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The Public Career of Joseph Lane

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THE PUBLIC CAREER OF JOSEPH LANE

by

MARJORIE PHYLLIS FORSYTH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts. Department of
History and Political Science.

Division of Graduate Instruction
Butler University
Indianapolis
1942
I wish to take this opportunity to extend my deep thanks to the following persons without whose aid this thesis could not have been successfully prepared:

To Dr. A. D. Beeler of Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, for his expert guidance in the course of my investigations of the subject.

To the staff of the Oregon State Library at Salem, Oregon, and the staffs of the Butler University and Indiana State libraries for their invaluable help in obtaining much of the information incorporated herein.

To Nina Lane Faubion, of Bates, Oregon, great granddaughter of General Lane, for her excellent letter giving a personal insight into the General's character and activities.
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INTRODUCTION.

The history of the United States in the years just preceding the Civil War is the history of the terrible struggle along democratic lines upon a subject which had vast economic and moral implications.

As is always true in a time of such moral and political unrest and dissention this fundamental disagreement brought forth brilliant champions for both sides and their brilliance in argument as in battle lives today in the pages of American history. Their names are many and their political achievements mighty, and it is only natural that the reading public a hundred years later should overlook all but the most brilliant and the most colorful.

Lincoln, of course, will live forever and his tomb be always hallowed ground for American patriots. Likewise Grant, Lee, Douglas, Davis and many others live in history.

It is small wonder that in the galaxy of great names of the period the public should hear little of a man who, while far from the least important of the men of the time, had the misfortune to support the losing side and die in the ignominy of a political defeat.

In writing of the life of a man whose personality so influenced the early history of two great states, Indiana and Oregon, it is strangely difficult to cite adequate information to prove his strength of character and his influence on the
historical events of his time.

Joseph Lane was the type of man who formulated his own convictions regardless of political pressure and in no case did he ever exercise hypocrisy for his own personal gain. His decisions were not formulated on a moment's thought. He analyzed situations carefully, made his own decisions and fought for them.

Although disagreeing in part with his preference for the South, we must recognize his ability as a statesman. His footing was solid, based on his own personal conviction. It may not be justly compared to the shifting quicksand in which so many politicians of his age died the death of only a defeated politician. His life was one of honesty and straightforwardness - based on that pillar of truth that so many people in the public eye fail to recognize. Because of his honesty, his life as a politician and statesman should be long remembered by all fair minded citizens.

In attempting to write this biography of such an outstanding character I do not feel that I have been able to do him entire justice. The written records of his life have been sketchy and the gaps between events all too frequent. I have attempted to show the sincerity of Lane's convictions and the tenacity with which he clung to them. During the time when many outstanding personages in public life were deserting their party in the North, General Lane put forth every effort to prove the justice of his support of the cause of the South. His was a lost cause, and although it caused his political downfall,
he was sincere in that belief.

Even though I do not agree with General Lane's convictions, yet I am compelled to admire him for his firm stand and the honesty with which he stated his views. Indiana may be proud of General Lane for his valiant services, and if in writing this little treatise about his public career, I have helped to make other students of Indiana history understand and appreciate him better, I will feel sufficiently repaid for my efforts.
THE PUBLIC CAREER OF JOSEPH LANE

CHAPTER I

HIS EARLY LIFE

Joseph Lane, the second son of John and Elizabeth Street Lane, was born in Buncombe County, North Carolina, December 14, 1801. His parents moved to Henderson, Kentucky, in 1810, and there Joseph attended the common schools. In 1816, at the age of fifteen, his parents moved to Darlington, Indiana, the seat of Warrick County. There a Judge Glass hired him to take charge of his store at Rockport, Indiana. According to early biographers, he was a very popular young man, made friends with everyone; he was said to have had a very kind and genial disposition, and to have understood the rules of business very well for that day.

In his youth, Joe purchased a keel-boat and cut cord wood, which he loaded into the boat, and sold to steamboats on the Ohio. The passing steamer would take his keel-boat in tow and haul it up or down the river until all the wood that was wanted was taken off, and then the keel-boat was cast loose.

In 1821 Lane married Polly Pierre and settled on a riverbank farm in Vanderburgh County, just across the Warrick line. He engaged extensively in farming, stock raising and stock buying. He sold his produce in lower Mississippi and New Orleans, carrying it there by flat boat, according to several reports.

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1Colonel Wm. M. Cockrum, Pioneer History of Indiana, (Oakland City Press, Indiana, 1907) p. 511.
The next year, before he was 21, Lane was elected to the State Legislature from the counties of Vanderburgh and Warrick. He had to wait, however, until he reached the legal age before he could take his seat in the House. Lane was elected to the House of Representatives in 1822, 1831 and 1833, and to the State Senate in 1844 and 1846. His career in the Legislature of Indiana was not spectacular, but he was steady and conscientious and won the respect of his constituents. Lane was in favor of increasing the salaries of the judges of the Supreme Court and the Circuit Court to $1,500.00 and $1,000.00 respectively. He argued that it was true economy to employ a capable person. The judges should be selected, he said, from the best lawyers or persons fully competent to do the work.\(^1\) Lane was also particularly interested in the promotion of the Wabash and Erie Canal project and urged its completion.\(^2\) The farmers of Indiana were producing more than could be consumed and were demanding a means to get their produce to markets. The building of canals seemed to be the answer for means of transportation to the people.

Perhaps his most outstanding work was his argument against the State repudiating the debt incurred through its Internal Improvements Bill passed in 1836. Many leading men felt that that was the only thing they could do. The General

\(^1\) Indiana State Sentinel, December 31, 1845.

\(^2\) Ibid., January 3, 1846.
Assembly of Indiana and many of the citizens were loud in their protestations of honesty, and there is no doubt public sentiment favored the ultimate payment of every dollar of the State debt.\footnote{Logan Esarey, History of Indiana, (3d ed.; Fort Wayne, The Hoosier Press, 1924) I, p. 430.}

The bondholders banded together and hired Charles Butler, an attorney of New York, to look after their claims. On December 19, Mr. Butler met the committee and submitted his plan as follows: First, For arrears of interest, the State should give certificates payable by 1851; or if not paid then, to be funded into five per cent stocks. Second, The State should pay, by taxation, three per cent interest on the debt up to 1851. Third, All arrears of interest up to 1851 to be funded at five per cent. After 1851, three per cent interest to be paid promptly by tax and two per cent from tolls of the canal. It was understood that the State was to finish the canal to the Ohio River.\footnote{Ibid., p. 432.}

The Joint Committee notified Mr. Butler that it could not accede to his demands and inquired if he had anything better to propose. They seemed to be negotiating for a bargain with their own creditors rather than trying to maintain the financial integrity of the State.\footnote{Ibid., p. 433.} Lane, who had declared he would cut cord wood to pay his part of the debt, finally introduced a bill drawn along the lines of Butler's propositions. The House was Democratic, the Senate, Whig. There was little straightforward
policy manifested in either branch. Even after both parties in convention had endorsed the bill, the Democrats in caucus decided to refer the whole matter to the people in the August elections. Governor James Whitcomb and leaders of the party succeeded in breaking the Democratic caucus, and, on January 19, 1846, the Governor signed the bill.¹

This long law of thirty-five sections had been very carelessly drawn, and was soon found to be impossible of execution. It was revised and after a long struggle received Governor Whitcomb's signature January 27, 1847. The general effect of this new bill was to divide the outstanding bonds of the State, except those known as the Bank Bonds, into two equal parts. One of these parts, with its accumulated interest, was assumed by the State, and the other was made a debt on the canal for which the State assumed no further responsibility. The canal was deeded to the bondholders and they were forced to accept the compromise.²

Lane's career in the Senate was brought to a close by his resignation when war was declared with Mexico on May 13, 1846. For twenty-five years, from the time he was barely of age, he served in the Legislative Assembly of Indiana in both houses with few intermissions. His work was solid and dependable.

¹Indiana State Sentinel, January 3, 1846.
²Esarey, op.cit., I, p. 434.
CHAPTER II

LANE'S MILITARY CAREER.

The news of the declaration of war with Mexico did not reach Indianapolis until May 21, 1846. Joseph Lane resigned his senatorship to become a private soldier in Captain Walker's company of infantry. He was elected colonel of the Second Regiment on June 25, 1846, it being the custom at that time to have the men elect their officers.

When it became the duty of President James Polk to make the appointment of brigadier-general, it was felt by every western member of Congress to be a prize for one of his own constituents. Probably some fifty names had been handed to President Polk accordingly. Robert Dale Owen, in whose congressional district Lane resided, entertaining no such local pride, would probably not have furnished any name but for a suggestion to that effect from one of the Indiana senators. He offered the name "Joe Lane". President Polk made the appointment July 1, 1846, and said he hoped that Owen had considered well his recommendation, for the office was a responsible one. Owen said he knew nothing of Lane's military talent, but that he had those traits of character which, in times of difficulty, made men instinctively rally around him as a leader. That had been the case in early days when lawless men infested the river border.

1Ibid., p. 498.
When the news of the battle of Buena Vista reached Washington, Mr. Owen called on President Polk. "Well, sir," exclaimed he, "What do you think of our Hoosier general?" "Ah," said the President, with a quiet smile, "Mr. Owen, you are safe out of that scrape."\(^1\) At the battle of Buena Vista the Indiana regiment, only 360 strong, was under the immediate command of General Lane. They were facing two Mexican divisions of 7,000 men. While the battle was going on, General Lane sought to make the American fire more effective by moving his men up closer. Just at this time, a second column of Mexicans appeared on the left. Seeing these, and thinking the battle lost, and that it was best to save what men he could, Colonel William A. Bowles, of French Lick, Indiana, who was at the opposite end of the line of the same regiment from General Lane, gave the order to retreat. Thus, while the left of the line started forward in obedience to General Lane's order, the right began to fall back at the command of Colonel Bowles. The retreat soon became a rout. Twenty of the men never stopped till they reached the buildings of the ranch of Buena Vista. General Lane and some other officers succeeded in re-forming 190 of them, who returned to the field along with the third regiment of Indiana and a Mississippi regiment under Colonel Jefferson Davis. Under their own officer, Lieutenant Haddon, the 190 Indiana men helped as bravely as any other

\(^1\) Oran Perry, *Indiana in the Mexican War*, (Indpls. 1908) p. 284.
troops to restore the lost battle. This episode has been the subject of much heated argument. When General Lane learned the truth of why these men retreated, he clashed with his commanding officer, General Zachery Taylor, over the official report.

This action was later to have serious effect on his political career.

General Lane was later sent to Vera Cruz and given command of 3,000 troops. He defeated the Mexican leader, Santa Anna, at Huamantla, attacked and routed a large body of guerillas at Atlixco. He took Matamoras and captured a large quantity of military stores. Early in 1848 he was sent out to break up and destroy the many bands of guerillas roaming the country. He came so near Santa Anna at Tehuacan that he captured the latter’s carriage containing his private papers and his wooden leg.

General Lane was the one outstanding Indianian in the Mexican War. Full of energy and vigor, he was indeed one of the most picturesque characters in the war. His figure was a striking one as he rode at the head of his troops, wearing a black hat and an old blue coat. It was sometimes said of him that he never slept. He was called "Old Rough and Ready, No. 2". He moved with such rapidity, and was so successful in beating the enemy that he was also called "The Marion of the Mexican War".

1 Esarey, op. cit., I, 505.
3 Perry, op. cit., p. 338.
4 Charles Roll, Indiana-One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Development, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co. 1931) II, 75.
His services brought him a brevet major-general's commission.\footnote{William W. Woolen, Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana, (Indpls.: Hammond & Co., 1883) p. 417.}

The Indiana Legislature voted General Lane a sword in token of Indiana's appreciation of his services in the war.\footnote{Indiana State Sentinel, January 27, 1848.}

The Mexican War elevated General Lane from an obscure local personage to a figure of national prominence. It undoubtedly influenced President Polk in choosing Lane as the Governor of the Oregon Territory. In a country of Indian atrocities his military record stood him in good stead. He was no unknown to the people of Oregon. In his future political career his military service made good political propaganda.
CHAPTER III

GOVERNOR OF THE TERRITORY OF OREGON.

Joseph Lane was appointed Governor of the Territory of Oregon by President Polk in August, 1848. He was a guest at the home of Senator Jesse Bright, prominent Democratic leader of Indiana, when he received the telegram appointing him to office on August 28, 1848. Lane set out the next day for Oregon, since he knew that President Polk desired to have the territory organized before the expiration of his term.¹

The trip overland to Oregon was very difficult during the winter of 1848, and when Lane reached St. Louis on August 31, General Stephen W. Kearney advised against the undertaking. Lane, however, insisted and pushed on to Fort Leavenworth, where an armed escort awaited him. There he found the company averse to undertaking such a dangerous journey. Lane then asked for twenty-five men with Lieutenant Hawkins, saying a small number could get along better. He left Fort Leavenworth on September 10. After reaching the Pio Grande River, he and his guide differed on the route. Lane insisted on leaving the direct and common route and striking south because it was shorter. The guide, not knowing this route and thinking it too dangerous, left the party and Lane undertook to pilot himself to Oregon. They finally

¹Government Printing Office, Western, (Washington, 1852) pp. 25f. (Writer's Note:-The author of Western is unknown but is generally believed to have been either Robert Dale Owen or David Yulee.)
reached the Mexican village of Santa Cruz, in Sonora, where they took the regular trail. On reaching the Gila River, seven men deserted to try their luck in the gold field.\(^1\) Shortly after that, five men and a corporal deserted, fearful of starvation and death if they went on. If Lane had taken the old trail, the group would have met the same fate as Colonel John C. Fremont, who followed Lane in a few weeks, and lost almost his entire party in the Rocky mountains. The remaining men of Lane's party took passage at San Francisco for the Columbia in the schooner "Jeannette". They went from there to Oregon City in small boats.\(^2\)

On March 2, 1849, about six months after his departure from home, Lane arrived at Oregon City, and on the next day took the oath of office. He found no organized government; the provisional organization had ceased to function and Indian affairs were in a serious condition. The most immediate and pressing work before him was the apprehension and punishment of the Cayuse Indian murderers of the Whitman family. He had to travel to the Cayuse country, four hundred miles distant, accompanied only by an interpreter and a Dr. Newell. Along the route he made peace with four different Indian nations, besides stopping a war between two of them. He was successful in getting the Cayuse Indians to turn over the guilty parties.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 27.

\(^2\)Harriett Lane, "General Joseph Lane" (Unpublished Thesis, Oregon State Library, Salem, 1909) p. 3.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 5.
When the Oregon Legislature met on the 16th of July, 1849, Lane's message included recommendations that showed his understanding of the things that would be best for the welfare of Oregon. He was anxious that they should always encourage friendly relations with the Indians, distinguishing between friend and foe by allowing the sale of arms to them for procurement of their food. Lane recognized the value of the Columbia River as a means of both internal and external communication. He saw the importance of good military roads and he urged the organization of the militia.

He recommended the establishment of a judicious system of raising revenue and changing defective laws of the territory. He stressed the justice of a request of Congress that the expense of the Cayuse War be paid the individuals to whom it was due. Lane also recommended the adoption of a system of common schools and the provision of means for putting them into immediate operation.\(^1\) While serving in the Senate of Indiana in 1846 Lane had expressed the desire for everyone to receive an education.\(^2\)

Lane was removed from office on August 8, 1849, by President Zachery Taylor, Lane's old commander in the Mexican War, on an implied charge of inefficiency. As he had received no official notice, Lane wrote the Secretary of War on May 27 setting the

\(^1\)Lane's Message to the Oregon State Legislature, Indiana State Library, Facsimile, July 17, 1849.

\(^2\)The Indiana State Sentinel, January 14, 1846.
of his resignation on June 18, 1850, as he desired to go ahead with his work of concluding treaties with the Indians. 

The following letter from his great granddaughter, Nina Lane Faubion of Bates, Oregon, explains his decision to continue his work:

... He had placed our relations with all the Oregon Indians upon an amicable footing, except the Shastas or Rogue River Indians. These Indians were of a warlike and predatory tribe. They were attacking white men traveling to and from the gold fields of Northern California. Recent depredations and safety for the future to the border citizens required decided terms of peace or war with them! Great grandfather preferred the former, and was about to visit them to obtain restitutions of stolen property, and treat for future relations, when his letter of removal came. What could he do? His successor had not arrived to assume the governorship, its responsibilities and discharge of its duties. Should he abandon all, and leave confusion to reign and the Indians to rob and murder at pleasure? Having been removed he would have been justified in so doing and the Administration alone responsible for the consequences. And had he consulted his private interests such would have been his course; but such a course was not in keeping with his character. A duty to government and to Oregon and its citizens was to be performed and since his successor was not there to perform it, he felt it should be done by himself. Supposing he could complete the treaty he desired to make by the 18th of June and being desirous, since he was superseded, of being at liberty to attend to his private business as soon as duty would permit, he determined to return his official power to the source whence he obtained it - the Government at Washington - and notify them that the discharge of his duties would cease on that day. In the absence of his successor to receive the responsibilities of the office from his hands and discharge its duties, this was the only course which accorded with his sense of duty. Accordingly, he addressed the following letter to the Secretary of War:

Oregon City, O. T. May 27, 1850.

Sir: I have the honor to report that I have succeeded in bringing to justice five Cayuse Indians, being all that are now supposed to be living who were concerned in the murder of Dr. Whitman, family and others. I am happy to say that our relations with the Cayuse as also all other tribes with the exception of the Shasta or Rogue River Indians, are of the most friendly character. I shall set out this day for
Rogue River, for the purpose of placing our relations with these Indians upon a proper and friendly footing. In sending in my resignation I have given myself until the 18th day of June, in which time I hope to accomplish this most desirable arrangement. I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant.

Joseph Lane

He did not conclude the treaty with these Indians until the middle of July, but expected no pay for his services beyond June 18th, 1850.1

Lane's friends resented the implied charge of inefficiency as the reason for his removal, and, since a great many removals had taken place under Taylor, a discussion arose in the Senate. The Democrats wished to show for the sake of his reputation that his removal was political, and the Whigs sought to show just cause.2

Mr. Thomas Ewing, the Senator from Ohio and "chief operator" of Taylor's cabinet, sought to defend the removal of Lane and a Colonel Weller of the Boundary Commission. He gave as the reason that Lane had failed to file reports with the Department of the Interior on the Indian affairs in Oregon. Senator Dodge of Iowa claimed that that reason was ridiculous and that Lane probably made the report, but that due to the distance and poor mail service it was delayed. Senator James Whitcomb of Indiana also defended Lane. He said that Lane had to acquaint himself with the Indian problem before he could make a report. Whitcomb claimed he was removed while working with the

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1 Personal letter from Nina Lane Faubion, great granddaughter of General Joseph Lane, Bates, Oregon, December 15, 1941.

2 Lane, op. cit., p. 7.
Indians in order to make a report. 1

Mr. Ewing then gave as his second reason that Lane had issued publications against President Taylor that questioned his veracity in regard to the conduct of the Second Indiana Regiment at Buena Vista. Senator Jesse Bright, of Indiana, close political friend of Lane, vigorously protested Ewing's reasons. He said that Lane had never made derogatory remarks about Taylor. He explained that when General Lane made his report of the battle he did not know that the men had been ordered to retreat and it was not known at the time General Taylor made his report to the Secretary of War. When Lane learned the true circumstances, he went to Taylor and asked him to make a supplementary report as he thought the first did the men an injustice. Taylor refused, and Lane later vindicated the men under his command himself, without, however, questioning the integrity of General Taylor. 2

Senator Bright of Indiana also produced the following communication from the Department of State dated December 28, 1850:

Sir:

In reply to your note of this morning, I have the honor to state that I have caused an examination to be made of the proper files of this department, and that no complaints or charges have been found therein against General J. Lane, late Governor of the Territory of Oregon, and ex

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1 Congressional Globe, 31st Congress, Vol. XX, Part I, pp. 40f. (December 12, 1850)

2 Ibid., January 2, 1851, p. 154.
officio superintendent of Indian affairs.\footnote{Ibid, January 2, 1851, p. 155.}

I am, Sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

Dan'l Webster\footnote{Ibid, January 2, 1851, p. 155.}

The Indiana State Sentinel, Democratic paper, published the following news items February 3, 1852:

Mr. Polk, fearing that his motives might be misconstrued, refused to move Mr. Wise from his mission to Brazil because there existed between them a personal difficulty; but General Taylor made no hesitation, from the beginning, to speak on all occasions of his intention to remove General Lane because the General had determined that justice should be done the Indiana troops, who had been vilely slandered.

The Oregonian of December 6 says that 'Lane resigned before he had any notice of his removal.'

Vincennes Gazette

After the peace treaty with the Indians was signed, Lane went to the gold fields of northern California to recoup his depleted fortunes, where he remained until 1851. He worked in the mines as a common miner, dodging Indian arrows or stray bullets as did his companions when occasion required.\footnote{Faubion, \textit{op. cit.}, December 15, 1941}

The Legislative Assembly of the Oregon Territory passed a resolution on May 18, 1850, complimenting Lane upon his services as Governor.\footnote{Ibid, January 2, 1851, p. 155.}
CHAPTER IV

LANE ELECTED DELEGATE FROM OREGON

The first delegate from Oregon, a Mr. Thurston, had died while returning home and this left the office open. It seemed the natural thing that the very popular former governor should take his place. However, there were some men who opposed Lane due to his treatment of Indian affairs, so they put up W. H. Wilson against him. The Oregon Statesman, a newspaper, took up Lane's cause. This Statesman eventually became the powerful voice of the Democrats in Oregon.

There were some objections to Lane on the ground that he was not a resident of this state, and in answer to this the candidate sent a letter from Oregon City, which was published in the Statesman May 30, 1851. In this he stated that he had lived in the Territory for nearly three years, and was a citizen of Oregon to all intents and purposes and not a citizen of any other state or territory, and did not intend to be. He denied that his family had refused to come to Oregon, and insisted that they were coming to live on a claim which he was improving for their benefit. As to the charge that he would not be granted a seat in Congress if elected, Lane says, "and if elected to Congress (of which I have no doubt) I will not only be entitled to a seat

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1 Hubert H. Bancroft, The History of Oregon, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1890) II, 205.
as Delegate, but will claim it, and have it; and furthermore, let me say, that I will honestly and faithfully represent the Territory of Oregon with the view to the promotion of the general interests of her people." Over the opposition, and with the aid of the papers, Lane easily won the election with a majority of 1832 out of the 2917 votes cast. ¹

Lane left Oregon in July, 1851, for Washington via Panama and New Orleans. On his way to Washington, General Lane stopped at his old home in Indiana, about eight miles above Evansville, where he received visits from many old friends. He was disappointed, for to use his own words, in a letter he wrote to Mr. Bush, Editor of the Oregon Statesman, he said: "Nothing looks right. The people, though as clever as any in the world, don't look healthy as they do in Oregon, nor is the country like Oregon. I would not give my claim in Oregon for twenty miles upon the banks of the Ohio and be compelled to remain in this country."² It seems that this statement was made deliberately in order to give emphasis to his claim of Oregon citizenship.

In the memorial prepared by the Legislature giving instruction to the delegate, they asked him to try and obtain the following results in Congress: an appropriation of $100,000 for the improvement of the Willamette river; $40,000 for a customs house at Astoria, $30,000 for a road from Steelacoon to Fort Walla Walla, $40,000 for a road from Scottsburg to the Rogue

¹Ibid., II, 206.
²Lena Newton, "The Public Career of Joseph Lane in Oregon", (Oregon State Library, Salem, 1913) Lane correspondence.
River, and $15,000 for buoys at the entrance of the Columbia River.1

They also asked him to provide for more and better mail routes and to urge the continuance of the geological survey and the making of another survey between California and Oregon; to enlarge the Oregon legislature, and have St. Helens made a port of delivery. He was also asked to have the salary of the postmaster of Astoria raised to $1,000. This was an unusual amount of work for a first term delegate to accomplish, but he did succeed in achieving most of these aims.

The first work he did for his territory was to write a letter on December 12, 1851, to President Millard Fillmore concerning the protection of immigrants to Oregon. When no action was taken, a copy of the letter was read in the Senate on February 5, 1852. The letter follows:

I know that I need but call your attention to the condition of things here, and present the facts within my knowledge, to secure your aid and prompt action in the premises. The suffering this season for want of troops to protect immigrants and others enroute to Oregon and to California has been terrible, and certainly this government ought, and will, afford protection to her citizens in a country so remote and exposed as are all persons traveling either on this immigrant road to Oregon or on the road from Oregon to California.2

On February 9 and 10, 1852, Lane made a speech in the House insisting on troops for protection. He said there was a rifle regiment created for that purpose during the Mexican War,

1Ibid., p. 22
but this regiment had been sent to Mexico. After that they were discharged, and then recruited over again. Lane asked that this regiment should be sent to Oregon at once.\(^1\)

Lane also gained for Oregon, with the help of the California delegates, in this first session of the 32nd Congress which ended July 8, 1852, $17,000 for Indian affairs, and $120,000 for lighthouses on the Pacific Coast.

As far as the Oregon people were concerned, the most important thing accomplished was the passage of the bill guaranteeing the payment of the Cayuse War Debts of 1848. In the second session of Congress he succeeded in getting land grants for all soldiers since 1790. The importance of these Indian claims is indicated by letter written October 19, 1852, from Evansville by Lane to Mr. Bush, in which he tells him that the claims will approximate $190,000. He also writes, "No delegate has ever at one session succeeded in getting more bills through."\(^2\)

A question as to where the capital of Oregon should be located stirred up quite a controversy between Governor Gaines and the Legislative Assembly. The Governor insisted it was his right to apply the Federal appropriations for territorial buildings. He also asserted that the bill locating the capitol at Salem was illegal, because of several things taken up in the bill that did not pertain to the capitol.\(^3\) Lane sided with the

\(^1\)Ibid., pp. 507-509.
\(^2\)Oregon Statesman, January 1, 1855.
\(^3\)Newton, op. cit. p. 25.
Legislative Assembly and told Governor Gaines in a letter that it was his duty to carry out the wishes of the people of Oregon as expressed through their representative in the Legislative Assembly. From this argument grew a feeling that expressed itself in a memorial to Congress sent to Lane, in which the people asked that they be allowed to elect their own Governor, Secretary and Judges, the Federal Government, however, still paying their salaries. The bill passed the House, but failed in the Senate.1

Lane gave the following statement to the paper on the controversy with Governor Gaines, which also included his idea of political parties:

As a Democrat, I have ever believed in the doctrine that the people are capable of self-government, and I can see no good reason why the selection of officers to administer laws in which they alone are interested should not be entrusted to the intelligent voters of Oregon.

Party is but another term for principles; an organization the more efficiently to act together for the dissemination and success of certain defined principles.2

After Lane failed to secure the Democratic nomination for the presidency in the Convention of 1852, which occurred during his last year of his first term as delegate, he was appointed Governor of the Territory of Oregon by President Franklin Pierce. He succeeded Governor Gaines and this relieved the people of Oregon of a blundering administration.

1Ibid., p. 28
2Oregon Statesman, May 18, 1852.
CHAPTER V
THE CONVENTION OF 1852

The year 1852 was presidential election year. The Compromise of 1850 had been disposed of and people were extremely anxious to keep the slave question dormant. Toward the end of 1851, the Lafayette Courier and the Indiana State Sentinel, both Democratic papers, declared they would support only sound and consistent Democrats as their nominees, men opposed to further agitation of the slavery question, in favor of the Compromise measures, including the Fugitive Slave Law.1

At this time, Lane was becoming intensely interested in national politics. He had been an unusually successful delegate. He was well known in Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin and somewhat in the Carolinas. He had distinguished himself in the Mexican War. Lane was aggressive and ambitious.2 He did not know what office to run for at this time as some wanted him for Governor of Oregon, others advised him to remain in Congress as a delegate and prepare himself for the Senate when Oregon became a state.3

In the meantime, while Lane was in Oregon, the Democratic

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2 Newton, op. cit., p. 29.
3 Ibid., p. 30.
machine in Indiana, unknown to him, decided to boom Lane for the Presidential nomination in 1852. To the politically sagacious Chapman brothers, George H. and Jacob B., editors of the Indiana State Sentinel, belonged the credit for the first important public suggestion of the candidate who was to combine the appeal of martial fame with that of local pride.¹ For over a year after the Chapmans' original suggestion little was done to promote Lane's candidacy. It was not until Robert Dale Owen, Senator from Indiana, came to Indianapolis in January, 1851, that the bell was officially put in motion. In an address before the Democratic members of the Indiana Legislature, Owen declared that the party's next presidential candidate ought to come from the West and should combine military fame with parliamentary experience. Almost spontaneously his audience responded with three cheers for Joe Lane.²

Lane visited Indianapolis on November 12, 1851, and was met at the station by Governor Wright, Senator Jesse Bright, Dr. G. N. Fitch of Logansport and others. Senator Stephen A. Douglas was invited to the reception to be given for Lane that evening, but was unable to attend. In the course of his speech of introduction Governor Wright said:

General Lane, you have been selected by the sons of the far-off Pacific to represent them in the Congress of the United States. You have many friends scattered all

¹Indiana State Sentinel, November 18, 1848

over the Union who would be proud to see you fill another
and more important position.
If you should be called to occupy that position, we
have a sure guarantee in your past life that the trust
will be safe in your hands. In that event we should pre-
sent you to the nation, not as an Indianian or Western
man, but as an American belonging to no section, knowing
no North, no South, nothing but the Union, a proper and
fit representative of the feelings and views of the people
of your own Indiana.

Lane said in his reply that when he left for Oregon in
1848, the people were fearfully agitated by the angry and dan-
ergous sectional question of slavery. However, his confidence in
the integrity and political soundness of the people throughout
the controversy remained unshaken. His hopes, he said, had been
realized. If he had been a member of Congress he would have
voted for each and every one of the Compromise measures, includ-
ing the Fugitive Slave Law. He considered it a necessary measure
to carry out the Compromise. Lane concluded:

The Governor has spoken of me in connection with the
Presidency. I have never aspired to that high office.
There are several other talented and worthy Democrats. I
have had no agency in placing my name in that connection
yet I shun no responsibility, and if the choice should
fall on me, I shall endeavor faithfully to discharge the
duties.

This speech helped Lane overcome the reluctance of those
who felt that his ideas on the Fugitive Slave Law were too liberal.
The Indiana State Sentinel printed the following article November
27, 1851:

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1 Indiana State Sentinel, November 14, 1851.

2 Ibid.
Heretofore, among the newspapers of Indiana, the most vociferous in support of General Lane for the Presidency were those strongly tinctured with free-soilism. The favor of this class of politicians no doubt injured the General's cause and to it may be attributed the sparse attendance at the reception meeting last week. Of this the General appears to have been fully conscious, and if he did not in so many bitter words cry 'Save me from my friends!', he took effective measures to free himself from their pernicious influence, by declaring emphatically that the Compromise measures were right, and that the Fugitive Slave Law was the best of them all! Hurra for Joe Lane! Another leap of this kind into our affections and his name shall be inscribed on our Presidential Banner.

The Indiana State Sentinel said on February 12, 1852, that General Lane was undoubtedly the choice of Indiana for the Presidency, and that the Convention should be careful that his friends were selected as delegates. It felt that Indiana should leave no stone unturned to accomplish so desirable an object as his nomination. On the contrary, it did not desire to see a delegation go to Baltimore and stubbornly sit down and vote for Lane from beginning to ending without any prospect of success.

The Indiana State Sentinel said that it was useless to disguise the fact that General Lane was not a first choice candidate except in Indiana. It added: "We are for General Lane, but if he cannot be nominated, then we are for the strongest man."

The Democratic State Convention convened at Indianapolis February 24, 1852, and was presided over by Judge Thomas L. Smith. The committee on resolutions, of which Robert Dale Owen was chairman, was a very strong one, being composed of the leading Democrats of the State, including Oliver P. Morton. The Convention

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1Indiana State Sentinel, November 27, 1851.
2Woolen, op. cit., p. 421.
adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, that Joseph Lane, the State legislator, the gallant General, the Territorial Governor, tried in the Council Chamber, tried in the tented field, tried in the executive chair, and never found wanting, is, of the People of Indiana, the first choice for the Presidency.

Congressman John S. Robinson took charge of the movement and threw into it all of the energy and ability he possessed. A pamphlet called "Western", written for the purpose of acquainting the public with Lane's career, made its appearance at this time.

Lane was quite gratified by the action of the Democrats of Indiana, but in spite of his desires, he began to see the necessity and value of such a letter as the following:

May 30, 1852
Nesmith Mills, Oregon

I see that your prospect of the Baltimore Convention is not as flattering as your friends could wish, and I don't know that I am much sorry, for if you are nominated, you will be elected, then we may bid goodbye to 'Old Joe' in Oregon. The people here say that if prayer of a memorial is granted, and you do not wish to return to Congress, that you shall be reinstated in the Executive Chair of the Territory.²

Your devoted friend,
J. W. Nesmith

The Democratic Convention met in Baltimore June 1 and upon one of Indiana's delegates at large, Congressman John W. Davis of Sullivan County, was conferred the distinguished honor of being selected as permanent chairman of the Convention. Particularly active in behalf of General Lane was Congressman John L.

¹Indiana State Sentinel, February 25, 1852.
²Newton, op. cit., p. 30.
Robinson, ably aided by the Brights, Senator Jesse and Michael. These gentlemen were especially hostile to Senator Stephen A. Douglas from Illinois, whose defeat was of far greater importance to them than the nomination of any one of the other aspirants, except Lane. Besides Senator Douglas, other candidates were Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan and Secretary of State James Buchanan of Pennsylvania.

The Convention lasted five days. Indiana gave Lane her thirteen votes for thirty ballots. Tennessee gave Lane one vote on the tenth ballot, but changed it on the eleventh. After the thirtieth ballot had been cast, Senator Jesse Bright obtained the floor and made the following speech:

From the first to the thirty-first balloting, the delegation from the State of Indiana have cast their united vote, under the instructions of their State Convention, for one of her own favorite sons, General Joe Lane. They have done so in good faith, believing that General Lane possessed all those elements of character necessary to make a successful candidate and a safe President. Had General Lane been as well known to the members of this Convention generally as he is to the delegation who have so repeatedly given him their united vote the result of that protracted struggle might have been different. Yesterday at a late hour, despairing success, and feeling that we had done ample justice to our candidate, the vote of Indiana was cast for General Lewis Cass, who, in my humble judgment, is more deeply anchored in the hearts of the iron-bound Democracy of this country than any other now living. . . . A period has been reached in the deliberations of this Convention which calls for a surrender of preferences. We have no objections to General Franklin Pierce; on the contrary, we can support him warmly, cordially with all our hearts.  

1 John B. Stoll, History of Indiana Democracy 1816-1916 (Indianapolis: Indiana Democratic Publishing Co. 1917) 33

2 Ibid., p. 37.
Pierce accepted unreservedly the Democratic platform, the chief plank of which was that endorsing the compromise measures, including the Fugitive Slave Law. This made him acceptable to the Indiana delegates. Forty-nine ballots were cast before Franklin Pierce was finally nominated as the Presidential candidate of the Democrats. Lane endorsed Pierce and promised his support in the election.\(^1\) The following article appeared in the York, Pennsylvania Gazette commenting on Lane's endorsement of Pierce:

\[\ldots\] but the reply of General Lane, coming from one, who it is known 'wouldn't flatter Neptune for his trident', and who is gifted in an extraordinary degree with the talent of judging those with whom he is thrown in contact, we have considered worthy of being put upon the record. The good opinion of that brave and honest soldier, 'Joe Lane' is high praise, of which any man, however elevated, might justly be proud.\(^2\)

As a result of Lane's support Mr. Pierce appointed him for the second time Governor of Oregon.

This Convention year of 1852 brought Lane in closer cooperation with the pro-slavery faction in Congress. Lane's association with the Southern senators definitely influenced his way of thinking on the subject of slavery so that by 1860 he became their candidate as Vice-President. It also sharpened his appetite for the Presidency and he never gave up his desire for that high office.

\(^1\)Leopold, op. cit., p. 296.

\(^2\)York, Pennsylvania Gazette copies by Indiana State Sentinel, July 1, 1852.
CHAPTER VI.

LANE'S POLITICAL CAREER AFTER 1852

During the interim between the Thirty-second and Thirty-third Congress, Lane was appointed to the Governorship of the Territory of Oregon by President Franklin Pierce. He accepted and took the oath of office on May 16, 1853. Lane then resigned on May 18, 1853, from the Governorship. The Oregon Statesman of May 21 made this comment:

General Lane arrived here on the Canemah, on Monday, May 16, and the same day took the oath of office as Governor. After having relieved the Territory of the blundering stupidity and mulish obstinacy of the unexampled hero of the Encarnacion, Governor Lane doubtless thinking he had done enough in a gubernatorial capacity to entitle him to the everlasting gratitude of the people of Oregon, resigned the office of Governor on Wednesday.¹

Lane ran for re-election as delegate in 1853. The fact that he was instrumental in making the famous treaty of Table Rock with the Rogue Indians September 10, 1853, and also that his views on the Indians coincided with those of the settlers had much to do with his subsequent re-election.

Lane was again successful in his second term in getting many bills through for Oregon. He succeeded in getting a bill enabling the people to hold a convention to form a state government, he obtained an appropriation of $30,000 for a military

¹Newton, op. cit., p. 31
road from Salem to Astoria, and an appropriation of $67,000 for the completion of the public buildings in Oregon.\(^1\) There were many other bills, but the most important was the amendment of the donation land laws, which applied to both the Washington and Oregon territories.

Lane was again re-elected delegate, in 1855 and in 1858. He served, in all, from March 4, 1851, to February 14, 1859, when the Territory of Oregon became a state. The most important part of his work during these last terms was to gain admission for Oregon as a state.

In 1858, when Lane ran for re-election, the people were so sure that Oregon would soon be a state, they decided to elect their senators so they would be ready whenever they were needed. Lane and Delazon Smith were made senators-elect by the Oregon Legislature on the first Monday in July, 1858.

Lane wanted the senatorship very much, and his election was assured when he sent this message from Washington to the Territory:

\[ \text{May 18, 1858} \]

Dear Bush:
The Bill for the admission of Oregon has this moment passed the Senate 35 to 17. All right in the House.
Your friend,
Lane.\(^2\)

This message helped to bring about Lane's political downfall as the bill in the House was referred to the Committee on

\(^1\) Congressional Globe, Vol. XXIV, 33rd Congress

\(^2\) Newton, op. cit. (Oregon Statesman, June 29, 1858) p. 48
Territories June 5, without an objection from Lane. Mr. Bush, the editor of the Oregon Statesman, interpreted this as a breach of loyalty to Oregon on the part of Lane. This paper declared that Lane was deliberately delaying the admission of Oregon as a state, so that he might draw mileage both as delegate and senator. This marked the break between Lane and the Statesman, which had always supported him.¹

Oregon became a state January 12, 1859. On drawing for their terms as was the custom, Lane with his usual good luck drew the long term ending in 1861, while Delazon Smith drew the short term. Lane served from February 14, 1859, to March 3, 1861, as Senator from Oregon.² He used every bit of eloquence he possessed in fighting what he considered coercive measures against the South, clinging tenaciously to his theory of the sovereign right of a state to withdraw from the Union when it deemed that equality had been refused and rights infringed. He returned to Oregon disillusioned and bitter, after his retirement from the Senate in March, 1861.

¹Ibid., p. 48.
CHAPTER VII

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF 1860

Congress, assembling a few days after John Brown's execution, for a session which lasted into June, 1860, proved to be a scene of defiant debates, of charges and countercharges, between the leaders of the opposing sections and parties. On several occasions, violent collisions between members were only narrowly averted. Throughout these trying months the proceedings of Congress were marked by consciousness of the approach of a presidential campaign. The opposing leaders did everything possible to discredit each other in the eyes of the people, and the Democrats made a last effort to patch up their internal differences.

Into this turbulent scene came Joseph Lane, who had never given up his ambitions to hold the Presidency. He was perturbed over the report that Breckenridge had received President Buchanan's support for the Presidency in Pennsylvania. He regarded it as a breach of faith. It was understood that Lane was to receive the support of Pennsylvania, and he, on his part, consented to endorse Buchanan's Territorial Policy, and avow himself in favor of a slave code. ¹ With the support of Pennsylvania he expected to make

¹Indiana State Sentinel, January 6, 1860.
his claims paramount with the South as an expediency candidate, disregarding the vote of the Northwest in the Convention, and relying upon his military distinction in that section to carry its vote, in the event of his nomination. "His failure to secure the Keystone state lets him down gently as a candidate for the Presidency." Without the backing of Pennsylvania, Lane would be unable to control enough votes to win the nomination because of his attitude on slavery.

On February 9, 1860, at the Democratic State Convention in Indiana, Dr. B. F. Mullen, championed Lane for the Presidential nomination. John L. Robinson, Senator Jesse Bright's chief lieutenant in Indiana, also put forth a strenuous effort to instruct the entire delegation to the National convention at Charleston to vote for Lane, or to send the whole delegation uninstructed. The majority was against them and they failed. The vote was 265 to 129 in favor of Senator Douglas. Thus the delegates from Indiana to the National Convention were pledged to support him.

On February 10, the Indiana State Sentinel printed a statement of Buchanan's in which he said he would use all of his influence for Breckenridge's nomination instead of Joe Lane, whom he originally supported.

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1 Indiana State Sentinel, January 6, 1860.
2 Ibid., February 9, 1860.
3 Roll, op. cit., II, 155.
Lane's attitude on the slavery question was well known. He was definitely in sympathy with the South, and some persons accused him of a desire to extend slavery. Lane insisted that Congress had no power over the question of slavery. In a speech at Concord, New Hampshire, during the Presidential canvass of 1856, he said: "The question of slavery is a most perplexing one and not to be agitated. We should leave it with the States where it constitutionally exists, and the people of the Territories to prohibit or establish, as to them may seem right and proper."¹

On December 19, 1859, in a speech in the Senate on the territorial and slavery question, Lane said: "Congress has no power over the question of slavery; they cannot under the Constitution establish it in a territory or prohibit it."²

Lane became more pro-southern in his attitude on the slavery question as time went on and subsequent events led to the actual secession of South Carolina.

The Democrats assembled for their National Convention on April 23, 1860, at Charleston, South Carolina. Contrary to precedent, it was decided to frame the platform before nominating candidates. Two platforms were submitted to the Convention, one reiterating Jefferson Davis' demand for a Congressional slave code, and the other reaffirming Douglas' position at Freeport.

¹Indiana State Sentinel, March 27, 1860.
²Ibid., July 14, 1860.
The Freeport doctrine stated that slavery could not exist in a territory without local police regulations to protect it, and these could only be made by the local legislature, which would oppose slavery if the people who elected the legislators were opposed to it. \(^1\) The northern Democrats were in the majority, and their platform was adopted by a vote of 165 to 138. When the final vote had been taken, a member from the Alabama delegation came forward and amid tense excitement announced that the delegates of his state would withdraw. Then other Southern delegations went out in quick succession - Mississippi, South Carolina, Florida, Texas, Arkansas and Georgia. After balloting in vain three days the diminished Charleston convention could not get a two-thirds majority for any candidate, and the remnant of the Convention adjourned to meet again in Baltimore on June 18.

When the "regulars" reassembled in Baltimore on the 18th there was hope that perhaps a modification of the platform might be effected that would re-unite the Convention. Mr. Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts, who was permanent chairman of the Convention, rather intimated that the resolutions were open to change. But it never got to that. When the Committee on Credentials began to seat other Douglas delegations to take the place of the Southern secessionists, another bolt, this time led by Virginia, occurred, and most of the delegates from North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and Maryland followed suit. The Southern Democrats held

their own convention in Baltimore on June 21 at which they unanimously adopted the southern platform rejected at Charleston, and chose as their candidates John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky for President and Senator Joseph Lane of Oregon as his running mate. At once the bolters at Richmond reassembled and ratified the nomination of these men.\(^\text{1}\) Lane's nomination for Vice-President was clearly a bid for support in Indiana, and his residence in Oregon might have performed the same service there. It was by no means impossible that this election might have been thrown into the House, and under those circumstances, the three votes of Oregon would have been as valuable as those in New York.\(^\text{2}\)

The Northern Democrats nominated Stephen A. Douglas for President and Herschel V. Johnson of Georgia for Vice-President on June 18 at Baltimore.

The Republican Convention met in the rapidly growing city of Chicago on May 16, 1860. The acknowledged leader of the party was William H. Seward of New York. Next to Seward in the great contest stood Abraham Lincoln of Illinois. On the third ballot Lincoln was nominated for President and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine was nominated for Vice-President.\(^\text{3}\)

A mass call was sent out in Indiana for a Democratic rally on July 31, and it was announced that Lane, Senator Jesse Bright


\(^{2}\) Earl L. Shoup, \textit{A History of The Vice-Presidency of the United States}, (New York: 1934) 239.

and G. N. Fitch would be present. It had been hoped by Indiana Democrats up to this time that a schism in the party might be avoided, but the meeting, which was held in Indianapolis July 18, to ratify the nomination of Senator Douglas and Herschel Johnson failed to bring in the Breckenridge supporters. The meeting called for July 31 was an endeavor on the part of the Breckenridge Democrats to rally the state behind their candidate.

In the meantime, in reply to formal notification of his nomination as the Vice-Presidential candidate made by Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts, Lane made the following acceptance speech:

Compromises of constitutional principles are ever dangerous, and I am rejoiced that the true Democracy have seen fit to plant a firm foot on the rock of truth, and to give people an opportunity to vindicate their love of justice and fraternal regard for each others' rights. Non-intervention on the subject of slavery is the cardinal maximum of Democracy.

The Democratic party honestly met this agitating question which is threatening to sever and destroy this brotherhood of States. It does not propose to legislate for the extension of slavery nor for the restriction, but to give to each State and to every citizen all that our forefathers proposed to give, viz. perfect equality of rights, and then commit to the people the determinations as to what kind of institutions best fitted their requirements in their constitutional limits, and declaring as a fundamental maxim that the people of a Territory can establish or prohibit slavery when they come to form a constitution preparatory to their admission as a State into the Union.

Our Union must be preserved, but this can only be done by maintaining the Constitution inviolate in all its provisions and guaranties."

On July 14 the Indiana Daily Journal, a Republican paper, announced the organization of a political paper for Lane in Indian-

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1 The Indiana Daily Journal, July 7, 1860.
polis called "The Old Line Guard". Messrs. Elder and Harkness of the "Locomotive" were the publishers, and Judge A. B. Carleton was the editor. The first edition was to appear July 17 and continue until after the election.  

The Old Line Guard printed the following answer to the charge of bolting of the Breckenridge group from the Democratic Party at Baltimore:

Douglas men bolted in 1858 because they preferred principle to a party. Now the Breckenridge men are acting precisely the same way and with the same motive. We are only following your example. If you resist our movement you repudiate your own.  

The Breckenridge meeting was held in Indianapolis July 31. Senator Jesse Bright, Graham N. Fitch, John Pettit, Dr. Sherrod and Judge Eckles were among the leaders. Senator Bright spoke bitterly about Douglas - his manner was even more bitter than his words. No steps were taken to form a state ticket, but it was decided that if the regular candidates avowed themselves for Douglas, steps would be taken to put up another ticket. The meeting was as large as the Douglas group, if not larger. The truth of the matter was that with the Douglas men attending the Breckenridge meeting with no good intentions, and the Breckenridge men attending the Douglas meeting with the same idea, it was impossible to know the true attendance of the separ-

1The Indiana Daily Journal, July 14, 1860.  
2Ibid., July 30, 1860.  
3Ibid., August 1, 1860.
Lane was unable to attend in person due to illness, but he wrote a letter from Riley, North Carolina, to Dr. Sherrod to be read at the meeting.

I hope the Democracy of Indiana, which has so proudly, heretofore, rallied in the defense of the Constitution and the equal rights of the States, may again march in a solid united column against the common enemy. I am sure Indiana is not Black Republican at heart, and that my old friends with whom I have fought side by side so many battles for constitutional rights, will rally at the present important crisis in our political affairs to the support of the Constitution and the Union, which are now placed in peril by a powerful Northern Sectional Party. Though I cannot be with you and my friends in Indiana at present, my heart and warmest wishes are with you and the good cause for which you are all fighting.

In the course of Lane's campaign for election, he made a personal appearance in Indianapolis on September 17. He was serenaded by the crowd as he appeared on the balcony of W. H. Talbott Esq.'s house, prominent Indiana Democrat. Lane claimed to be the candidate of the National Democratic Party, because he did not believe that the followers of Douglas were wholehearted members of the Democratic party. He felt that they were sectional Democrats in opposition to the Southern bloc and this difference in the respective attitudes on slavery had caused a split in the Party. He made the following statements:

It has been charged that the party with which I have the honor to act, designed to employ the Federal Government for the propagation of slavery. This I deny. I deny that the National Democratic Party desires to propagate slavery.

Ibid.; August 1, 1860.
in the Territories. To concede this would be to concede that I belong to a sectional party — as sectional as the Republican. I declare that the party with which I act is neither an anti-slavery party nor a pro-slavery party. It is simply and purely a constitutional party.

I am for the rights of all the States, and I will do all in my power to preserve those rights. I have battled and always will battle against any interference on the part of Congress with the subject of slavery. It is a subject with which Congress has nothing to do.

Mr. Lincoln's election would be the greatest calamity that could possibly befall the country.¹

Lane preferred to believe that if Lincoln was elected it would be final proof that the North intended to deprive the South of her constitutional rights in the Union, and that, therefore, she could not be blamed for defending herself. He felt that the North was unjust and unwise to deny the right of the Southerners to settle in the Territories with their slaves. He contended that it was a Union of equal right, and that this equality must be maintained. Lane said that the only way to avert dissolution was to admit slave states.

... No one, in my opinion, who is at all informed as to the frame work of our government can conclude that the Federal government has the constitutional power to use force against a State for resuming the power which it delegated to the general government when its rights have been infringed or equality refused; or if the government had the power that it would be wise or prudent to use it. The Union was not formed by force, nor can it be maintained by force. It was a voluntary Union of sovereign states, and whenever the rights of any of them shall be infringed or equality refused, and they find it necessary and desire to part, there is no power that can keep them together, or that should attempt it.²

This was not Lane's attitude concerning slavery earlier

¹Indiana Daily Journal, September 19, 1860.
²Indiana State Sentinel, November 28, 1860. (Letter written by Lane from Washington, D. C., November 20, 1860).
in his career. In 1851 Lane had said that he was in favor of each and everyone of the Compromise measures of 1850, and would have voted for them if he had been a member of Congress. One of these measures stated that all cases arising which involved title to slave property should be referred to the Supreme Court. To that Tribunal then, was left the question of the legality of slavery in the new territories. Another measure forbid slavery in the District of Columbia. This shows that Lane had changed his viewpoint and become definitely pro-southern in his sympathies.

The result of the election was not surprising to the people of Indiana. It was generally felt that Senator Bright’s efforts to swing the election to Breckenridge were due more to his personal hatred of Douglas than to the fact that he was a pro-slavery man. The two Democratic tickets between them only carried 12 of the 31 participating states, had combined only 84 of the total electoral votes of 303. Of the two, the Douglas ticket got by far the greater number of popular votes, 1,376,957 as compared to 849,781 for Breckenridge - but received only 12 electoral votes as compared to 72 for the Southern ticket. In Indiana, the popular vote was as follows: Lincoln, 139,033; Douglas, 115,509; Breckenridge, 12,294. Lane received 136,725

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2Kent, op. cit., p. 197.
3Esarey, op. cit., II, p. 662.
votes, almost as many as Mr. Lincoln. The Oregon Statesman published a private letter of Lane's, which had been written to a
cousin on December 14, 1860, giving his convictions as to the
future policy of the South as a result of the election of Lincoln:

... and if they cannot have them (rights and equality)
in the Union, (and that is quite manifest) they will go out,
and, if need be, defend them at the point of a bayonet; and
when the day shall come, I, with thousands of good northern
men, will be by their side. ... No, the South must act
and act promptly, and go out of a Confederacy that refuses
justice and equality. ... This is my birthday. I am now 59 years of age. My life
has been an eventful one, and unless coercion shall be taken
toward the states that may secede, I shall retire from public
life. My heart is upon it, and nothing but the cry of war
shall divert me from my purpose, but while I live, I shall
stand by the right.

Joseph Lane

Lane continued to fight with all his might for the rights
of the South, making speeches throughout the rest of his term as
Senator. His pro-slavery attitude ended his political career. The
people of Oregon no longer supported him. They felt that Lane
had deserted them for Southern interests. His last term as senator
ended March 4, 1861, and he returned to Oregon to spend the rest
of his life in retirement.

1The Oregon Statesman, March 11, 1860.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The retirement of Joseph Lane from the United States Senate in 1861 closed his political career. He returned to Oregon on the same boat bringing news of the firing on Fort Sumter, in April, 1861.

An episode of peculiar interest of his later life belongs to legend rather than history.\(^1\) According to popular account, there is a story of Lane's plan along with a group of other Western men, to separate the Pacific states and create an independent republic in case the South seceded and the North brought force to bear.\(^2\) The fact was that Lane was too much the political realist to undertake the dismemberment of the Union.

Lane's friends were refused permission to give him a salute of honor in Portland when he arrived home. To some of the people of Oregon, he was a secessionist.

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\(^2\) Newton, op. cit., p. 50, quoting Oregon Statesman, December 10, 1860: "He and a group of other western Congressional leaders conceived the idea of making a new republic that might join in with the South or preferentially, it might be entirely independent and set up on the Pacific Coast. When he returned to Oregon he brought ammunition to carry out the plans that had been maturing at least since September, 1853. But his old friend, Jesse Applegate, talked him out of such a plan, and he retired to a farm near Roseburg."
... The people, in thinking that the General had betrayed them, broke the old General's heart. All the papers other than Whig papers had been suppressed in Oregon. There was not a paper in Oregon that the General could use to put his ideas before the public. Broken hearted, he sold his "Black Mud" farm below Roseburg, bought land ten miles out of Roseburg up in the mountains, and retired from public life, except to make public speeches upon any occasion that offered. He was still the idol of the people, both Republican and Democrat who were not Lincolnites. Ovations to the General in the late Sixties and Seventies, according to the press, were numerous and huge crowds gathered whenever the old man appeared in public.¹

General Lane was one of the ablest and most vivid personalities of his time. He was about five feet nine inches tall; his complexion was ruddy, his eyes hazel, and his hair dark and inclined to curl. His conversational powers were extraordinary. He was generally considered an independent thinker on public questions.

The following tribute was paid Lane by George H. Williams, who later became Senator from Oregon:

I was well acquainted, though not intimate with Lane. I have never known a man in Oregon to whom the Latin maxim, 'Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re' (gentle in manners, brave in deed) could with more propriety be applied. He had all the essential qualifications of a successful politician, and if he had not been so imbued with a desire to extend slavery, might, in all human probability, have represented Oregon in the Senate as long as he lived. He was intensely southern in all his feelings and sympathies, a devoted friend to Jefferson Davis, and opposed to coercive measures to preserve the Union. I sincerely believe he was wrong and opposed him upon that ground, but it is due his memory to say that he had, what many shifty politicians have not, the courage of his convictions, and he stood by them to the bitter end.²

¹Faubion, op. cit., December 15, 1941.
²George H. Williams, "Oregon Historical Events", The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, II, (1901)
Lane passed away April 19, 1881, in Roseburg, Oregon, and was interred in the Masonic Cemetery there.

Lane was a pioneer of Indiana, a gallant soldier and the man who did most to fashion the Oregon Territory into a state. He fought sincerely and courageously for his convictions. He was not afraid to speak his thoughts frankly at a time when many politicians tried to straddle the issues of slavery. No history of either Indiana or Oregon can be written without honorable mention of his name.

The Indiana State Sentinel of April 22, 1881, carried this last tribute to Lane upon his death:

General Joseph Lane

Indiana may claim with fairness the honor of dividing with Oregon something of the reputation and fair and honorable career of the old hero whose name heads this brief tribute to his memory. He was a brave, honest representative American of the old school and a thorough Democrat during his long and creditable career.¹

¹Indiana State Sentinel, April 22, 1881.
APPENDIX

Joseph Lane was the father of ten children, four daughters and six sons. Nathaniel Lane, the oldest son, became captain of a Mississippi river boat that ran to New Orleans. He went west with his father and assisted him as Indian Agent after taking a whirl at mining en route. In the gold fields he cleared about fifty thousand dollars, which he and his father shared, and with which bought a saw mill at Oregon City. After this fortune was swept aside by a flood, Captain Lane became one of the leading merchants of East Portland and served on the board of Columbia River Pilots.

Ratcliff Lane died of one of the most dreaded diseases of the time, yellow fever.

Joseph Lane, Jr., after having fought in the Mexican War with his father, bought some property and ran a successful ranching business, after which he ventured into mining with his brother Simon, who was a rancher, miner and merchant, and they owned what is now called the Pioneer mine, near Bandon, Oregon.

Colonel John Lane left West Point at the outbreak of the Rebellion, served under General Lee, joined the Knights of the Golden Circle later and, as the General wrote in one of his letters, "came home a very badly whipped boy." It cost the General quite

1Personal letter from Nina Lane Faubion, great granddaughter of General Joseph Lane, Bates, Oregon, December 15, 1941.
a large sum to free John from the Yankees. Later Colonel John
Lane ran a hotel in Idaho.

His youngest son, Lafayette Lane, was a brilliant
lawyer, and served the State of Oregon by aiding in the framing
of the constitution of that state and later in the State Legis-
lature.

Captain Nathaniel Hart Lane was the father of the late
Senator Harry Lane of Oregon. Harry Lane was a physician and
surgeon and later senator from Oregon. Nina Lane Faubion is
his daughter.

Mary Lane married into the Shelby family of Evansville
and had a very distinguished son, Eugene Shelby, who headed the
western division of the Wells Fargo Company for many years.

There were three other daughters, Millisa, Emily and
Winifred. All of the children of General Lane and his wife,
Polly, were born in Indiana near Evansville.¹

¹Ibid., December 15, 1941.
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