

Chapter 29 The Wide Awakes

The Wide Awakes were groups of Republican young men which included some of those who joined the 120th OVI. Wide Awakes...to promote the election of Lincoln and Hamlin in 1860

The Wooster Republican is available on microfilm at the Wayne County Public Library in Wooster, OH.

Woo Republican, Thursday, 2 Aug 1860 pg 3

Preamble to the constitution of the Wooster township Wide Awakes

"We, the undersigned young men of Wooster Township, desirous of securing the ascendancy [sic] and perpetuity of the principles of the Republican party, and the election of its candidates for office to all places of honor and trust in the Government, do hereby explicitly declare our entire devotion to the Constitution and the Union, our opposition to interference with Slavery in the United States where it now legally exists, and our unqualified and unalterable determination to resist by all constitutional means its further extension, and pledge ourselves to use all honorable means for the success and triumph of the principles of the Republican party, and of the election of its candidates to office."
Their members were to be 21 to 30 years of age.

Wooster Republican , Thursday, 19 July 1860, page 3

"The organization of the 'Lincoln Wide Awakes,' in Wooster has commenced very auspiciously, and the club now numbers over 170 votes under 30 years of age. It is the intention of the Wooster Wide Awakes to appear at an early day in full uniform, when it is expected that Hon. John Sherman will be present to address the people. The time of the meeting cannot be fixed until it is definitely ascertained when Mr. Sherman can attend, but due notice will be given so that Republicans from the country may have an opportunity to attend." [Meeting was at the Arcadome Hall. Officers were listed.] [John Sherman, at that time, was in the House of Representatives. He was the brother of General Wm T. Sherman and the uncle of Henry S. Sherman of the 120th OVI whose diary has been included in this Study Guide.]

Woo Rep, Thurs 4 Oct 1860, page 2

Huge meeting of Wide Awakes at Arcadome Hall. Many speakers for the Republican cause. **"W. G. Myers** and Mr. Pardee also spoke briefly...."

Woo Rep, Thurs 26 July 1860, page 3

"The Wooster Wide Awakes are to have a grand evening Rally on Friday evening next, when the club, now numbering nearly 200 will appear in full uniform, and in torchlight procession. Able speakers will be present to address the people, and a general good time is expected. Our Republican friends in adjoining townships will be present in full force, and the meeting will undoubtedly [sic] eclipse every other one of the season."

[Woo Rep, 2 Aug 1860, pg2: That meeting took place on 27 July 1860 with a procession of the men in their uniforms. Speakers on Public Square were Wm M. Orr, Ben. Douglas, A. S. McClure, Mr. Harn, **Mr. Rouch** and A. Weitman..

Woo Rep, Thurs 16 Aug 1860, page 2

Wm P. Myers was secretary of the Smithville Wide Awakes.

[Holmes County Republican \[Millersburg\], 11 Oct 1860, page 2](#), column 5: Available at [Chronicling America](#)

"The Wide Awakes

History will record the Republican victory of 1860 as due to the Wide Awakes. - the men who compose that body are young, intelligent and determined. The moral force of such a body of young men, all of one mind, cannot be estimated. The influence of such a guard over the polls, in preventing illegal votes and in protecting electors in the free enjoyment of their rights, cannot be known; for beside the direct prevention of the deposit of suspicious votes and the overawing of rowdies, ballot-box stuffers and hired bullies, there is no telling how many frauds will be unattempted because of the known argus-eyes of this body of Wide Awakes."

See more at the link. [[Merriam-Webster](#): Argus eyed - vigilant, awake, observant, alert.]

[The Holmes county Republican, 20 Sept 1860, page 2](#), column 1: available at [Chronicling America](#)

"The 'Millersburg Wide Awakes' turned out on Saturday night last in full uniform, and made a splendid appearance. After an hour or so spent in drill, under the command of Gen. Joseph Ankeny, they marched to the Court House where they were ably addressed by S. G. Crow, Esq. Everything passed off well and all hands, (except, perhaps, a few cross-grained, mean-spirited Locofocos, who think, and practice of the thought, that a political opponent has no rights,) were pleased with the Wide Awakes, their numbers, their uniform, and their general good behavior. They meet again next Saturday."

On the Democrat side of things:

[Holmes County Farmer, 30 August 1860, page 3](#), column 1: available at [Chronicling America](#)
Wide Awakes, Sprouts, &c.

The 'Wide Awakes' are companies of Republicans leagued together to aid in humbugging through the election of Lincoln. They perform the part in this campaign that the corn-crackers and cider suckers did in the campaign of 1840. - They are to the Republican show what the monkey is to the circus. They come out at night dressed in oil-cloth shawls, toadskin caps, tight pants, and bear little lamps. The companies are usually composed of big boys and small men who are more noted for the length of their ears than the capacity of their brains. A company was recently formed at Orrville; on Saturday night last nine of them came out in procession. The little boys of that place thinking the men wanted to monopolize their playthings determined on defending their rights, accordingly between forty and fifty boys of from four to ten years of age got lamps, badges &c., and paraded the streets in opposition to the Wide Awakes. The boys took the crowd by all odds. After marching was over the Wide Awakes assembled at their den and unanimously passed the following resolution: 'Resolved, That we are d---d mad.' "

END CHAPTER 29

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