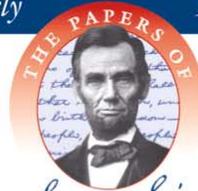


# LINCOLN EDITOR

The Quarterly

Newsletter of



April - June 2002

Volume 2 Number 2

Abraham Lincoln

*"a great honor and a great labor"* A. Lincoln, October 26, 1863

## PROJECT RECEIVES GRANT TO FILM AND DIGITIZE LINCOLN DOCUMENTS AT THE ILLINOIS STATE ARCHIVES

The Illinois State Library recently awarded a \$10,000 Educate and Automate grant to the Illinois State Historical Library (ISHL), in partnership with the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, to film and digitize Lincoln documents at the Illinois State Archives in Springfield. Director Daniel W. Stowell worked with ISHL Director Kathryn M. Harris, Illinois State Archives Director John Daly, and Alyce Scott and Joe Natale of the Illinois State Library to develop the application. The grant supports the filming, digitization, and cataloging of over 250 Lincoln documents held by the archives. Many of the documents are from Lincoln's legal career and from his service as a member of the state legislature (1834-1841). Assistant Editor Glenna Schroeder-Lein, microfilmer Edward Wass, and researcher Sam Wheeler captured images of each document, and they have been digitized. As a separate task, Assistant Editor Dennis Suttles is cataloging the documents, and Assistant Editor Stacy McDermott is cropping and concatenating the document images for delivery over the web. Once cataloged and prepared, the images will be available over the Internet through the Illinois Digital Archives (IDA) of the Illinois State Library at: <http://eli.sls.lib.il.us/ida/>.



## LINCOLN PARDONS TENNESSEE "UNIONIST"

Vituperative Methodist and newspaper editor "Parson" William G. Brownlow (1805-1877) was one of the most outspoken Unionists in severely divided East Tennessee. After being imprisoned by Confederates for some weeks in Knoxville, Brownlow was expelled from Tennessee in March 1862. By May he had assembled a volume about his experiences, commonly known as *Parson Brownlow's Book*, which George W. Childs, whose stationery Brownlow borrowed, was about to publish.

William G. Brownlow to John W. Forney

Philadelphia, May 13, 1862.

Hon. John W. Forney:<sup>1</sup>

I desire to say a few things to you and I will ask you to take the time and trouble to show this hastily written scroll to President Lincoln and Senator Wilson.

Lieut. Col. J. F. White, of East Tennessee was, and still is a Union man.<sup>2</sup> He was drilling three

*Continued on page 2*

companies of Union men in Hamilton and Bradley counties, and his letters to me were intercepted and published—he was arrested and threatened with death by the furious mob—but was allowed to go free of hanging, on the condition that he would enter the Rebel service. He done so, under compulsion, and was elected Lieut Col. to command Cavalry. He was stationed at Knoxville, and true to his Union principles, he posted us all the winter, as to the Rebel movements against Union men. Had we betrayed him, they would have hung him! Upon my leaving home the 3d of March, he was ordered to Cumberland Gap, but told us that he intended to be taken a prisoner, so as to escape fighting. At the Gap, or near there, he was captured in his bed, pretending to be asleep, and some 30 of his men also. He is now at Fort Warren.<sup>3</sup> He is nothing to me, but is a true man, a former member of the Tennessee Legislature, and I would like to have him turned out, without the facts in his case being made public. If the President is willing to turn him out, let the authority be inclosed to me to the care of the “A[s]tor House” in New York, and I will go to Fort Warren with it. He would not want to go home, until the Federal army get possession of East Tennessee, where he has a good farm, a [ferry?], wife and children, and a half dozen negroes

Half the men in East Tennessee who went into the Rebel Army, went as a choice between that position and death, or imprisonment during the war. Mr. Maynard knows Col. White, and will attest the truth of his character.<sup>4</sup>

Very Respectfully, &c,  
W. G. Brownlow

[Endorsement]

Respectfully submitted to the Sec. of War, with my opinion that Lieut. Col. J. F. White should be bailed to Parson W. G. Brownlow.

A. Lincoln

May 15, 1862.

[Endorsement]

May 16 /62'

The Adjutant General is directed to release the prisoner on condition that he report to Rev. W. G. Brownlow  
By order of Secretary of War

P H Watson  
Ass<sup>t</sup> Sec<sup>t</sup> War

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Forney (1817-1881), editor of the *Philadelphia Press* and the *Washington Chronicle*, was also secretary of the United States Senate (1861-68), and in these capacities would have had more ready access to President Abraham Lincoln and Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts than Brownlow could have had himself.

<sup>2</sup>The subject of Brownlow's concern, John Fletcher White (1824-1901), was a lawyer in his native Rogersville, Tennessee, until 1850 and in Chattanooga thereafter; and most importantly for Brownlow, White was an active Methodist. White served in the Mexican War, in the state legislature (1847-49), and as county judge of Hamilton County (1856-58). Soon after the Civil War began, White organized a company called “The Bird Rangers” in Hamilton County and became its captain. The company was mustered into the Confederate service on August 24, 1861, in Knoxville, as company F of the First Tennessee Cavalry (CSA), of which White became the lieutenant colonel. White and fifteen others from his regiment were captured at Big Creek Gap near Jacksboro, Tennessee, on March 14, 1862, after a skirmish of about five minutes.

<sup>3</sup>Fort Warren, Massachusetts.

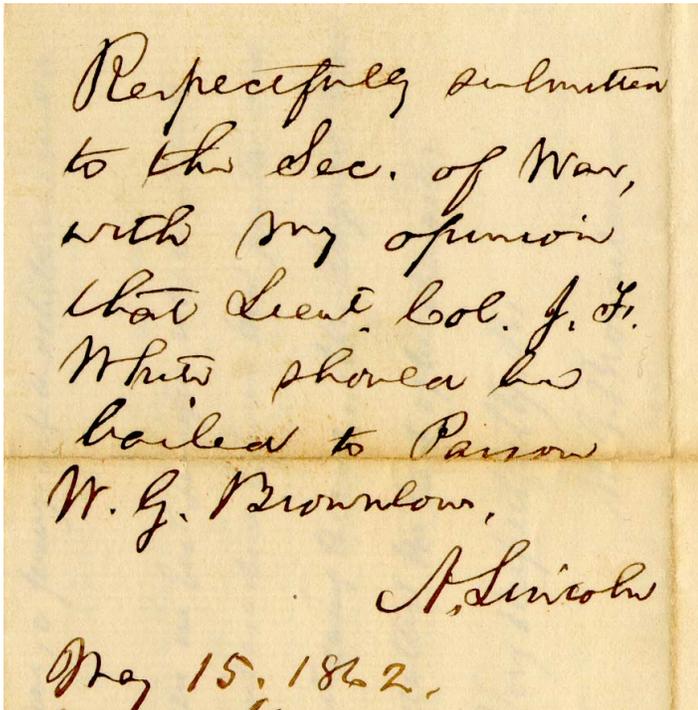
<sup>4</sup>Tennessee Congressman, Horace Maynard.

Abraham Lincoln wanted to encourage what he believed to be a strong element of southern Unionism, and he responded to Brownlow's letter with an endorsement urging White's release. The request moved through the system quickly, and White received his parole on May 24.

White returned to Tennessee where his regiment had been reorganized without him. He unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a position impressing resources for the Confederate army. Then, sometime after the spring of

1863, he moved his family to Florida where he was involved in army supply procurement. White's actions were not unusual, for many East Tennessee Unionists took a minor post to deflect suspicion from themselves, prevent their own conscription, protect their family and property, and shield other Unionists from depredations.

In any case, White disguised his Unionism well enough so that his widow received a Florida pension in 1908, based on his Confederate service.



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to the Sec. of War,  
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W. G. Brownlow,  
A. Lincoln  
May 15, 1862.

This endorsement by Lincoln appears on the verso of William Brownlow's letter to John Forney. *Image courtesy of the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection, Illinois State Historical Library.*

## DONORS

The project acknowledges with deep appreciation the generosity of the following contributors:

Keith E. Danish  
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## STAFF NEWS

In April, Assistant Editor Glenna Schroeder-Lein participated in the Macoupin County Civil War Round Table in Carlinville. She gave a presentation about Confederate hospitals during the war.

Glenna also spoke to the Simpson family reunion at their gathering in Springfield in June about the relationship between Lincoln and Bishop Matthew Simpson of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who delivered a sermon at Lincoln's funeral in Springfield.

Microfilmer Ned Wass and Researcher Sam Wheeler microfilmed Lincoln materials at Lincoln College and the Illinois State Archives.

Sam Wheeler attended the Institute for Documentary Editing at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission sponsors "Camp Edit," as it is affectionately known.

## MEET OUR EDITORIAL BOARD

(Fourth in a series)

**Paul H. Bergeron** is a recently retired Professor of History at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Dr. Bergeron received his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University in 1965. From 1987 through 2000, he was the Director and Editor of the *Papers of Andrew Johnson*, and he served as editor of the last nine of the series's sixteen volumes (Tennessee, 1989-2000). He is the author of four books, including *The Presidency of James K. Polk* (Kansas, 1987), and he co-edited two volumes of the James K. Polk papers.



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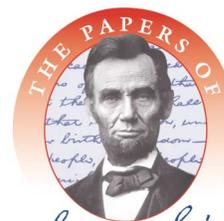
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*Abraham Lincoln*

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