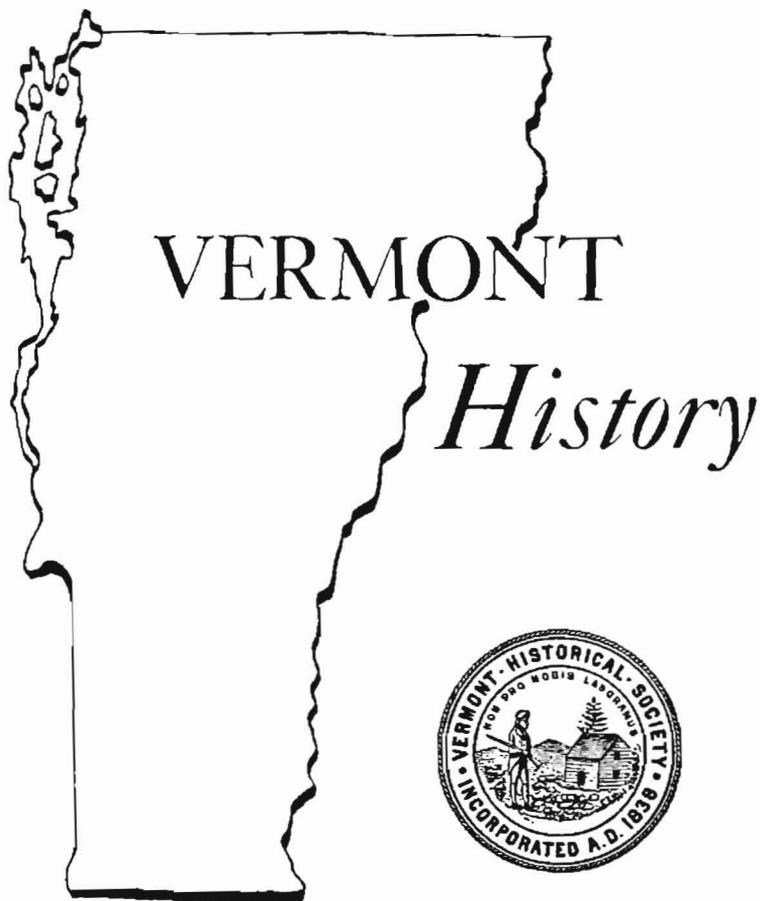
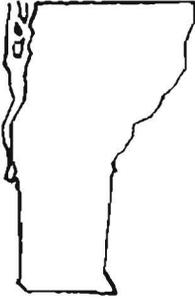


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The Republican National Committee took Aiken's candidacy seriously enough to offer \$50,000 to sound out national support.

You Can't Get There From Here: The Presidential Boomlet for Governor George D. Aiken, 1937-1939*

By D. GREGORY SANFORD

To the vintage Republican, 1936 was a year of despair as Alf Landon, the Kansas Sunflower, wilted in the New Deal sun. Many observers thought the election of 1936 signalled the collapse of the Republican party. Landon, the G.O.P.'s presidential candidate, captured only the meager electoral votes of Maine and Vermont. The Republican Congressional majorities of the 1920's had been dissipated until only seventeen Senators and eighty-nine Representatives remained. A similar attrition occurred among Republican governors. The Republican elephant had become an endangered species.

Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University and veteran spokesman for the party, lamented that "there isn't any Republican Party any more, and there hasn't been . . . for some time." An article in *Scribner's Magazine* entitled "Electing a Republican President" began on the cheerful note that "It has been said that a sufficient amount of advertising money, in sufficiently skillful advertising hands, could popularize cancer. Undoubtedly, expert advertising could help sell the American public a Republican president."¹

What engendered this doom-saying were the successive Republican defeats of 1930, '32, '34, and '36, each greater than the last. Political parties had gone through droughts before, but the apparent abruptness and geometric progression of the Republican decline seemed to portend the party's demise.

*Mr. Sanford presented a version of this article to the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Historical Society in Montpelier, August 1, 1981

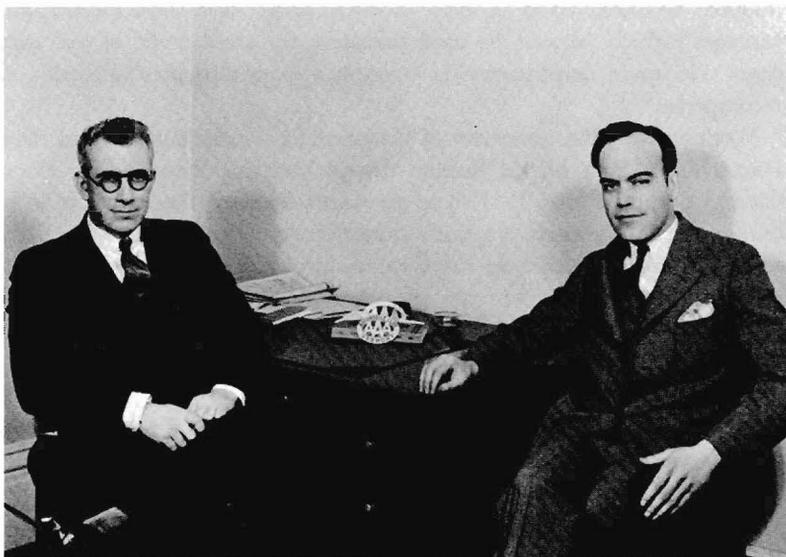
As the Republican leaders of the twenties succumbed to age, factionalism and electoral defeat, the party faithful issued a call for new leadership. The search for new leaders focused attention on the few emerging Republicans who emerged during the Democratic ascendancy, and, in rapid sequence, these men were paraded before the public. Arthur Vandenberg, Thomas Dewey, Robert Taft, and, eventually, Wendell Willkie were each ballyhooed as a modern Moses capable of leading the party out of the electoral wilderness.

From 1937 to 1939, Vermont's new governor, George David Aiken, captured the attention of both the party and the national press as a prospect for the 1940 nomination. As one of four Republicans elected governor in 1936, and as governor of one of the only two states to vote for Landon, Aiken gained considerable prestige within the party. "Something of a national novelty," he was invited to address prestigious Republican organizations and received press coverage not normally bestowed upon the governor of a small rural state. The early coverage ranged from an appearance on the "March of Time" to *Country Home Magazine's* "Farmer of the Month" award and created public interest in the Governor.²

A horticulturalist from Putney, known throughout the state for his flower show talks, Aiken had risen swiftly in Vermont politics. After his election to the Vermont legislature in 1930, Aiken's career had been marked by his opposition to attempts, first by the utility companies and later by the federal government, to control the state's hydroelectric potential. He based his opposition on the Jeffersonian belief that local and state governments had to control the use of their natural resources in order to maintain their autonomy.

Aiken was much more than an obstructionist, and early in his career he revealed his belief in the humanitarian role of government. Perhaps the most notable example of this philosophy was his strong support for a worthy debtor law which provided relief for small businessmen hard pressed by the Depression. Similarly, he played an instrumental part in bringing rural electrification to Vermont. He had also avoided narrowly partisan politics and promised never to oppose "any measure calculated to relieve human distress . . . simply because those measures are endorsed by an opposing party." During his rise in Vermont politics he attracted the support of a group of like-minded men and women, many of whom would also play prominent roles in state and national history. These supporters included Ernest Gibson, Jr., a long-time Aiken friend and confidant, and Sterry Waterman, president of the Young Republicans in Vermont and Aiken's 1936 campaign manager.³

Beleagued Republicans from around the nation wanted to learn more of this oddity — a Republican who could get elected in 1936. Though



Governor Aiken and Judge Sterry R. Waterman who, then as the leader of the Young Republicans, worked hard for Aiken's election and who remained his friend and advisor. (Both men now serve as Trustees of the Vermont Historical Society.)

the new governor received numerous speaking invitations, he saw his first priority as fulfilling his gubernatorial duties. He even curtailed his flower show talks to local garden clubs because he thought he should "stop running around and study state problems a little bit."⁴

Flood control stood high among the major state problems. In 1936 a devastating flood had hit New England, with Massachusetts and Connecticut bearing the brunt of the damage. Calls for flood control came from throughout New England, but the matter was complicated by the need for interstate cooperation. Effective protection of southern New England required damming the upper reaches of the Connecticut River. The proposed dams would flood Vermont's narrow valleys, removing fertile farm land from cultivation, and reducing local tax bases. The New England governors and eventually the Roosevelt administration debated who should pay for the dams, how Vermont and New Hampshire would be compensated for flooding their lands, and, most importantly, who would control any hydroelectric power generated at these dam sites.

As much as his electoral success in the face of the Roosevelt landslide, the 1936 flood precipitated Aiken's emergence as a national figure. The Governor warned would-be dam builders that water power was "a natural

resource bestowed upon us even as other states have their natural advantages" which "should be used primarily for the benefit of our own state." He would never surrender Vermont's water resources "without just recompense."⁵

Working with the governors of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, Aiken helped fashion the Connecticut River Valley Flood Control Commission in 1937. The governors designed the Commission to oversee the flood control program, apportion costs, and administer federal funds. At Aiken's insistence the Commission recognized flood control as the sole purpose of the compact and reserved to each state "all benefit or advantage of water conservation, power storage or power development."⁶

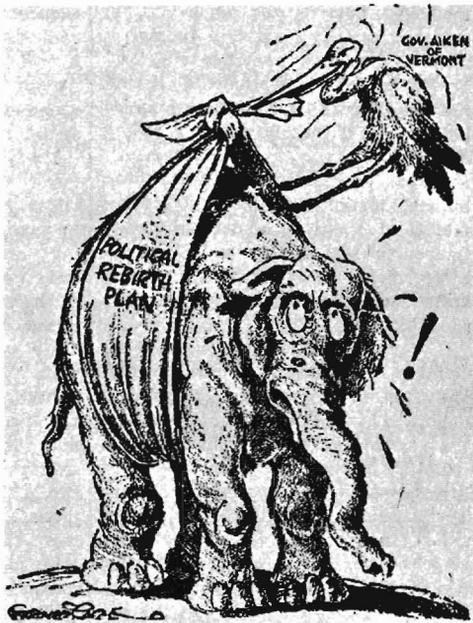
Aiken viewed the compact as the product of men "schooled in the town meeting tradition of government" who "gave the Commission only the minimum necessary powers to do the things that the states could not do individually."⁷ However, Roosevelt and the Federal Power Commission saw the compact in a different light and sought to block the necessary Congressional approval. They saw the failure to convey the dam sites to the federal government and the reservation of power rights by the states as infringements on federal prerogatives and as a ploy by the utility companies to use the dams for their own ends. Federal opposition frustrated attempts to have the compact approved, and in August, 1937, Washington backed a counter measure reserving water and power rights and reservoir ownership to the federal government.⁸

For the remainder of his gubernatorial tenure, which ended in 1941, Aiken found himself at odds with Roosevelt over flood control. His emergence as spokesman for the New England governors and his prolonged battle with Roosevelt raised hopes among some Republicans that they had found a successful counterpoise to the New Deal. Some out-of-state Aiken boosters began to try out the slogan "not by a dam site," and by the summer of 1937 the Governor's name began to be linked with the Republican presidential nomination then three years away.

Aiken's main concern, however, remained the protection of Vermont's water rights. With little political clout and isolated by the collapse of the Republican party, Vermont's continued resistance seemed futile in a struggle against sizeable Democratic majorities in Congress. During 1937 Aiken cast about for a way to offset this federal pressure. He tried enlisting bipartisan support and even threatened to forge disgruntled Republicans and Democrats into a third party. However, his best hope lay in a resurrected Republican party. If the G. O. P. could return to power, or even substantially reduce the Democratic majorities, Vermont's bargaining position would be enhanced.

Raised in the traditions of Progressivism — his father had supported Teddy Roosevelt's Bull Moose campaign — Aiken believed that the only way to revitalize the party was to broaden its appeal through the adoption of a "new republicanism." As he explained to his colleague Ralph Flanders, the seventeen million who voted for Landon would always vote Republican, and thus the party should direct its efforts toward the "ten or fifteen million that [were] dissatisfied with both parties."⁹ First, Aiken argued, the party had to disassociate itself from the leaders of the 1920's who had closely allied themselves with big business. These leaders had neither seen the unevenness and maldistribution of that decade's economic boom nor realized the shortness of the road between the "Republican prosperity" and the "Hoover depression." Next the party had to give greater voice to the young and to industrial and agricultural workers. It also had to refrain from characterizing Roosevelt as a demonic communist and offer the public a constructive program of its own. This program had to recognize the federal government's increased responsibility for public welfare. Aiken's new republicanism, however, differed from the New Deal by disavowing deficit spending and insisting that local and state governments play a greater role in addressing the problems of their citizens. Aiken believed that federal tax money should only be used as a means of doing cooperatively what individuals or subdivisions of government could not afford to do. Local government, Aiken argued, should never be "wholly free from the responsibility for its own problems or the obligation to cope with them in accordance with its own ability" because "no method of procedure has been devised by which liberty could be divorced from local self-government."¹⁰ Rather than looking to Washington, people should try to solve their own problems through cooperatives and interstate compacts. With pride Aiken pointed to Vermont's record in providing debt relief, old age assistance and other social welfare programs.

In May, 1937, Aiken began to accept out-of-state speaking engagements in order to spread the gospel of the new republicanism. In June he addressed the Middlesex Club of Boston, a bastion of old guard Republicanism. Reputedly the oldest Republican club in the country, its august and blue-blooded membership did not deter Aiken from pressing his demands. He spoke of the unrest among industrial workers and farmers and challenged the Republican leadership to stop mouthing facile epithets and to see "things as they are and not as you might wish them to be." If the party continued to associate with big business and to alienate the working class, said Aiken, the "next question it will have to answer is 'what color mothballs do we prefer?'"¹¹ Aiken's speeches soon developed a clear pattern. Every time the Roosevelt Administration attempted to enact



Cartoon comment on Aiken's open letter to the Republican National Committee in the Louisville Courier-Journal reprinted in the New York Times, December 12, 1937.

its New England flood control program, Aiken responded by attacking New Deal excesses and urging the Republicans to broaden their appeal.

The Governor's 1937 campaign to revitalize the Republican party culminated on December 6 with the publication of an open letter to the Republican National Committee. The letter asserted Vermont's claim for "the respect and attention" of the committee by virtue of its loyalty in 1936. It described what the Vermonter saw as the fallacies of the New Deal and the dangers to liberty inherent in them. However, Aiken scolded the Committee, while normally citizens could turn to an opposition party to preserve their liberties, the Republicans had not offered constructive alternatives. Aiken laid the blame for this on what he described as the party's "reactionary elements" whom he branded as "more concerned with controlling party machinery than in American welfare." The letter ended with a call for a "purge" of these elements and the immediate preparation of an "affirmative program."¹²

The letter and speeches received a heartening response. The press and public began to evince a greater interest in the Governor, and many expressed relief that a Republican was finally offering a constructive choice to the New Deal. Others were captivated by the David and Goliath aspect of a Vermonter challenging both President Roosevelt and the Republican National Committee. The *New York Times Sunday Magazine* carried a

Governor Aiken signing a
Library Bill into law.



feature article on Aiken, and his speeches were carried in the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Boston Evening Star*, and as far away as the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Portland Oregonian*. Letters of support arrived from around the country, many from Democrats.¹³

Several of the newspapers and letter writers linked Aiken to the 1940 Republican nomination. The *Boston Globe*, for example, thought that the G.O.P. could “go further and do worse than giving consideration to the present Governor of Vermont” as its nominee, while the *Rutland Herald* suggested that Aiken wouldn’t “shoot anybody who presents his name for the nomination.”¹⁴ Rumors of a candidacy provided an unexpected bonus for Aiken, as they lent weight to his demands on the Republican National Committee and augmented Vermont’s position in the flood control fight. However, throughout most of 1937 those who urged Aiken to run received the same reply. He appreciated the sentiment but “modern political temptations have little effect on me.” He professed to prefer “wildflowers to politics.”¹⁵

Despite his declared disinterest, not all of Aiken’s friends and advisors were as phlegmatic about the incipient presidential boom. In December, 1937, Leo Casey, publicity director for the Republican National Committee and a *Burlingtonian*, began to sound Aiken out on a possible campaign. Casey, about to resign his position with the Committee, had

been attracted by Aiken's speeches. He offered to quietly organize a campaign—without Aiken's "official knowledge."¹⁶

The arrival of Casey marked a change in Aiken's attitude toward the campaign rumors, and in 1938 the Governor began consciously to exploit them. While not entirely immune to the presidential fever, Aiken realized that national support for his candidacy would force both Roosevelt and the Republican National Committee to take his demands more seriously.

Fortuitously, Aiken was given an ideal launching point for an unofficial campaign when he received an invitation to address the National Republican Club's 1938 Lincoln Day dinner at New York's Waldorf Astoria. The dinner, traditionally a forum for leading Republican spokesmen, appealed to Aiken. With enthusiasm he wrote to Casey, "what better place is there to say what I expect to say" than the Waldorf-Astoria, "the symbol of everything the Republican Party must get away from." What appealed to Casey, the publicity expert, was the national radio hook-up reserved for the principal speaker. Vandenberg had been allotted the radio time in 1936, Landon in 1937 and Casey felt that Aiken deserved it in 1938. Consequently Casey warned Aiken to insist on receiving the national radio time to avoid being an "also spoke."¹⁷

The speech, however, was just part of Casey's evolving plan. He wanted Harold "Hap" Mason, Vermont's member on the National Republican Committee, and other prominent Vermonters to start lining up support for Aiken among potential delegates to the 1940 Republican convention. He suggested that Ralph Flanders be put in charge of a financial committee to raise funds for the campaign. Casey, himself, planned to use his contacts to cultivate the national press. He encouraged columnists already receptive to the Governor, such as Vermonter Dorothy Thompson, to write about Aiken's accomplishments. He hoped to build up Vermont as a "laboratory for sound, forward-looking legislation."¹⁸

Casey schemed to make the whole country "Vermont-conscious." He would promote books on Vermont and its history, and "sometime in 1939" Casey hoped to interest Hollywood in producing a movie on Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys. Former Vermonters would be encouraged to activate the Vermont Societies, or form new ones, in their respective states which, at the "right time," could become "natural springboards" for Aiken-for-President clubs. The promotion of Aiken's books and speeches would be followed in 1939 with the publication of a "full-sized book on Governor Aiken's life story." To attract the farm vote, Aiken would write "non-political" articles on agricultural topics, while the National Education Association, already predisposed to Aiken, would be used to garner support among educators.¹⁹ To overcome Vermont's electoral impotence, which many commentators saw as Aiken's major obstacle,

Casey wanted to convince the public "that Vermont is New England and New England is Vermont." If this could be accomplished, Vermont's three electoral votes would become New England's forty-one, making it, next to New York, the largest electoral bloc in the country.²⁰

Casey never lost sight of the upcoming Lincoln Day speech as he laid out plans for the campaign. He worried about radio coverage, Aiken's appearance ("wear tails"), advance copies for the press, possible attempts by the National Committee to dilute the speech, and the speech's content. Casey culled through Aiken's speeches selecting the best passages and learning the Governor's style. These selections and Casey's own suggestions, written in Aikenesque terminology, were incorporated in a proposed text for the speech. The idea was to deliver a "provocative" speech, one "different from all talks given that night," in order to attract "nationwide play."²¹ As February 12 approached, the subtle workings of Casey became apparent. The *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Washington Times*, and other papers hinted that Aiken's speech would "give the old-line Republicans heart failure" and that his selection as chief speaker indicated "the strength of the quiet and unobtrusive drive to make the Vermonter the G.O.P. presidential nominee."²²

The speech went as planned, from the opening statement that "the greatest praise I can give Lincoln . . . is to say he would be ashamed of his party's leadership today" to the closing threat that the party would have to provide "warm, human, understanding, sound and sincere" leadership or make way for a new party based on neither wealth nor position. Leaving his audience either sputtering in indignation or cheering in support, Aiken then departed to watch Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."²³

The national reaction was immediate. Old Guard leaders fulminated against this troublemaker in their midst, and even the Bennington *Banner* warned that "two or three more Lincoln Day addresses and Lieutenant Governor [William] Wills might find it a good year to run for governor." For the most part, though, the reaction was favorable. Aiken was hailed as the "first genuine glimmer of hope in the murk of the Republican national leadership" and as a "new voice to which people are likely to listen with respect, even in disagreement, for it is an honest voice." *The Christian Science Monitor*, *U.S. News* and *Newsweek* expressed their support, and even Roosevelt was rumored to have said he "could run on the same ticket with that man."²⁴

Thus launched, Casey's campaign strategy seemed to work to perfection during 1938 and 1939. Influential magazines and newspapers sought biographies of Aiken. Some of the more ecstatic commentators took to referring to the Governor as a "5 foot 8 Lincoln." Farm journals and other

media solicited his comments. The Governor became a sought after speaker, and in his speeches he was as likely to describe himself as a New Englander as a Vermonter. The publication of Aiken's *Speaking From Vermont* in 1939, while not the life story that Casey had suggested, gave wider publicity to the Governor's political philosophy. Several reviewers described it as a campaign document.²⁵

Never a full blown boom, the presidential boomlet began to have its desired effect. The Republican National Committee took Aiken's candidacy seriously enough to offer \$50,000 to sound out national support. If they could not wholeheartedly accept the new republicanism, events had forced them to at least give its spokesman a chance.²⁶

Roosevelt also began to take an Aiken candidacy seriously. Hoping to undermine the Governor's appeal, he prevailed upon Fred Martin, Vermont's most popular Democrat, to run against Aiken in the 1938 gubernatorial contest. This maneuver failed, and Aiken easily won re-election.²⁷ More importantly, Roosevelt, confronted with political problems elsewhere, decided not to press the flood control fight. In January, 1939, it was reported that he had dropped his plans to build a dam at Union Village, Vermont, marking the end of his conflict with Aiken over flood control.²⁸

Unbeknownst to either Roosevelt or the Republican National Committee, Aiken had long since ceased to sanction any campaign efforts on his behalf. The Governor, always uncomfortable trying to raise campaign funds, felt that all the publicity detracted from his gubernatorial responsibilities. Events had moved rapidly for the careful Yankee. In 1931 he had been a first-time Vermont legislator representing a town of 835 people. Six years later he had become a major voice in the Republican party and a contender for the presidential nomination. In February, 1938, he wrote to Ralph Flanders and rather plaintively explained that he did not want to "hang on" to the campaign, but that he did not know how to let go. In April, 1938, Aiken told Casey that although he appreciated his efforts, he would not be a candidate. For political reasons the two men kept the decision quiet.²⁹

Even after his decision not to run, Aiken used the campaign rumors to keep the National Committee from becoming "reactionary to the nth degree." He also remained in touch with Casey and used his public relations skills to aid in the fight against the Union Village dam. When it became evident that Roosevelt would not continue the flood control fight, the Governor further relaxed his campaign subterfuge and dissuaded Casey from reviving any campaign efforts.³⁰ Republican gains in the 1938 elections also seemed to undercut the need for the ruse, though Aiken continued to warn the party against complacency.

His own interest in, and need for a campaign over, Aiken let the boomlet fade. Once heralded as a candidate with unparalleled appeal, Aiken was soon grouped with such perennial never-rans as J. Edgar Hoover and William Allen White. The boomlet, however, served Aiken's purpose. From 1937 to 1939 it allowed Vermont to assert its influence on the Republican party and to offer the nation an alternative to the New Deal's unending faith in the efficacy of federal planning.

NOTES

¹ *New York Times*, April 2, 1937; Ted Patrick, "Electing a Republican President," *Scribner's Magazine*, November, 1938, p. 17.

² Robert R. Mullen, "George Aiken: New England's Favorite Son," *Forum*, September 10, 1939, p. 36. For mention of the "March of Time" appearance, see Charles M. Winchester to Aiken, April 19, 1937 in the Aiken Papers, Crate 82, Box 2, File 11. University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont. (Hereafter references to the Aiken Papers will be by crate, box, and file, i.e., 82-2-11); and *Country Home Magazine*, August, 1937 in 82-2-11.

³ Aiken Papers, 82-2-3, text to Aiken's speech to the 1936 Republican State Convention. Gibson was appointed to fill out his father's U.S. Senate term in 1940, served as governor from 1947-50 and as U.S. District Judge from 1950-69. Waterman served on the U.S. Court of Appeals, Second Circuit from 1955-1978.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 82-2-7, Aiken to Mrs. Eugene Smith, November 7, 1936. For more on Aiken's 1936 campaign and his flower show talks, see Samuel B. Hand and D. Gregory Sanford, "Carrying Water on Both Shoulders: George D. Aiken's 1936 Gubernatorial Campaign in Vermont," *Vermont History*, vol. 43, No. 4 (Fall, 1975), 292-306.

⁵ Aiken Papers, Speeches, 76-2-1937, from the text of Aiken's Inaugural Address, January 7, 1937.

⁶ Vermont, *Acts and Resolves passed by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont at the 34th Biennial Session, 1937* (Bellows Falls: Wyndham Press, 1937), pp. 270-271.

⁷ Aiken Papers, Speeches, 76-2-1937, from the text of Aiken's speech to the National Governors' Conference, September 15, 1937.

⁸ The Roosevelt supported Brown-Casey bill, introduced on August 6th, would have authorized the War Department to construct flood control dams if any two area states agreed to federal restrictions on power and water rights. The bill was seen as an attempt to split New England since Massachusetts and Connecticut could then dam the upper Connecticut River Valley without the consent of Vermont or New Hampshire.

⁹ Aiken Papers, 82-2-25, Aiken to Flanders, February 17, 1938.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Speeches, 76-2-1937, from the text of Aiken's speech to the Syracuse Young Republicans Dinner, May 5, 1937. This is one of Aiken's earliest elaborations on the "new republicanism" which received national attention.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, from the text of Aiken's Middlesex Club speech, June 22, 1937.

¹² *Ibid.*, 82-2-17, Aiken to the Republican National Committee, December 4, 1937. Several of Aiken's Vermont allies were consulted on the letter including Ralph Flanders, Sterry Waterman and some of the Young Republican leaders.

¹³ For examples of newspaper and public response see *Ibid.*, 82-2-13, 14, and 15.

¹⁴ *Boston Globe*, August 1, 1937; *Rutland Herald*, December 8, 1937.

¹⁵ Aiken Papers, 82-2-11, Aiken to Arthur Wilcox, July 28, 1937 and Aiken to Charles Johnson, August 5, 1937.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 82-2-22, Casey to Aiken, January 12, 1937. Aiken had met Casey in January, 1937, during a visit at Republican national headquarters. Casey wrote to Aiken on January 7, 1938, that "what is left of the Hoover wing . . . with the aid of some of the reactionary crowd in New York" were trying to force his resignation as publicity director. Casey was "relieved" because he would now be free to "aid forward-looking Republicans who have the same ideas you and I have." *Ibid.*, 8-2-22, Casey to Aiken, January 7, 1938.

- 17 *Ibid.*, Aiken to Casey, January 7, 1938, and Casey to Aiken, January 12, 1938.
- 18 *Ibid.*, Casey to Aiken, January 12, 1938.
- 19 *Ibid.*, Casey to Harold Mason, January 24, 1938. Casey hoped to convince Sinclair Lewis to write the movie script.
- 20 *Ibid.*, Casey to Ralph Flanders, March 5, 1938.
- 21 *Ibid.*, Casey to Aiken, January 26, 31, February 4, 1938. Casey, still at national party headquarters, was aware of attempts to replace Aiken as the main speaker. Aiken, who had not formally acknowledged Casey's campaign efforts, agreed that "much depends on the outcome" of the speech, for if it were panned, he would have to "do a fade out." If the speech was favorably received, the national committee would be in a "particularly weakened position, especially if some . . . commentators and reporters have the idea I was to go on a ride." *Ibid.*, Aiken to Casey, February 3, 1938.
- 22 *New York Herald Tribune*, February 6, 1938; *Washington Times* February 7, 1938. On the day of the speech, the *New York Times* carried a short report on the resignation of Leo Casey as publicity director of the Republican National Committee, effective March 1, and his plans to form a public relations agency in Washington, D.C.
- 23 Aiken Papers, Speeches, 82-2-1938, from the text of the Lincoln Day speech, February 12, 1938. U.S. Senator Ernest W. Gibson, Sr., of Vermont had the speech printed in the *Congressional Record* of February 16, 1938. For the crowd reaction, see Aiken's Dartmouth College Speech, April 22, 1938, *Ibid.*, Speeches, 76-2-1938.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 8-2-35, *Bennington Banner*, February 22, 1938, *Evansville (Indiana) Press*, February 14, 1938; and *Binghamton (N.Y.) Press*, February 14, 1938; *Ibid.*, 82-2-27, M.E. Hennessy to Aiken, February 15, 1938; and *Ibid.*, 82-1-7, for various press and public comments.
- 25 Mullen, "George Aiken," *Forum*, September 10, 1939, is an example of the Aiken as a "5 foot 8 Lincoln" genre. Aiken wrote articles such as "What the Farmer May Expect in the Future," which appeared in the *Ohio Farm Bureau News*, February 28, 1938. For his addresses to farm groups see Aiken Papers, Speeches, 76-2-1938. Bruce Catton, reviewing *Speaking* for the *San Diego Sun*, thought it was designed to ignite "the fuse leading to an Aiken boom for 1940." *San Diego Sun*, September 26, 1938.
- 26 Interview with Aiken by author, April 28, 1976.
- 27 Aiken won by 40,000 votes. For Washington's efforts to undermine Aiken see *Boston Globe*, undated, Aiken Papers, 82-1-10; Peter Bove to Aiken, June 6, July 25, 1938, and Aiken to Bove, June 9, 1938, Aiken Papers, 82-2-20. Also see Roosevelt's January 17, 1939, press conference in *The Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, Vol. 13 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972), 58-60.
- 28 FDR was confronted with Republican gains in the 1938 elections and resentment over his Supreme Court "packing" plan. For newspaper reaction to Aiken's victory at Union Village, see the *Burlington Free Press*, January 16, 1939, *New York Herald Tribune*, January 14, 1939, *Los Angeles Daily News*, January 19, 1939, and *Pasadena (Calif.) Star News*, January 19, 1939.
- 29 Aiken Papers, 82-2-25, Aiken to Flanders, February 28, 1938; *Ibid.*, 82-2-22, Aiken to Casey, April 8, 1938. Aiken had begun to discourage Casey's efforts in March. See *Ibid.*, Aiken to Casey, March 8 and 25, 1938. Aiken did not wish to relinquish the political leverage a rumored campaign gave him and on April 8 advised Casey that it would be "well for you and me, as well as others," if his decision not to seek the nomination remained secret.
- 30 *Ibid.*, Aiken to Casey, September 16, 1938. Political commentator Drew Pearson called Casey the mastermind behind Aiken's Union Village flood control fight. See *Ibid.*, 82-1-24. For examples of Casey's renewed efforts to start a campaign, see *Ibid.*, 82-2-22, Casey to Aiken, undated (probably late January, 1939), and Aiken to Casey, February 8, 1939. Casey later headed the Democrats-for-Wilkie campaign.