that, at the campaign headquarters, "the ladies gallery formed not the least attractive feature of the arrangements."<sup>31</sup> In the male view, then, part of women's political value came not from violating the traditional female sphere by taking radical political action, but from remaining within the bounds of appropriate womanhood to cast a sense of refinement and propriety upon the party. A beautiful woman showing her partisan support lent that party respectability for having attracted such an ideal specimen of femininity. Women, as guardians of what was good and pure in life, were best able to judge the political party whose motives were best, men believed. A Lincoln, Illinois man displayed this trust in women's moral judgment when he told a committee of ladies that "we are proud to see that you believe the work in which we are engaged is a good work, and the consciousness of that fact will give us renewed vigor, energy, and determination to carry on that work to the end."<sup>32</sup>

Conversely, the party whose women acted inappropriately, or contained men who acted inappropriately toward women, was the target of ridicule. A Democratic newspaper mocked a company of Republican women who "did excellent service by hallooing right lustily for Lincoln" on one occasion and a company of men for their use of "insulting language in and around the square" as "even ladies were not exempt from their indiscreet personalities."<sup>33</sup> To

men, then, it was necessary for women to remain true to the ideal of womanhood to lend respectability and nobleness to the party.

Women were willing to be welcomed at political events for their femininity rather than for radical, unladylike political action. However, they did not put aside their daily tasks to attend political rallies merely for the chance to look pretty. Instead, they came to hear political speeches that mirrored their own viewpoints. Anna Ridgely Hudson, for example, recorded that she “went to the Barn to hear Mr. Messick speak with Father, Mother, and Larry. It was a good Douglas speech and I liked it very much.”<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Sarah Withers attended a political rally in Bloomington and “thought Mr. Allen (the Democratic candidate for Gov.) made the best speech. Trumbul made a poor effort.”<sup>35</sup> For women, the decision to attend political rallies allowed them to be seen swelling the ranks of supporters of their presidential favorite. It was also an opportunity for them to strengthen their connection to a partisan identity by enjoying speeches that championed their political cause.

Although scholars such as Ryan may dismiss women’s role as audience to political events as not being worthy of the term “participation,” it is important to understand the need to attract large audiences to the political rallies of 1860.<sup>36</sup> The political atmosphere was one in which political success “depended on the people, on their capacity to organize and act.”<sup>37</sup> Republicans and Democrats vied with each other to attract the most spectators to their rallies. After a major Springfield Republican gathering, the *State Journal* boasted it was “THE BIGGEST DEMONSTRATION EVER HELD IN THE WEST! ... Never, we believe, in the history of the country was there a larger or more magnificent political demonstration than which yesterday took place at the home of Mr. Lincoln.”<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, after a large Douglas rally the Democratic newspaper recorded that “at every corner, their numbers, already amounting to some

thousands, were continually increasing until the square and the contiguous streets were literally filled with enthusiastic crowds which made the welkin ring with deafening shouts for Douglas, Johnson, and popular sovereignty.”<sup>39</sup> Parties tried to outboast each other as to the number of people present at rallies, claiming crowds that numbered in the tens of thousands. Large numbers were virtually essential to political gatherings of 1860. Those partisans who could swell the ranks, male or female, were welcome because they served to validate the popularity, and therefore virtue, of the cause. The role of spectator, then, was not an inferior one to which women were relegated, but a vitally important one in which their contribution to the cause was on par with that of men.

The role of spectator was not the only aspect of political culture that was open to both men and women during the election of 1860. McGerr argues that “a man demonstrated his identity and power by wearing a party button, turning out to listen and cheer at rallies, marching in parades, and casting a ballot on Election Day.”<sup>40</sup> However, women were legally only barred from voting. In all other aspects of political culture, women chose to participate along side the men. For example, it was quite common for women to wear a party button, as a newspaper account from a Democratic rally reveals: “each [woman] had a small national flag, and a Douglas badge of pink ribbon.”<sup>41</sup> At a Republican rally reporters observed “a splendid omnibus wagon, freighted with beautiful ladies, with appropriate badges.”<sup>42</sup> A woman’s public appearance at political rallies wearing partisan badges emphasized her commitment to her partisan ideals, while at the same time created a sense of camaraderie between herself and all the other like-minded citizens, male and female, who turned out to express their shared political beliefs.

Women also became actively involved in political rallies by joining processions. It was common for them to ride in parades dressed symbolically as the states of the union. In a typical description of a political procession, a local newspaper noted that part of the parade included “a Prairie Boat, containing a beautiful young lady, neatly dressed in white, with appropriate lable, for each State, accompanied by a fine looking lady clothed in mourning for Kansas, bearing on her banner the appropriate motto, ‘They will not let me in because I will vote for Lincoln and Hamlin.’”<sup>43</sup> The saying on the Kansas woman’s banner is significant. While ostensibly it meant that Kansas would vote for Lincoln, the fact that a woman carried it implied that she, too, would vote for Lincoln. Symbolic representation of states is the type of participation that Ryan argues “lured women closer to the feminine sphere, but along duplicitous, dependent, and manipulative avenues.”<sup>44</sup> She contends that feminine symbols in public ceremonies only served to celebrate the virtues of domestic life and to provide a stamp of feminine morality to male politics.<sup>45</sup> However, it is important to note two things. First, women willingly set aside time from their domestic chores to appear in public bearing political mottoes. Second, women’s symbolic representation of states in the 1860 election had little to do with the celebration of domestic virtue and much to do with the politics of the day. The major platforms of the election centered very much around the preservation of the Union, which sectional conflicts seemed to be on the verge of tearing apart. Women’s portrayal of states, then, was meant to emphasize that their candidate stood for the preservation of the Union. The addition of a woman representing Kansas at the Republican rally displayed a keen awareness of the political situation revolving around the Kansas-Nebraska act. By dressing up to symbolize states, women made public declarations that they were aware of the major political issues of the day and would rely on their presidential favorite to best protect the Union.



Women's participation in parades was not limited to symbolic representation of the states. Often women rode horses and marched in parades with men. One newspaper described a political procession in this way:

At half past eleven the Delegations commenced coming in. The first that reached the public square was from White Oak – thirty-three ladies in uniform, labeled each for a State, each attended by a gentleman, all on horseback, and followed by a long array of wagons and carriages. Then came . . . a long line of ladies and Rangers, all in uniform, presenting a very beautiful display.<sup>46</sup>

Another Republican procession involved delegations from Wide Awake clubs from around the state, “then came forty-one couples of ladies and gentlemen on horseback, gaily caparisoned.”<sup>47</sup> These processions represent women, like men, turning out in public to support their presidential favorites. At a Democratic rally, women were key participants in the procession and in a later ceremony presenting the Democratic club with a banner sewn by Democratic ladies. The order of the procession went thus: “The Hickory Club enters the building first and files off in true military style. It is followed by the flag-bearers, . . . next come the ladies, who have labored to make the flag an object of interest to the Democracy of Sangamon, and the rear is made up of the German Douglas Club of this city.”<sup>48</sup> These examples show the varied nature of women's participation in parades and processions. Women did everything from ride in wagons dressed as states to march with the men. Their participation ranged from symbolic representation to integrated marching. Women's involvement in such a variety of public and conspicuous acts demonstrated their eagerness to participate in the political culture as a means of showing their support to their party. Although not voters, they shared in rituals of mass mobilization that helped create a sense of identity and usefulness within a political party.

An example of such a political ritual was the singing of campaign songs. Joe Kincheloe has traced the connection between camp meeting and political rally in antebellum America, and he argues that from 1840 on politics borrowed the style of emotional religious camp meetings. Singing was a common feature of both camp meetings and political rallies as a means to heighten emotion and inspire a feeling of solidarity against a common enemy. In camp meetings that enemy was the devil, while in political rallies the opponent represented the devil.<sup>49</sup> Singing was a democratic activity that both men and women engaged in. As such, it moved beyond gender differences to unite men and women in expressing common partisan beliefs. An account of a Republican rally notes, “between the speeches the glee club of Waverly, composed of nearly a dozen ladies and gentlemen, sang several excellent campaign songs.”<sup>50</sup> The performance of this coed glee club reveals evidence of genders mixing in public to promote political ideals, and an instance of women truly voicing their political beliefs.

Just as campaign songs could be performed publicly, women sometimes brought campaign songs into the home. Benjamin Grierson, a staunch Lincoln supporter, wrote his wife to tell her that he “wrote a Republican song today and if you and May feel patriotic enough you can amuse yourselves and the children by singing it to the tune of Old Dan Tucker.”<sup>51</sup> Grierson’s suggestion to sing a campaign song to the children implies a note of republican motherhood, where a woman would do her duty to her country (or political party) by instilling patriotic (or partisan) values in her children so they grow up to hold those beliefs.<sup>52</sup> The fact that Grierson shared campaign songs with his wife indicates his awareness of his wife’s political interest and a willingness to include her in elements of popular political culture. His use of the word “patriotic” is

also significant. More than displaying loyalty to the Republican Party, Grierson's campaign song demonstrated loyalty to the nation, which he believed Lincoln's election would preserve.

Participating in the public aspects of political culture was only one expression of women's political activism in 1860. There were many instances in which women merged the domestic and political spheres to show support at rallies by doing more traditionally feminine tasks. In this way women were able to show partisan support without completely overstepping the bounds of appropriate femininity. As Kinchloe has argued, although women "did not cover up various examples of more orthodox feminine behavior...women at the political gatherings took an active interest in an area of human endeavor which was inconsistent with their traditional activities."<sup>53</sup> That is to say, although women may have performed traditional domestic tasks, they were doing so in support of an area of public culture – politics – that was not traditionally associated with female participation.

One of these tasks was decorating political headquarters. Springfield's Democratic newspaper recorded, "all day yesterday our democratic lady friends with a host of rougher democratic material were engaged in fitting up the Douglas headquarters for to-day's occasion, and most beautifully have they performed their work."<sup>54</sup> Likewise, the Republican paper summoned ladies to meet at the Republican headquarters and "enjoined [them] to bring their thimbles and needles with them. There is work for them which must be done."<sup>55</sup> This is the type of behavior that McGerr describes as women being "allowed into the male political realm only to play typical feminine roles."<sup>56</sup> This activity, however, needs to be viewed not in terms of meager political scraps handed out by men, but in terms of women merging the domestic sphere with the political to contribute to the campaign in a suitably ladylike fashion. Women possessed

a political identity and considered themselves either Republicans or Democrats, and would therefore work to benefit only their party. In decorating political spaces, women had the opportunity to use domestic talents for the benefit of partisanship, and, indirectly, for the nation. One newspaper praised the “patriotic Republican ladies” for their decoration of the Springfield Republican headquarters. The use of the word “patriotic” indicates that the act of decorating had significance that went beyond loyalty to the Republicans to display loyalty to the nation. Their decorations, exhibited within the political headquarters, represented women’s influence over the building’s appearance and stood as a conspicuous symbol of their contribution to the campaign.

Other traditionally feminine tasks done in support of politics included offering hospitality to fellow partisans. Political rallies often drew huge numbers of people to the towns in which they were held. It was up to the citizens of that community to host the visitors, as the boarding houses and hotels were soon overrun. As one newspaper advised, “it is suggested that all such of our citizens as are able to accommodate with lodging any of the immense throng who will be here on Wednesday, report their names to the Republican headquarters.”<sup>57</sup> This newspaper hoped that “no stranger need fear to apply wherever he sees a Lincoln flag flying in front of the house.”<sup>58</sup> By flying political flags from the “home,” women made public declarations about their partisan sentiments. This practice literally merged the domestic with the political by bringing politics home to women, who fed, sheltered, and entertained their visitors for the duration of the stay. Significantly, women’s efforts at hospitality did not go unappreciated, but rather were recognized contributions to the political cause. A Mrs. M.M. Vandensen hosted a large delegation of Chicago Democrats during an October Springfield rally and, as a token of thanks, was presented with a full-length photo of Senator Douglas. The presentation included remarks by the Chicago Club, which declared that, because of the hospitality she displayed, “Mrs.

Vandensen with all her virtues and accomplishments, possessed that one, the crowning glory of all, a very large and enthusiastic DOUGLAS DEMOCRATIC HEART."<sup>59</sup> She was praised for her "hospitality and democracy," indicating that domestic virtues used for political purposes were considered a service to American government.<sup>60</sup>

Women engaged in traditionally feminine tasks for the service of a political party and were rewarded with a sense of identity and accomplishment within their party. A similar article expressed the gratitude of the Bloomington Wide Awakes:

Weary with marching and oppressed with thirst and hunger, they were welcomed at the house of Mr. J.H. Adams, to as much ice-water as they chose to take, and then invited to step into the house where they were waited upon by the good lady, Mrs. Adams, and abundantly supplied with cakes, ham, beef, &c., that *a Prince* might eat. While these good things filled their stomachs, the marked kindness of the good people filled the hearts of our Boys with gratitude and thankfulness.<sup>61</sup>

It is clear, then, that domestic tasks such as housekeeping and hosting guests could be used for political purposes. By having her name printed in the paper, Mrs. Adams was publicized as a Republican supporter at the same time she was being praised for doing work appropriate to her sphere. The politicization of domestic tasks, such as hosting political guests, allowed women to both contribute to the campaign and gain public recognition of their political identities.

The wives of political candidates shouldered a large part of the burden of entertaining on behalf of their husbands. Scores of people were naturally curious about the contesters for the highest office in the land, and they turned out in droves to meet the men in person. During her husband's campaign, Mary Lincoln was known to get up at dawn to have the house cleaned and prepared for the stream of visitors who would pass through during the day. She would finally retire at midnight. During one rally a Springfield citizen recorded that, after a speech at the State House, "the crowd all went down to Old Abe's with a band of music, and called on him to make

a speech. He came out and made a short speech and then invited them all in to shake hands with him.”<sup>62</sup> While Mr. Lincoln’s job in such a case was to make speeches and shake hands, it was his wife’s duty to serve food and refreshments, provide charming conversation, and overall act the part of the gracious hostess. The Lincolns were a political team, and Mary worked hard to keep up her end so that she might reflect well on her husband. In this way she was doing her part to provide an appealing public image of her husband, thereby helping to get him elected.

Women displayed their partisanship directly from the home during illuminations. At night it was common for processions to take to the streets and march by torchlight. Women showed support for these political parades by putting lights in every window of the house. Sarah Withers recorded one such illumination this way: “The Display at Springfield was beyond description. The Torchlight procession and fireworks were magnificent. Many houses were splendidly illuminated. We were delighted all, all the time.”<sup>63</sup> On another evening Sarah noted that she “tried to illuminate for the Invincibles.”<sup>64</sup> Illuminating often involved more creative work than simply lighting a candle at each window. Lanterns and transparencies, made by hand, increased the illumination and made for a more imposing display. Women often set aside their daily chores to create these devices to show their partisan support. The extra work that women took upon themselves to enhance these political spectacles gave them a greater sense of contribution to, and therefore affinity with, the political party. Ada Bailhache of Springfield indicated as much in her account of her part in the Republican victory celebration:

We are to have a grand illumination and torchlight tomorrow night by way of an appropriate finis to the glorious victory we have achieved. I hope we will do credit to the affair . . . The wind is blowing very hard and cold today, and if it continues will put out all our fine chinese lanterns and transparencies that I have been making.<sup>65</sup>

By discussing the political events and victory in terms of “we,” it is clear that Ada felt like a contributing member of the Republican Party. Her work for the campaign gave her a sense of identification with the party and pride in its glories.

A few of the traditionally feminine tasks women performed in service of their political parties took them outside of the home. Food preparation was such an activity. Kinchloe traces women’s role in preparing and serving food to the political masses to the camp meeting, in which women performed much the same roles.<sup>66</sup> Women’s labor to provide food for political rallies, however, took them one step farther from the home and right into the middle of public political space. In November, Springfield Republicans advertised that they were “having a grand rally this evening at their Wigwam. The Republican ladies furnishing the refreshments.”<sup>67</sup> In this way a simple domestic task turned into a show of political support that took women out of the domestic sphere and placed them in political headquarters. Their labors served to emphasize their partisan identities, confirming their distinction as “Republican” ladies. Another time women’s food preparation in service of the party led them to a local saloon – a place that normally would have been one of the most inaccessible examples of the “men’s sphere” of antebellum life. The night of the election “Republican ladies . . . assembled at Watson’s Saloon. There bountiful refreshments were provided and partaken of, during the evening by large numbers.”<sup>68</sup> Women did not simply prepare the food and slip into the shadows, either. Rather, they stayed to enjoy the meal and the political speeches that followed. Of a banquet prepared by Republican women, a local newspaper reported, “the crowd in the Wigwam during supper was very large, and among them were a goodly number of ladies, who, with their cheerful smiles and graceful motions . . . lent a double charm to the gay and pleasing scene.”<sup>69</sup> Preparing food was

therefore one way in which women showed their partisan support. Having prepared the food for a political party, women were identified with that party and made part of the partisan activities.

The politicization of domestic tasks presented an opportunity for women to exercise their talents for organization. Committees were frequently formed to coordinate the preparation of large quantities of food, sew political banners, or otherwise contribute to the campaign. At one Republican supper it was declared “the arrangement of tables will be left to the ladies, in a committee of the whole.”<sup>70</sup> In Mackinaw, a newspaper noted “one of the most pleasing features of the meeting was the presentation of a beautiful flag by the ‘Ladies Democratic Club’ to the Democrats of Mackinaw.”<sup>71</sup> These examples reveal the organization required of women to coordinate significant displays of partisanship and hint at the level of interest and commitment to the cause displayed by the committee members. The creation of ladies’ political committees gave women the chance to meet and discuss politics with other women who held similar partisan beliefs, and to work together to create a tangible token of their support. The fact that women formed clubs specifically for the support of a certain political party, such as the members of the “Ladies Democratic Club,” emphasizes that women did not blindly participate in political activities, but rather felt a sense of partisanship and formed organizations to aid only their presidential favorite.

Banner making was a domestic task that served to show partisan support and publicly express political sentiments. During the election of 1860 it was common for women to form committees to create a banner for presentation to a local branch of that party. Sewing a banner of silk was very much a domestic task, yet, in doing so to support a political party, women transcended the domestic sphere and entered the political sphere. Their banners were valued as much for the political sentiments they expressed as for their workmanship. At the same time,



women became infused with a sense of political identity. One newspaper noted, “the ladies, every one of them a Lincoln *man*, got up a beautiful and appropriate flag which waved gracefully in the evening breeze.”<sup>72</sup> This statement makes the simultaneous note that banner making was both an appropriate domestic task for women and a political task appropriate to loyal Republicans.

The creation of political banners also served as a key to taking a central role in more public political activities such as processions, ceremonies, and speeches. The presentation of a banner from the ladies was often a formal affair worked into a larger political rally. In the case of a Springfield Democratic banner presentation, notices ran in the newspaper for several days prior to the ceremony stating the time and location of the event as well as the names of every woman on the committee. One such notice boasted the upcoming presentation of “a Union Flag from the Ladies,” stressing that the flag was a “national banner.”<sup>73</sup> In this way the newspaper emphasized that the women’s banner was meant to stand for the preservation of the Union. At the actual event, the women marched in the procession up to the campaign headquarters to present the banner. A Mrs. Davis gave an address to the committee, which was “loudly and enthusiastically cheered” by the audience of 30,000 Democrats.<sup>74</sup> In her speech she asked those present to “accept . . . this flag as a token of the interest which we ladies take in your cause, for even politics, without the approving smile of woman, cannot be successful, and long may the Douglas Democrats rule.”<sup>75</sup> She also took the opportunity to applaud the principles of the Democratic Party and urge all voters present to cast their ballot for Douglas. For this effort, Mrs. Davis was praised as a “patriotic lady.” In reply to her address, Mr. N.M. Broadwell declared the ladies presentation of the American flag evoked the time when “there was no irrepressible conflict between the colonies, so now, the true interests of the Union forbid it should be divided

against itself.”<sup>76</sup> In such banner presentation ceremonies, women were able to publicly declare their political sentiments to the approbation of large audiences of men and women. Unable to vote themselves, women such as Mrs. Davis were able to speak out to urge others to vote, thereby helping to influence the election. Their presentation of an American flag symbolized their faith in the Union, and their efforts were interpreted as actions taken to help preserve the nation.

In Lincoln, the news of Republican ladies’ presentation of a flag was a subject that took up three columns of the local newspaper. This meeting, too, involved a procession, as 26 ladies who formed the flag-making committee marched into the hall bearing the flag and accompanied by music. The newspaper declared that the flag “is the beautiful emblem of the union of these States, that union which has made us what we are, a free, happy, prosperous and united people, and while this flag is respected and venerated by our own citizens...we will still continue to be and remain that same free, happy, prosperous, and powerful nation.”<sup>77</sup> Both Democrats and Republicans, then, saw ladies’ flag presentations as symbolic support for the preservation of the Union, which could only occur with their own presidential victory.

Not possessing the right to vote themselves, many women found access to political influence through their husbands and other male relatives. This influence could take the form of subtle suggestion or outright demands. Julia Trumbull kept abreast of her husband’s campaigning through correspondence and newspapers. Her political influence on her husband took the form of subtle suggestions, as when she wrote him, “It seems to me that it would have been much better for you to have spoken in St. Louis the first of this week.”<sup>78</sup> Ada Bailhache, on the other hand, had no qualms about directing her husband as to who should receive political offices. As she wrote her mother, “Applications are pouring in for office. Everybody is

receiving letters to please intercede for them. I know of one person I am going to intercede for and that is Fred. He wants a good appointment and ought to have it.”<sup>79</sup> Women had the opportunity to influence the vote through their spouses. A letter to Abraham Lincoln from a small girl alluded to this when she wrote asking him to grow a beard for “all the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husband’s to vote for you and then you would be President.”<sup>80</sup> The newspapers, too, were full of stories of loyal partisan women who refused to be courted by men who would not promise to vote their way come election time.<sup>81</sup> Women like these showed a clear preference for a certain political party and candidate and used what influence they possessed over their near male relatives and admirers to ensure that a vote would be cast for that candidate.

Wives of political candidates were in a particularly key position to influence their husbands’ political careers. The degree of influence wives wielded over their spouses was widely recognized at the time, as one article in the *Bloomington State Register* displays:

Probably, however, successful matrimony is a fair qualification for the Presidency, although it be not the very highest. A man who can rule his wife well, or at least be well ruled by her, has made one step toward qualifying himself to govern others...It is a remarkable and interesting fact that a majority of the wives of the Presidents have been devotedly Christian women – a fact which has had no unimportant bearing on the character of the Chief Magistrates and upon the conduct of their several administrations.<sup>82</sup>

As this article reveals, the political candidates were judged not merely on their own qualifications, but also on the state of their marriages and the capabilities of their wives. This could have both positive and negative repercussions on the candidate. One Illinois newspaper praised Douglas that “his accomplished lady is said to be one of the most elegant women of the land.”<sup>83</sup> However, another noted that several people thought “that Douglas ought not to be elected President, because his wife is a Catholic.”<sup>84</sup> Women were therefore made a part of the

political culture almost in spite of themselves, and they were required to be on their best behavior to ensure success for their husbands.

Enough evidence exists to suggest that women not only took an active part in the presidential campaign of 1860, but also identified and were identified with specific political parties. That women possessed partisan identities is apparent in the way they referred to each other, and were referred to, in the printed material of 1860. With few exceptions, partisan women in 1860 were described as Republican women or Democratic women. A pro-Lincoln newspaper praised the flower bouquets arranged by female supporters to shower on a political speaker, stating, "The Republican ladies of Waverly have as good taste in the arrangement of flowers as in the bestowing of them."<sup>85</sup> Another newspaper offered up "three cheers to the Republican ladies of Urbana" for a banner designed and presented by these women, while in Freeport it was reported that "the Democratic ladies of this city are getting up a magnificent banner for the Giant Club."<sup>86</sup> Women took public action to support the candidate they preferred, and thereby gained for themselves public recognition as partisan women. Partisan identities were not merely bestowed on women by male observers, either. Upon making a new acquaintance, Sarah Withers of Bloomington noted, "she is a charming lady and such a good Douglas Democrat."<sup>87</sup> In this way we see that women evaluated their own viewpoints and activities to identify themselves and other women as partisan. To both men and women, then, it was appropriate and perhaps desirable for women of 1860 to pledge partisan affiliations.

Women's partisan feelings often mirrored those of their husbands. However, this does not necessarily imply that women blindly followed their husbands' leads in political matters. As John Mack Faragher notes in his study of life on the Illinois prairie, "party identification was a family affair . . . families developed reputations as being either Whig or Democratic

supporters.”<sup>88</sup> It therefore follows that, during courting, the political persuasion of a prospective mate was already known and could be a factor in the selection of a spouse. A woman with strong partisan feelings might select a husband with similar political beliefs to ensure the creation of a new generation of politically-minded citizens. Similar political views could contribute to a successful marriage. Such was the case with Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln. David Herbert Donald argues that “politics was a bond that held the Lincoln marriage together” and that both Abraham and Mary “had inherited their politics, for Mary’s father was an influential Whig spokesman in Kentucky and Thomas Lincoln hoped for the election of a Whig president.”<sup>89</sup> For partners who did share the same partisan feelings, women’s political participation could reflect well on their husbands. The women who were politically active during the 1860 campaign were always listed in the newspapers under their married names. This made a statement to the community, which emphasized the political sentiment of each family and advertised the dedication of both husband and wife to the cause. Nevertheless, not all women shared the same political viewpoints as their husbands. Mrs. Gridley, the wife of a prominent Republican citizen of Bloomington, caused a stir when she “took her husband’s carriage & a Douglas flag and escorted [Douglas] to town while at the same time her husband was escorting [Republican] Gov. Corwin.”<sup>90</sup> However, for a wife to flaunt political disagreement with her spouse in a manner as what Mrs. Gridley did was unseemly. A neighbor remarked that “a great many men would not live with her another day after such an impropriety.”<sup>91</sup>

When Election Day finally arrived, it sparked great excitement in Illinois in 1860. The long political contest was over, and the day’s events would most likely leave the fate of the nation in the hands of either Lincoln or Douglas. Men and women eagerly anticipated the

election results. Sarah Withers referred to Election Day as “the great day of the year” and smugly believed that her Republican sister-in-law Mary “will be disappointed in this days work.”<sup>92</sup> However, Sarah was the one who was disappointed the next day, when she lamented, “Lincoln elected...oh how sad I feel. Went up Town hoping to hear some good news, but alas, there is none.”<sup>93</sup> Her lament was shared by Anna Ridgely Hudson, who recorded, “the Republicans have all been victorious. They have carried our state, country, city, and everything else. Of course I am disappointed but I have tried to cherish no ill feeling.”<sup>94</sup> Elsewhere, however, pro-Lincoln women were rejoicing. The Republican women of Springfield prepared and served refreshments to the jubilant crowd who gathered at Watson’s Saloon the night of the election to celebrate Lincoln’s victory. The *Lincoln Weekly Herald* noted that, when Lincoln entered the Saloon, “the ladies rushed forward to shake hands, and it was ‘How do you do, Mr. President,’ from a hundred feminine voices, all at the same moment.”<sup>95</sup> Upon hearing of Lincoln’s election, Sarah Davis wrote her husband, “The good news had reached [?] before I left that Mr. Lincoln was elected...it seems almost too good to be true.”<sup>96</sup>

The following April, many Illinois women’s worst fears were realized when the attack on Fort Sumter signaled the start of the Civil War. Sarah Withers mourned the news, writing, “Oh how horrible to think of Fratricidal War, and of this once Glorious nation being rent asunder.”<sup>97</sup> She prayed “that God would turn the hearts of those that rule. Turn them to peace and save us oh our Father from war and bloodshed and ruin.”<sup>98</sup> With the election over, and Lincoln in office, Sarah had no recourse but to pray for God to guide Lincoln’s actions. As the war progressed, Illinois women channeled the energy they had once expended for their political party into activities to support the Union troops. Just as during the election they formed committees to make banners, decorate campaign headquarters, and prepare food to help their political party to

victory, during the war effort they formed committees to make bandages, gather medical supplies, provide the troops with home cooked meals, and create banners for regiments to carry into battle to help the Union soldiers to victory.<sup>99</sup>

Illinois women in 1860 were aware of the national political crisis and were afraid for the fate of the nation. Rather than sitting back passively to watch the nation collapse, women sought avenues of participation in the political culture. This participation took form as common rituals of political mobilization, such as attending rallies, wearing badges, taking part in processions, and singing campaign songs. In addition, women politicized many domestic tasks by performing them in service of a particular party, including preparing food, making banners, hosting political visitors, decorating campaign headquarters, and illuminating houses during parades. In each of these instances, women actively chose to display partisan participation as a means of supporting that party and helping their presidential favorite to victory.

Women's political activities in 1860 Illinois were not tied to a women's rights or female suffrage movement. No such movement existed cohesively in antebellum Illinois, yet a multitude of women participated in the presidential election in one way or another. Nor did women expend their time and effort for political activities to protect or extend the domestic sphere. Instead, women's interest in this election transcended interest in domesticity or women's rights to display concern for the political issues of the day and, ultimately, the preservation of the Union. Although many women did not believe in female suffrage, this did not automatically signal disinterest in politics or unawareness of the national crisis. Rather, women found ways to participate in the political culture while remaining within the bounds of appropriate femininity. This participation won the approbation of men, who felt that to have women visibly support a political party was to have a conspicuous stamp of moral approval on the party. However,

women enjoyed being part of a partisan culture simply because they, like men, held opinions on who was best fit to run the country. They took the opportunity to gain entry to political culture, contributing time and effort to a political party in the hopes that it would be victorious on Election Day. In this way, women made their contribution to support and help to elect the presidential candidate whom they felt would best preserve the nation from the “war and bloodshed and ruin” which seemed to loom on the horizon.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 2 November 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Ridgely Hudson diary, 4 November 1860. In the manuscript collection of the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. Hereafter the Illinois State Historical Library will be abbreviated as ISHL.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 4 August 1860.

<sup>4</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 7 July 1860.

<sup>5</sup> Michael McGerr, “Political Style and Women’s Power, 1830-1930,” *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 866.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Fishburne Collier, “Women in Politics” in *Woman, Culture, & Society* ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 91.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860” *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective*, ed. Michael Gordon (New York: 1973). Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 298.

<sup>8</sup> Paula Baker, “The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920” *American Historical Review* 89 (1994): 647.

<sup>9</sup> 647.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Ryan, “Gender and Public Access: Women’s Politics in Nineteenth-Century America” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), 271. Michael McGerr, “Political Style and Women’s Power, 1830-1930” *Journal of American History* 77 (1990): 867. Robert Gray Gunderson, *The Log-Cabin Campaign*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), 1957. Reprinted in 1977 by Greenwood Press, Inc.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth R. Varon, “Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too: White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia” *Journal of American History* 82.2 (1995): 494-521. Jayne Crumpler DiFiore, “Come, and Bring the Ladies: Tennessee women and the Politics of Opportunity During the Presidential Campaigns of 1840 and 1844,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 51.4 (1992): 197-212. Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray, “Whig Women, Politics, and Culture in the Campaign of 1840: Three Perspectives from Massachusetts,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17.2 (1997): 277-315; and “Political News and Female Readership in Antebellum Boston and its Regions,” *Journalism History* 22.1 (1996): 2-14.

<sup>12</sup> Arthur Charles Cole, *The Centennial History of Illinois*, vol. 3, *The Era of the Civil War 1848-1870* (Springfield, IL: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1919), 182.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>14</sup> William E. Gienapp, “‘Politics Seem to Enter into Everything:’ Political Culture in the North, 1840-1860,” in *Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860*, eds. Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Kushma (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982), 21.

<sup>15</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 16 October 1860; February 10 1861. In the Stevenson-Ives Library of the McLean County Historical Society, Bloomington, Illinois. Hereafter referred to as MHS.



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- <sup>16</sup> Willard L. King, *Lincoln's Manager, David Davis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 99.
- <sup>17</sup> Sarah Davis to Mrs. Daniel Williams, 18 April 1861. Davis papers, Williams College. Quoted in King, 183.
- <sup>18</sup> Sarah Davis to George Perrin Davis, 31 May 1860. Quoted in King, 142.
- <sup>19</sup> William E. Gienapp, "Politics Seem to Enter into Everything: Political Culture in the North, 1840-1860," in *Essays on American Antebellum Politics, 1840-1860*, eds. Stephen E. Maizlish and John J. Kushma (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1982) 15.
- <sup>20</sup> Raymond Brod, "All Prairiedom has Broken Loose" *Chicago History* 25.1 (1996): 58.
- <sup>21</sup> DiFiore, 209. DiFiore claims that Tennessee women's participation in fizzled after the Seneca Falls convention of 1848, when "for the majority of Southern women, Seneca Falls represented female political influence gone awry." However, this does not seem to hold true for Illinois, where the resurgence of female political activity peaked in 1860. Illinois women were careful to keep their political activity within the proscribed bounds of appropriate womanhood, and therefore avoided public derision.
- <sup>22</sup> Adade Mitchell Wheeler and Marlene Stein Wortman, *The Roads They Made: Women in Illinois History* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 1977), 35.
- <sup>23</sup> Brod, 67.
- <sup>24</sup> Anna Ridgely Hudson diary, 11 November 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>25</sup> Steven Buechler, *The Transformation of the Woman Suffrage Movement: The Case of Illinois, 1850-1920* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 57.
- <sup>26</sup> Cole, 212-213.
- <sup>27</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 7 July 1860.
- <sup>28</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 30 August 1860.
- <sup>29</sup> *Weekly Herald* (Lincoln) 22 August 1860.
- <sup>30</sup> *Weekly Herald* (Lincoln) 5 September 1860.
- <sup>31</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Bloomington) 25 July 1860.
- <sup>32</sup> *Weekly Herald* (Lincoln) 8 August 1860.
- <sup>33</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Bloomington) 9 August 1860; 26 July 1860.
- <sup>34</sup> Anna Ridgely Hudson Diary, 28 October 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>35</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 27 July 1860, MHS.
- <sup>36</sup> Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 31.
- <sup>37</sup> McGerr, 866.
- <sup>38</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 9 August 1860.
- <sup>39</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 7 July 1860.
- <sup>40</sup> McGerr, 866.
- <sup>41</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 26 July 1860.
- <sup>42</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 20 August 1860.
- <sup>43</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 4 August 1860.
- <sup>44</sup> Ryan, "Gender and Public Access," 271.
- <sup>45</sup> Ryan, *Women in Public*, 37.
- <sup>46</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 17 October 1860.
- <sup>47</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 9 August 1860.
- <sup>48</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 26 July 1860.
- <sup>49</sup> Joe L. Kinchloe, Jr. "Transcending Role Restrictions: Women at Camp Meetings and Political Rallies," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 40 (1981): 158-169.
- <sup>50</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 10 July 1860.
- <sup>51</sup> Benjamin Grierson to Alice Grierson, Mendosia, IL 6 June 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>52</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1980)
- <sup>53</sup> Kinchloe, 163.
- <sup>54</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 25 July 1860.
- <sup>55</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 7 August 1860.
- <sup>56</sup> McGerr, 867.
- <sup>57</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 7 August 1860.
- <sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

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- <sup>59</sup> *Illinois State Register*, (Springfield) 31 October 1860.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 13 August 1860.
- <sup>62</sup> Elbridge Atwood to his sister, Springfield, IL, 27 May 1860, Atwood Family Papers, ISHL.
- <sup>63</sup> Sarah Withers diary, 17 October 1860, MHS.
- <sup>64</sup> Sarah Withers diary, 5 November 1860, MHS.
- <sup>65</sup> Ada Bailhache to her mother, Springfield, IL 20 November 1860, Bailhache Family Papers, ISHL.
- <sup>66</sup> Kinchloe, 163.
- <sup>67</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 1 November 1860.
- <sup>68</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 7 November 1860.
- <sup>69</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 2 November 1860.
- <sup>70</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 1 November 1860.
- <sup>71</sup> *Illinois Statesman* (Bloomington) 24 August 1860.
- <sup>72</sup> *Daily Pantagraph* (Bloomington) 25 June 1860.
- <sup>73</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 7 July 1860.
- <sup>74</sup> *Illinois State Register* (Springfield) 26 July 1860.
- <sup>75</sup> ibid.
- <sup>76</sup> ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> *Weekly Herald* (Lincoln) 8 August 1860.
- <sup>78</sup> Julia Trumbull to Lyman Trumbull, Springfield, IL 17 July 1860. Trumbull Family Papers, ISHL.
- <sup>79</sup> Ada Bailhache to her mother, Springfield, IL 20 November 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>80</sup> Grace Bedell to Abraham Lincoln, Westfield, quoted in David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 258.
- <sup>81</sup> An example of such a poem can be found in the November 9, 1860 issue of Bloomington's *Illinois Statesman*:  
 Ere we parted for the evening/While I lingered in the hall/Half doubting when to leave her/If I ever left at all/She  
 asked me if 'twere possible/To change my vote this fall/She knew me for a Democrat --/The roguish little elf/Knew  
 that I loved my party less-/Less than I did herself./So she told me I might kiss her/If I laid "Breck" on the  
 shelf/Could I lose an opportunity/Available as this?/Could I think of hesitating/When I stood so near to bliss?/No!  
 Egad -- 'twas for the Union!/So I took the proffered kiss.
- <sup>82</sup> *Illinois Statesman* (Bloomington) 27 July 1860.
- <sup>83</sup> *Illinois Statesman* (Bloomington) 27 July 1860.
- <sup>84</sup> *Bulletin* (Freeport) 12 July 1860.
- <sup>85</sup> *Illinois State Journal* (Springfield) 10 July 1860.
- <sup>86</sup> *Central Illinois Gazette* (Champaign) 22 August 1860; *Bulletin* (Freeport) 23 August 1860.
- <sup>87</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 16 July 1860, MHS.
- <sup>88</sup> John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1986), 149.
- <sup>89</sup> David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 109.
- <sup>90</sup> David Davis to Sarah Davis, Bloomington, 30 October 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>91</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>92</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 6 November 1860, MHS.
- <sup>93</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 7 November 1860, MHS.
- <sup>94</sup> Anna Ridgely Hudson diary, 4 November 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>95</sup> *Weekly Herald* (Lincoln) 14 November 1860.
- <sup>96</sup> Sarah Davis to David Davis, 8 November 1860, ISHL.
- <sup>97</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 14 April 1861, MHS.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid., 28 April 1861.
- <sup>99</sup> Wheeler and Wortman, 37-39.
- <sup>100</sup> Sarah Withers Diary, 28 April 1861, MHS.

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