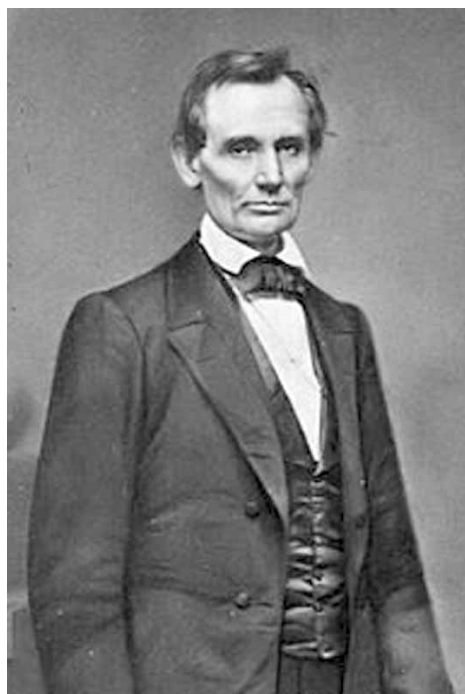


# Edward Dickinson Baker: Organizing the Republican Party on the Pacific Coast

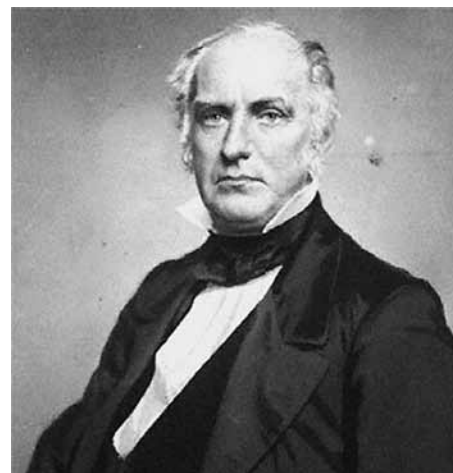
by Andrea Ingraham

*The subject of this article is Edward Dickinson Baker, arguably Abraham Lincoln's closest friend and political ally. What makes this story critically important is the battle that President Donald Trump is now waging to create a new political majority in the United States, with the life and principles of Abraham Lincoln as his guidepost. This is most clearly enunciated in Trump's September 17 [speech](#) at the National Archives, as well as in his September 22nd [Executive Order](#). Edward Baker's efforts in California and Oregon, between 1852 and 1860, are compelling in their relevance to the political and cultural fight of today.*



Mathew Brady

*Abraham Lincoln on Feb. 27, 1860, the day of his Cooper Union speech. Three months later, the Republican Party nominated him to be its Presidential Candidate.*



Col. Edwin D. Baker

*Edward Dickinson Baker, Lincoln's best friend and collaborator, led the fight on the west coast to organize the Republican Party.*

Sept. 25—As *EIR* has recently documented,<sup>1</sup> in the 1850s Abraham Lincoln led a brilliant and successful effort to organize the new Republican Party in Illinois, as a real answer to the chaos existing in the United States. Simultaneous with Lincoln's efforts, his best friend and collaborator, Edward Dickinson Baker, led a parallel fight on the west coast of the United States. At that time Oregon and California were both new states, with California attaining statehood in 1850 and Oregon in 1859. Both were also experiencing explosive population growth, with Oregon going from only 12,000

1. See the [article](#), "How Abraham Lincoln Created the Republican Party," by Robert Ingraham, *EIR*, Vol. 47, No. 37, September 11, 2020, pp. 43-49.

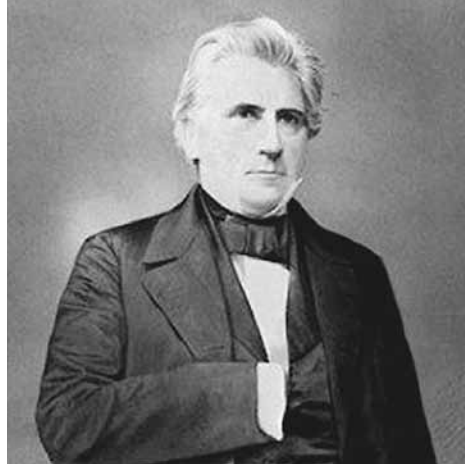
people in 1850 to 52,000 in 1860, and California growing from 93,000 to 380,000 during that same decade.

Politically, in the 1850s, California and Oregon were dominated by a virulent pro-slavery wing of the Democratic Party, and the breakdown of political parties and descent into chaos and violence was as intense, or more so, than anywhere else in the country. California politics was dominated by the southern-minded Democrats under the direction of sometime Senator William McKeendree Gwin, a slave owner from Mississippi; and in Oregon, Joe Lane from North Carolina was Territorial Governor, and later U.S. Senator. This pro-slavery clique maintained its power in both places due to the Federal patronage of the Pierce and Buchanan administrations.

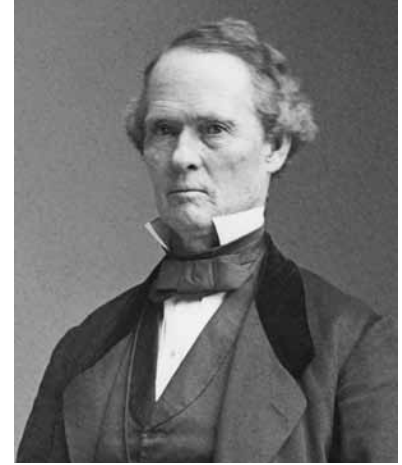
In California, David C. Broderick, a New Yorker and Free-Soil Democrat, led an heroic battle for control of the Democratic Party and for defining a new political direction. When Broderick was elected to the U.S.



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Mississippi Department of Archives and History



Brady-Handy collection

*The pro-slavery clique of William Gwinn (center, in California) and Joseph Lane (right, in Oregon) maintained its power in both places due to the Federal patronage of the Pierce and Buchanan administrations. They denounced David C. Broderick (left), who agitated, unsuccessfully, for an anti-slavery direction within the California Democratic Party.*

Senate in 1857, he proved his moral courage by denouncing the Buchanan administration, which he had helped to elect, over the question of the fraudulent pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution of Kansas. This led to bitter denunciations of him from the Gwin wing of the party in California, and a split into what became known as the Lecompton Democrats, a.k.a. the Administration Democrats, vs. the Broderick “Anti-Lecompton” Democrats. The sad culmination came in September of 1859 when, after a highly acrimonious election campaign, the Broderick wing was defeated and Broderick himself was murdered in a duel at the hand of a leading southern Democrat a week later.

While most people in the West did not intend to own slaves, they fell prey, as today, to the popular narratives promoted by leading newspapers and Democratic politicians. Then it was “avoiding the slavery agitation,” by promoting laws to ban all blacks, and similar approaches, appealing to people’s prejudices and economic uncertainty. This laid the groundwork for the proposal of a separate “Pacific Republic,” which would be promoted by the end of the decade in the face of looming southern secession.

In 1848, Baker and Lincoln had both written to President Zachary Taylor, requesting that Baker be appointed the Whig representative to organize the Whig Party in the newly acquired California territory. That job was instead given to a southern Whig. Baker then emigrated with his family to California in 1852 and immediately undertook organizing the rough, mostly young male population on many fronts. He was re-

nowned as a captivating speaker, one who could sway even a hostile crowd. He was a lifelong follower of Socrates, and applied that method, drawing out the best in people in any forum, be that public speeches, jury arguments, funeral orations, campaign speeches, recruiting military regiments, speeches in Congress, or debates in the Senate. These efforts built the foundation for what would become Republican victories in 1860 and continuing through the Civil War.

### California

In 1855 Baker ran for State Senate on the Whig ticket and lost, the Whig Party generally disappearing that year. The following year he campaigned up and down California for the first Republican Presidential campaign slate. Under the banner “Free speech, free press, free territory and the Pacific Railroad,” he stumped the mining towns and along the coast. On August 30, he addressed a large crowd at Marysville. The Marysville *Daily Herald* reported:

For two hours and a half he held the immense audience spellbound. Ever and anon he drew forth, even from his adversaries in the crowd, the unmistakable evidence of his power as a public speaker—for even they could not help joining the Republicans in their shouts of acclaim.... The peroration was sublime beyond description. The “Apostrophe to the Spirit of Liberty” ... completely carried away the vast auditory, and simultaneously they burst out in loud and long applause.

Baker's itinerary for October included Camptonville, Yuba County, October 18; Marysville, Yuba County, October 20; Auburn, Placer County, October 21; Stockton, San Joaquin County, October 25; Sonora, Tuolumne County, October 27; and Columbia, Tuolumne County, October 28. Baker traveled these many miles on horseback, on mountainous dirt roads.

At Camptonville it was reported, "for more than two hours he held the largest audience ever assembled in this place, to listen to a political address, chained and enchanted by the power of his eloquence." And so it went, place after place.

Baker was also attacked by the pro-slavery Administration Democrats, with the *Marysville Express* denouncing him as an ultra-abolitionist and an enemy to the institutions of the country.

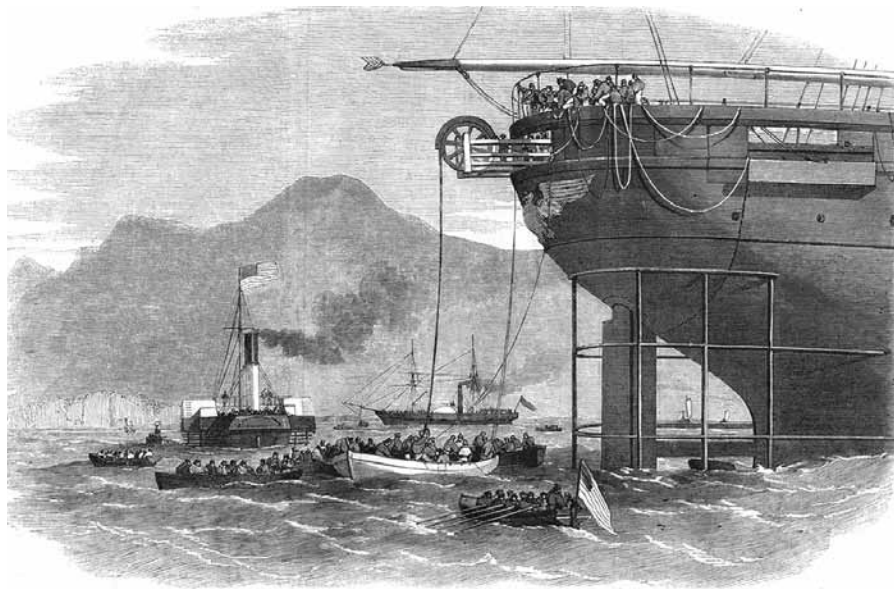
The November 4, 1856 election was a Democratic sweep in California: For President, James Buchanan won with 52,000 votes, with Millard Fillmore, running as a Know-Nothing, receiving 35,000 votes and John C. Frémont, the Republican, 30,000. Two Democrats were elected to Congress and the state legislature was completely Democratic. But after only one year of existence, the Republican Party was now a force to be reckoned with, largely due to Baker's efforts.

### The Atlantic Cable Address

In September 1858, celebrations were held all over the country on the occasion of the completion of the first telegraph cable across the Atlantic in August. San Francisco was no exception, and Baker was the featured speaker at a mass rally and parade on September 27. In this address, which includes his oft quoted apostrophe to science, his knowledge of, and love of science shines forth. He noted that there had never been such an expression of popular delight as on this occasion, and painted a profoundly optimistic picture of the future and the unique role the Pacific Coast would play, where "all people and all tongues shall meet," and thereby "form a more perfect civilization":

The transmission of intelligence by electric forces is perhaps the most striking of all the manifestations of human power in compelling the elements to the service of man.... Nowhere in the history of man is the power of Art—action directed by Science—knowledge systematized—so signally and beautifully obvious....

O Science, thou thought-clad leader of the company of pure and great souls, that toil for their race and love their kinds! measurer of the depths of earth and the recesses of heaven! apostle of civilization, handmaid of religion,



*The Illustrated London News*  
*Paying out the land end of the Atlantic Cable from the stern of the USS Niagara, 1857.*

teacher of human equality and human right, perpetual witness for the Divine wisdom—be ever, as now, the great minister of peace. Let thy starry brow and benign front still gleam in the van of progress, brighter than the sword of the conqueror, and welcome as the light of heaven!...

Yet, more than this, we turn with wonder and delight, to behold on every hand the results of scientific method everywhere visible and everywhere increasing; but amid that wonder and delight we turn to a still greater wonder—the human mind itself! Who shall now stay its progress? What shall impede its career?...

But, amid all these wonders, it is obvious that

we stand upon the threshold of new discoveries, and at the entrance to a more imperial dominion. The history of the last three hundred years has been a history of successive advances, each more wonderful than the last....

There is no reason to believe that the procession will be stayed, or the music of its march be hushed; on the contrary, the world is radiant with hope, and all the signs in earth and heaven are full of promise to the race. Happy are we to whom it is given to share and spread these blessings; happier yet if we shall transmit the great trust committed to our care undimmed and unbroken to succeeding generations.

I have spoken of three hundred years past—dare I imagine three hundred years to come? It is a period very far beyond the life of the individual man; it is but a span in the history of a nation, throughout the changing generations of mental life. The men grow old and die, the community remains, the nation survives. As we transmit our institutions, so we shall transmit our blood and our names to future ages and populations. What multitudes shall throng these shores, what cities shall gem the borders of the sea! *Here all people and all tongues shall meet. Here shall be a more perfect civilization, a more thorough intellectual development, a firmer faith, a more reverent worship.*

California already had the most ethnically diverse, multi-lingual population in the world. But how many recognized that this would lead to a more perfect civilization? How many could imagine 300 years into the future? He ended:

Perhaps, as we look back to the struggle of an earlier age, and mark the steps of our ancestors in the career we have traced, so some thoughtful man of letters in ages yet to come, may bring to



*Abraham Lincoln speaks in a debate with Stephen Douglas, seated on his right.*

light the history of this shore or of this day. I am sure, fellow-citizens, that whoever shall hereafter read it, will perceive that our pride and joy are dimmed by no stain of selfishness. Our pride is for humanity; our joy is for the world; and amid all the wonders of past achievement and all the splendors of present success, we turn with swelling hearts to gaze into the boundless future, with the earnest conviction that it will develop a universal brotherhood of man.<sup>2</sup>

### **The 1859 Campaign**

At the time of Baker's Atlantic Cable Address, Lincoln was debating Douglas in Illinois, while the battle over Kansas was raging in the Congress. President Buchanan had endorsed the fraudulently contrived pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution for Kansas, proclaiming that slavery existed in Kansas by virtue of the Constitution. David Broderick, now a Democratic U.S. Senator from California, had fiercely denounced President Buchanan's efforts to bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state. By the end of 1858, the California Democratic Party had split, convening two separate conventions, into what would become known as the Lecompton or Administration Democrats vs the Anti-Lecompton Democrats. It was at a Lecompton Democratic Convention in June of 1859 that Supreme Court Justice David

2. As reprinted in *Masterpieces of E.D. Baker*, Oscar T. Shuck, edit., Published by the Editor, San Francisco, 1899.

Terry set the trap for Broderick that would lead to a fatal duel.

When the Republican state convention met in Sacramento on June 8, Baker led the fight for a unity ticket with the Anti-Lecompton Broderick Democrats. He was defeated in this when the majority of Republicans demanded a straight party ticket.

On June 29, Baker was the featured speaker, kicking off the campaign at a Republican mass meeting in Petaluma. Baker spent much of the speech, and succeeding speeches of that campaign, reaching out to the Anti-Lecomptons to join with them.

Identifying himself as a Republican now, and a Whig formerly, he vehemently attacked the tyranny of the Buchanan Administration and praised the Broderick Democrats for standing up to that tyranny:

I am a candidate for Congress expecting to be beaten. [Laughter] ...

I feel that I am doing something to unite the public sentiment of which I have spoken against the tyranny of the power at Washington. I am in that sense an Anti-Lecompton man and of that organization—yet a Republican at the same time. I bid, in that view, God speed to all Anti-Lecompton men and say: Hurrah for you! You are doing nobly! You have come out from amongst them; you have given up chances for honor, place, and power.... I know and praise what McKibbin and Broderick, our Representatives in Congress, have done. I wish them God speed, and if I really believed my running for Congress would be in their way for a moment, I would get out of it before that moment expired.

On his conception of the Republican Party he elaborated:

The history, the poetry, the invention, the literature, the learning of this Union is Republican. The books your children read and your grandchildren will read are Republican. The inventions that give beauty to your hearths and brilliancy to your homes are the inventions of Republicans. The stimulus that Republican inventions give to free labor serves you with uncounted blessings. The men who do great deeds

and those who record them are alike Republican.... And the great men of the past, whether Homer, who said: “When you make a man a slave you take away half his value”; or all others good and wise, from Cicero, Plato and Demosthenes to Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Clay and Webster—all the noblest thoughts—“Thoughts that breathe and words that burn”—that fell from their lips were wrote for freedom. Who ever wrote a poem to slavery? [laughter] There have been men venal enough, amid the perfume of proud courts, to sing praises to monarchs and princes, but never a man base enough to write a poem to slavery. [cheers]

### Principles Shall Prevail

After reiterating that others may be elected in his stead, he stated his real purpose:

But at last when I am dead—when principles shall prevail—.... these thoughts will remain. They will go forward and conquer; they are gathering now into a stream; they are spreading into a rushing, bolding and bounding river; they are controlling men’s minds; they are maturing lives; they are kindling men’s words; they are freeing men’s souls; and as surely as the great procession of Heaven’s host above us moves east in its appointed plan and orbit, so surely shall the proud principles of human right and freedom prevail.—[cheers] I may not be there to witness that great glory; I may not see the great edifice of the American Republic placed upon so firm and stable a basis that no recreant hand can rise to shake it.

He concluded:

In that day when the names of the great, the wise, and the good are called, will not some generous comrade, remembering this hour and this sacrifice when my name shall be mentioned—half forgotten though I be—remembering I did my best in my day and my generation say of me as was said of another soldier in another struggle: “fallen upon the field of honor!”<sup>3</sup>

3. *Sacramento Daily Union*, July 2, 1859.

Reiterating those themes, Baker would speak at more than twenty meetings and rallies throughout the state in the following two months, from San Francisco, to Columbia, where 3,000 gathered, to Chinese Camp to Dutch Flat. On July 8, at Musical Hall in San Francisco, he added a lengthy history of the Democratic Party, asking how it became so strong, and why, “when coupled with slavery, it is now so weak”? He ended that speech with praise of Broderick and the Anti-Lecompton Democrats:

I see that the Anti-Lecompton men are opposing the Administration; they agree with me in this, and if they are going anywhere else I am very much deceived. I have a better opinion of their leader—their leader Broderick—I read that in his last speech, I read it in his votes in Congress. He may not be eloquent, in the usual sense of the word, but he is direct, firm, honest, unwavering, unfaltering.... He is the Richard Coeur de Lion, who, with his battle ax, cut down everything that dared to cross his path or meet him face to face. [Cheers.] He illustrated from Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, where “although the Giant fought strong and lustily, yet, strong in the cause of right, Great Heart conquered.” And so I verily believe will Broderick, the Great heart of the Anti-Lecompton party, ... will conquer the half way opposition of a Despair, or a more full opposition of our Lecomptonism, until he reaches the great goal of the ambition of every American. [Loud Cheers.]<sup>4</sup>

### **The Broderick Oration**

On September 16, 1859 Democratic Senator David Broderick was murdered in a duel, at the hand of David Terry, a leading Democrat. Two days later it was the Republican Edward Baker who would deliver the lengthy oration over his body at a mass gathering in Portsmouth Square:

What was his public crime? The answer is in his own words: “I die because I was opposed to a corrupt administration, and the extension of slavery!” Fellow citizens, they are remarkable words, uttered at a very remarkable moment;

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4. *Sacramento Daily Union*, July 15, 1859.

they involve the history of his senatorial career, and of its sad and bloody termination.

Baker reviewed this senatorial history, and how he had stood up to the Buchanan Administration:

When in his judgement the President betrayed his obligations to his party and country—when, in the whole series of acts in relation to Kansas, he proved recreant to his pledges and instructions—when the whole power of the Administration was brought to bear upon the legislative branch of the Government, in order to force slavery upon an unwilling people—then, in the high performance of his duty as a Senator, he rebuked the Administration by his voice and vote, and stood by his principles. It is true, he adopted no halfway measures. He threw the whole weight of his character into the ranks of the opposition. He endeavored to arouse the people to an indignant sense of the iniquitous tyranny of Federal power, and kindling with the contest, became its fiercest and firmest opponent. Fellow citizens, whatever may have been your political predilections, it is impossible to repress your admiration, as you review the conduct of the man who lies hushed in death before you....

He concluded:

But, fellow citizens, the voice of lamentation is not uttered by private friendship alone—the blow that struck his manly breast has touched the heart of a people, and as the sad tidings spread, a general gloom prevails. Who now shall speak for California? Who be the interpreter of the wants of the Pacific Coast? Who can appeal to the communities of the Atlantic who love free labor? Who can speak for masses of men with a passionate love for the classes from whence he sprung? Who can defy the blandishments of power, the insolence of office, the corruption of administrations? What hopes are buried with him in the grave?

But the last word must be spoken, and the imperious mandate of Death must be fulfilled. Thus, O brave heart! we bear thee to thy rest. Thus, surrounded by tens of thousands, we

leave thee to the equal grave. As in life, no other voice among us so rung its trumpet blast upon the ear of freemen, so in death its echoes will reverberate amid our mountains and valleys, until truth and valor cease to appeal to the human heart.

Good friend! True hero! Hail and farewell.

Baker's eulogy of Broderick would become, as one contemporary described it, "a rapier that split the Democratic party beyond hope of reconciliation in the 1860 election."

## Oregon

In the autumn of 1859, Oregon, which had become a state that year, was overwhelmingly Democratic. Its rabidly pro-slavery and pro-states' rights Senator, Joe Lane, would soon become the Vice-Presidential running mate of John Breckinridge. Some emigrants from the south had brought slaves into Oregon with them. But a split in the Democratic Party was occurring, similar to what had happened in California.

Meanwhile, a small group, led by Illinoisans, had formed a Republican Party. Dr. Anson Henry, a friend of Lincoln and Baker from Illinois and later Lincoln's personal physician at the White House, led an effort to persuade Baker to move to Oregon and apply his oratorical magic toward turning the state Republican. Another key figure was Simeon Francis, editor of *The Oregonian*. Formerly the editor of the Springfield, Illinois *State Journal*, he was long an ally of Lincoln and Baker.

Baker moved to Oregon in February of 1860, and on April 19, he was officially asked to stump the state in the coming canvass. A few days later, in Salem, he advised the Republicans of Marion County to hold off nominating a ticket, saying:

The canvass will drive into opposition those Democrats who are really with us in principle, whereas, if we fall in with them at the election they will almost be compelled to unite with us to save themselves from defeat by the friends of the Buchanan Administration.

Thus he campaigned for the Republican principles and program, not candidates. He covered a large part of the state, mostly on horseback or wagon, sometimes by

river steamer. On May 5 he spoke in Portland; May 7, Astoria, 100 miles downstream; May 8 St. Helens; May 9 Lafayette; May 16 Corvallis and Brownsville; May 17 Harrisburg; May 19 Eugene. Later in the month he spoke in The Dalles, 200 miles east. In the words of a contemporary:

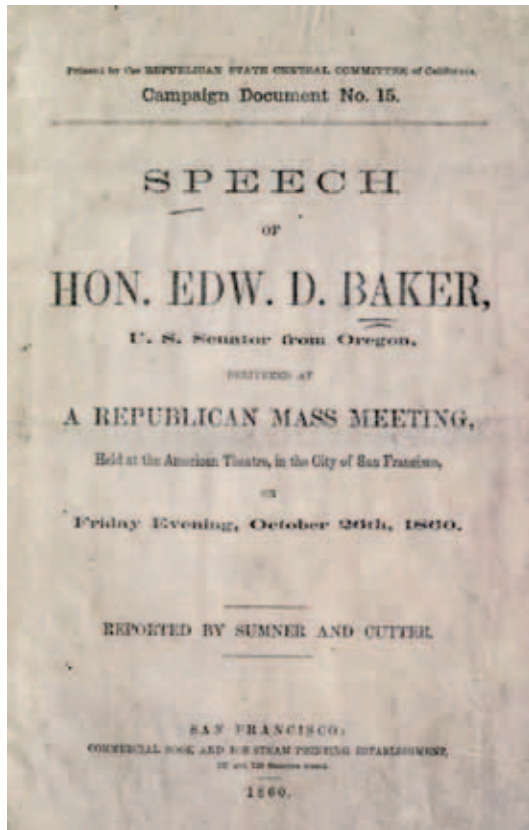
A great change came over the country after the advent of the Colonel [Baker]. For the accommodation of the people who came to see him, he had to keep open house, and this being insufficient, a part of the day, he held court at the largest hotel in town [Salem], and in a few weeks had seen and captured all who met him, and knew more of the social and political condition of the state than any man in it.

In a June 5 legislative election, the Administration Democrats elected 19 legislators, the Douglas Democrats 18, and the Republicans 13. The Republican Party, which heretofore was insignificant, now held the balance of power.

## Uniting the Pro-Union Forces

After this election, Baker returned to San Francisco to help organize the Republican campaign for Lincoln there. Lincoln had been nominated for President at the Republican national convention in May. Baker wrote to congratulate Lincoln and brief him on the new prospects for victory on the west coast, on the possibility of a Republican Senator from Oregon and possibly California:

I am happy my old friend to write you a letter on such a subject, the reward that fidelity and courage find in your person will infuse hope in many sinking bosoms, and new energy in many bold hearts. As I write I am reminded of a great many things in our earlier career, which in the events lately thronging around you, you may scarcely remember. I am proud as a personal friend and a party man to feel that among them all, there has been nothing which would not confirm my loyalty as a partisan and my confidence as friend. You will not wonder that in the great distinction you have won and the great usefulness which I believe awaits you, I feel an interest which later friends can hardly know. The seed which you



*Edward Baker's 'American Theater' speech. A few days later, Lincoln carried California and Oregon.*

planted in the fields we tilled together ripens in the sunshine of your later life, at a great distance. I rejoice in the luxuriance of the harvest. My whole heart is with you in the great battle, if we win here, my whole soul will go out in the struggle.

In Oregon he succeeded in doing what he had attempted in California the previous year: uniting the pro-Union Democrats with the Republicans. Despite an attempt by a band of Lecomptonite Democrats to prevent a quorum of the State Senate by hiding out in a barn, they were discovered, forced back to their seats, and on October 2, 1860, the Republican Baker and the Douglas Democrat James Nesmith were elected to the United States Senate.

On October 6, an editorial in the *Oregon Argus* quoted Baker:

Republicans of Oregon! You have achieved a glorious victory! Pursue the retreating enemy,

and in November the Republican Star will blaze over both of the new states of the Pacific Coast!

Shortly thereafter Baker left for Washington D.C., via San Francisco.

### The American Theater Speech

On October 19, the ship carrying the Bakers steamed into San Francisco Bay, greeted by a hundred-gun salute at Fort Point and a tumultuous crowd at the wharf. A week later, at the American Theater in San Francisco, Baker would deliver perhaps the greatest public speech of his life. It would swing California for Lincoln two weeks later and play a major part in keeping California in the Union. People came from around the state. Stores and offices closed early. The crowd began gathering by afternoon. By seven o'clock there were 12,000 present, while the theater held only 4,000. When the presiding officer introduced "the Honorable Edward D. Baker, United States Senator from the State of Oregon," people jumped from their seats, cheering, waving. They seemed to forget they had defeated him the year before.

After preliminary greetings, Baker first tackled the accusation that the Republicans were a sectional party:

They used to say that we were a sectional party.... I saw a letter last week from a very honest and a very good man by the name of Abraham Lincoln [tremendous applause], and he, in thus communicating with a friend, said that it was very queer he should be called sectional by certain politicians when it was a fact that he got more votes from the South in the Chicago Convention than Judge Douglas did in the Baltimore convention. "Yet the party to which I belong is said to be sectional while that of Judge Douglas claims to be national." ... Whose fault is it? You won't let us go down South and make Republicans or we would soon have a host of converts in that latitude....

Who, then, is national? Breckinridge will get no State at the North, and the Bell and Everett men say he will get none at the South. [laughter].... Freedom can't be sectional; it must be national.... If we are not yet represented in every State, whose fault is it? [laughter] If it is sectional not to get many votes in one section, how many will Breckinridge get in New

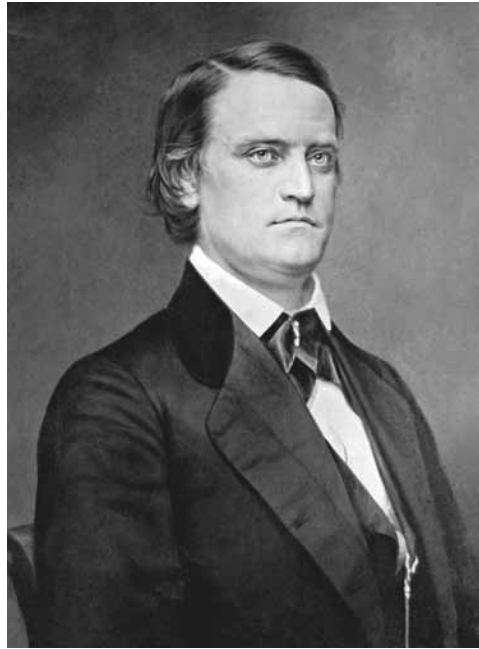


York? All he will get there will be by pretending not to run. [laughter] How many votes will he get in Illinois? Will he get half as many votes in Illinois as Lincoln will in Missouri?...

Southern people claim the right to go wherever they choose with their property. I say in reply that the Negro is not property in the general sense; he is property only in a sort of qualified sense. A Negro can be property only in the face of the common law, humanity, religion, literature, and philosophy—for all these claim that black or white, rich or poor, high or low, “*a man’s a man for a’ that.*” [great cheering.] It is true that there are certain compromises of the Constitution affecting this question, which we all agree to abide by; but we deny that the Negro is by common law a slave. He is such slave only by local law; and we say, catch him where you can, keep him where you can, hold him where you can; but when he gets away from your local law, he is free, by every instinct of humanity, and every principle of the common law. [Applause.] We deny, then, that he is “property” which you have a right to take into the Territories, and you shall not carry him there against the common sentiment of the men among whom you go. Is not that fair? Can you overcome the argument? [Applause.]

**Freedom**

The normal condition of the Territories is freedom. Stand on the edge of the Sierra Nevadas, or upon the brow of any eminence looking down into the Territories



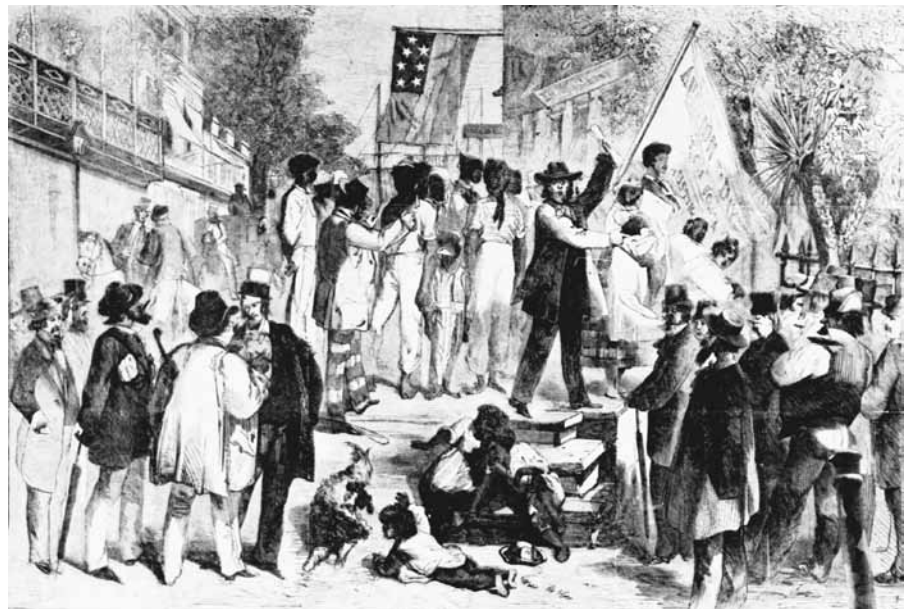
Mathew Brady

*John C. Breckinridge, the Democratic party’s candidate for President in 1860.*

beyond, and what do you behold?... Western man goes into the Territories with his family, his horses, his oxen, his ax and other implements of labor. The Southern man goes with his slave. The Western man says, “I can’t work by the side of the slave—he degrades my free labor.” And the Irishman or German (who don’t go South to find employment) says, “I can’t work by the side of the slave either—it degrades my labor.” ... But the Southern man says, “No, you don’t! I’ve got the Dred Scott decision in my pocket, which holds that neither Congress nor the Territorial Legislature, nor any human power can remove human slavery from the Territories; that it goes there pro-

ected by the Constitution of the United States, and there it must remain; and now, therefore, I tell you Irishman, and German, and Western man, that your ideas of popular sovereignty and free labor are all humbug!”

So says the slave-owner. Now, you Douglas Democrats, what are you going to do about this? Some of



Harper’s Weekly/Theodore R. Davis

*“A Slave Auction in the South,” July 13, 1861.*



Edward D. Baker, 1860.

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Mathew Brady

President Abraham Lincoln, 1863.

you say you don't care. I say you do care, for you can't help caring; first, because you are a man, and you feel that whatever affects humanity affects you. It is absurd to say that you don't care. There are four million slaves, and they are increasing. The fell influence of slavery is paralyzing the interests of freedom and free labor, and checking the advance of the whole country. It denies us legislation; it defe ats our Pacific Railroad, and withholds the daily overland mail.... What will you Douglas men do? Will you hear the music of the march of freedom, and stand idly by, or turn a deaf ear? We have the right and duty thus lawfully and peacefully to reverse a decision which puts a construction upon the Constitution that is higher than the Constitution itself, especially when that decision relates to personal liberty. I say that a decision which claims that by the Constitution slavery goes everywhere the flag goes, there to be and remain forever, is treason against human hope. [Tremendous applause.] You Douglas men, you will vote for popular sovereignty, will you? Now, how will you do it? What State will you carry? Perhaps California [cries of "No, No!"] and Missouri. [Missouri was in fact the only state Douglas carried.] What good will that do you? You can accomplish nothing. Come to us, then, and we will do you good.

There are people who talk as though we Republicans were doing the South some grievous wrong. How? When? Where? They forget that freedom and free labor

are the great interests of the country. There are only about 270,000 white men who have a direct interest in human slavery. Will legislating, then, for 30 million of free white men, instead of for the exclusive interest of 270,000, be a cause for disunion? There are poor white men in the South as well as in the North, who have an interest in this question of free labor, and we stand for the interests of free labor everywhere the world over, wherever a bright eye sparkles, or a bright idea gives forth its light!

### **Our Light Cannot Be Hid**

We are a city set on a hill.

Our light cannot be hid. The prayers and tears and hopes and sighs of all good men are with us, of us, for us. [Applause.] As for me, I dare not, I will not be false to freedom! [Applause.] Where in youth my feet were planted, there my manhood and my age shall march. I am not ashamed of Freedom. I know her power. I glory in her strength. I rejoice in her majesty. I will walk beneath her banner. I have seen her again and again struck down on a hundred chosen fields of battle. I have seen her friends fly from her. I have seen her foes gather around her. I have seen them bind her to the stake. I have seen them give her ashes to the winds, regathering them that they might scatter them yet more widely. But when they turned to exult, I have seen her again meet them face to face, clad in complete steel, and brandishing in her strong right hand a flaming sword red with insufferable light. [Vehement cheering.] And I take courage. The Genius of America will at last lead her sons to freedom! [Great applause.]<sup>5</sup>

Baker had spoken for two and a quarter hours.

The *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that "Senator Baker retired amid a wild storm of applause and cheering." Elijah Kennedy, a reporter and Republican from Marysville, described how the audience had been transformed:

5. *Masterpieces*, op. cit.

The scene defies description. The excited multitude were disinclined to leave the place. Long they continued cheering and shouting and singing. Deeper even than this manifestation was the feeling of many, who, touched by their hero's words of farewell and the pathos in his voice, wept, and even sobbed aloud. When, at last the thousands had departed they went out in a mood quite different from that in which they entered the hall. Then they were expectant; now they were full of courage and confidence, which spread abroad with the speed of thought.

The shorthand notes were transcribed, typeset, and printed overnight, ready for the outgoing steamboats and stagecoaches that were to distribute the pamphlet to every corner of the state. In many places, crowds assembled to hear the entire speech read. Elijah Kennedy read it aloud in a public hall in Marysville, reporting, "It was like the effect of mountain air."

*A few days later, on November 6, 1860, Abraham*

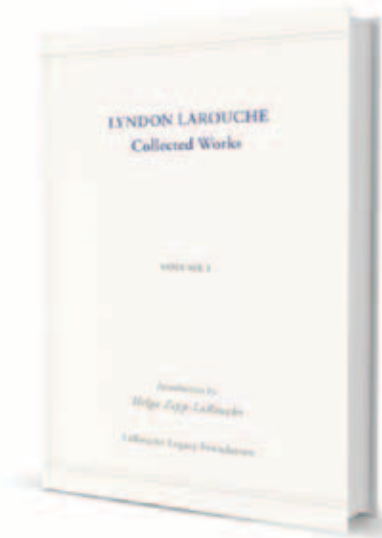
*Lincoln carried California with a plurality of 614 popular votes. In Oregon, Lincoln won by 270 votes. Fewer than 900 votes gave the two states to the Republican ticket!*

One year earlier, the Republicans and Broderick Democrats had been crushed in California, and a bill had passed in the legislature and was signed by the Governor to divide California in half, so that the southern territory would pave a way for slavery to extend to the Pacific. In Oregon, a constitution had been voted up banning Blacks from emigrating to the state and their pro-slavery Senator Joe Lane was now the running mate for John Breckinridge on the southern Democratic presidential ticket. Now and for the duration of the Civil War, Republicans and pro-union Democrats in both states unified behind Lincoln for the defense of the Union, and crushed efforts by southern Democrats and Copperheads to pull those states out of the Union.

The lesson to be learned? People are not fixed; they are not animals; they are human, after all. Thus, there is great cause for optimism today.

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