

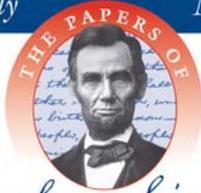
LINCOLN EDITOR

The Quarterly

Newsletter of

January - March 2009

Volume 9 Number 1



Abraham Lincoln

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

LINCOLN'S LEGAL PAPERS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln is delighted to announce the publication of *The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, Second Edition* in a free online format. This publication is an updated version of the project's award-winning *The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln: Complete Documentary Edition*, published in 2000 on three DVD-ROMs by the University of Illinois Press. In addition to including all of the cases, documents, and reference information in that landmark publication, the *Second Edition* includes additional information and corrections based on the research conducted for the project's four-volume print edition published in 2008.

The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, Second Edition, available at www.lawpracticeofabrahamlincoln.org, features the same functionality as the DVD-ROM product with new documents and cases discovered since publication in 2000. Included in this edition are forty-five new cases from Lincoln's law practice, twelve new activities that did not result in litigation, and nearly 1,300 new documents. In addition, the editors have replaced more than 1,500 black-and-white images of documents with more legible color images based on the continuing work of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. Although the original publication was widely available in law libraries, colleges, and universities across the nation, the *Second Edition* is freely available to users worldwide through the Internet.

In addition, the *Second Edition* is integrated into the Papers of Abraham Lincoln's other major online publication, *The Lincoln Log*. Users of *The Lincoln Log* (at www.thelincolnlog.org) who find a reference to a legal case there can now

follow a hyperlink to information about the case and images of the documents from the case in *The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, Second Edition*. Readers of the four-volume, selective print edition *The Papers of Abraham Lincoln: Legal Documents and Cases* can now view images of any of the documents transcribed in those volumes as well as other documents from the cases included there.

Together with the selective print edition, this online edition of Lincoln's legal papers concludes Series I of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln by achieving and surpassing the goals established for the Lincoln Legal Papers in 1985. Instead of a comprehensive, multi-reel microfilm edition available only at major research libraries, the project has produced an easy-to-use electronic edition of all documents from Lincoln's law practice, freely available to anyone with an Internet connection.

Search Screen of *The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, Second Edition* available at www.lawpracticeofabrahamlincoln.org

“A LOYAL AND WORTHY MAN”

The Civil War provided a patronage bonanza unparalleled in the nation’s history, as westward expansion, coupled with the war effort, ballooned the need for clerks, auditors, secretaries, assessors, revenue collectors, treasury agents, and assorted commissioners. While Abraham Lincoln tried to maintain a maxim of “fairness to all” when dispensing federal largesse, he never forgot that patronage was a tool to bolster his administration and the Republican Party.¹ Exiled Southerners were among the throngs seeking government positions, and prominent among them was William Houston, younger brother of American hero and founding father of Texan independence Sam Houston.

In 1861, William Houston was sixty years old and closely resembled his famous brother. He had been born the sixth son of Samuel Houston and Elisabeth Paxton in the family’s large mansion “Timber Ridge” in the Shenandoah Valley, just east of Lexington, Virginia. Along with his mother and eight siblings, William relocated to Tennessee after the sudden death of his father in 1807. While his “wild” brother Sam blazed a path that eventually won him national fame and political power, William took a more conventional route.² By 1850, he had married Mary Ball, fathered three sons

and two daughters, and become a lumber merchant in Memphis, Tennessee.³

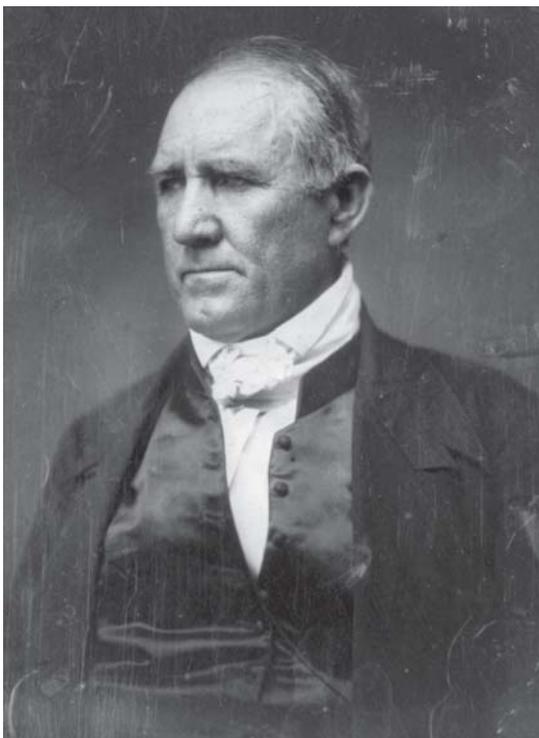
Southern secession was both a national and family crisis for the Houston family. Sam Houston failed to stem secessionist fever in Texas, and Texan Confederates unceremoniously deposed him after he declined Lincoln’s offer of U.S. troop reinforcements.⁴ While the Confederates permitted the ex-governor to live unmolested at his home until his death in 1863, William Houston apparently faced bleaker prospects. Like other unionist southerners, Houston fled to the North, eventually ending up in Washington, D.C., where he hoped that his unionism and his brother’s fame might secure him a government position. In this effort, Houston appealed directly to Lincoln:

Washington City
Sept 30 1861.

His Excellency
The President.

Having been forced to abandon my home in Tennessee for my strenuous opposition to Secession, and being closely related to one whose efforts to sustain the Union rendered him obnoxious to the party who sought its ruin, and my own avowed determination never to raise my voice or hand against the flag of my country; Thus being deprived of the my means of supporting myself; and remaining where I had spent my life, up to that time, compels me to solicit some appointment under Government, however temporary, that I may be able to contribute my mite to its support, and to subsist myself at the same time by my labor. I trust the President will consider my application with favor. I understand there are several vacancies in the Treasury or its branches, and amongst others, one in the Second comptroller’s office, any of which would be acceptable. If I should not prove to be qualified to discharge the duties I will freely submit to my rejection.

I have the honor to be
Sir, Your Ob^{dt} Ser’t
W. Houston.



Sam Houston

Contemporaries claimed William Houston bore a striking similarity to his older brother Governor Sam Houston of Texas, but despite a physical resemblance the two brothers reputedly did not have a close personal relationship.

Image courtesy of Daguerreotype Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Houston also joined the line of people outside the president’s office and seized a chance to implore Lincoln’s Illinois friend Henry Clay Whitney to press his request for a clerkship. Whitney obligingly stepped into the president’s office announcing: “William Houston is here, waiting to see you, and I think...” but Lincoln stopped him “by as dark a frown and as severe a burst of anger as I ever knew him to

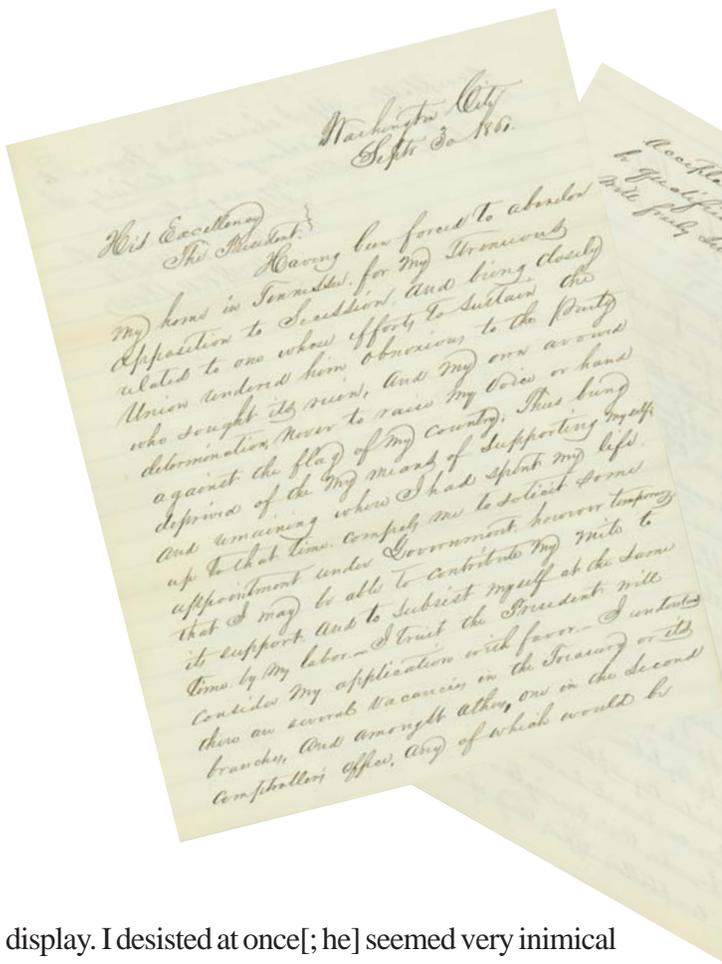
A famous name coupled with a presidential endorsement resulted in success. William Houston became a Treasury employee swearing out two oaths of allegiance, one on December 2, 1861, and another on April 24, 1862. He later received a promotion to first class clerk in the Second Auditor's Office on August 20, 1862, but how long he remained in that position remains unclear, nor is it clear if he ever returned to his home in Memphis.

What is known, however, is that Houston's plight was similar to that of many other southern loyalists who sacrificed a great deal to remain steadfast in their allegiance to the Union and who looked to Lincoln for help. Houston was one of those lucky enough to receive it.

**By David J. Gerleman,
Assistant Editor**

**William Houston to Abraham Lincoln (above left)
and Lincoln's Endorsement (below)**

Images courtesy of the National Archives, College Park, MD.



display. I desisted at once[; he] seemed very inimical to the appointment, for some reason which he did not disclose to me."⁵ Yet, perhaps remembering Governor Houston's dogged opposition to secession or touched by his brother's loyalty to the Union, Lincoln eventually changed his mind and endorsed the letter:

The writer of this is a brother of Gen. Sam. Houston of Texas; and I believe a loyal and worthy man. I know not that there are any such vacancies in the Treasury Department as he mentions; but I respectfully submit his application to that Department.

A. Lincoln

Oct. 1. 1861.⁶

Notes:

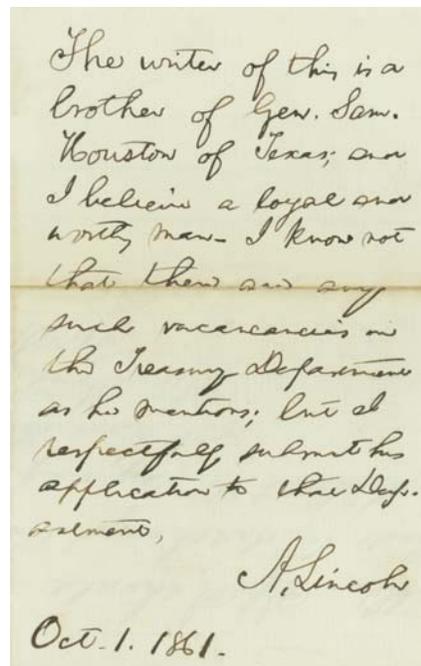
¹ Michael Burlingame, ed., *An Oral History of Abraham Lincoln*, John G. Nicolay's Interviews and Essays, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 94.

² James L. Haley, *Sam Houston* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 5-7.

³ U.S. Census Office, *Seventh Census of the United States* (1850), Shelby County, TN, Memphis, Ward 6, 134; U.S. Census Office, *Eighth Census of the United States* (1860), Shelby County, TN, Memphis, Ward 4, 38.

⁴ Haley, *Sam Houston*, 392-93.

⁵ Henry C. Whitney, *Life on the Circuit with Lincoln* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1892), 474-75.



⁶ William Houston to Abraham Lincoln, 30 September 1861, box 282, RG 56, Entry 210: Part II, Records of Various Divisions within the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, Records of the Division of Appointments, Correspondence of the Division, Applications and Recommendations for positions in the Washington, D.C. Offices of the Treasury Department, 1830-1910, National Archives, College Park, MD.

TWO LINCOLNS AND A “TREASURY GIRL”

Louisa Knowlton wrote to President Lincoln on October 20, 1864, looking for a job.¹ Like many other young women had done during the previous three years, she was soliciting a low-paying job as a so-called “Treasury Girl” with the government. Although Clara Barton had broken the gender barrier in government work in the 1850s, she and other path-breaking women were no longer in government service when the Civil War began.

In 1861, social conservatives harshly criticized the Treasurer of the United States, Francis Spinner, when he began employing women in large numbers. However, as the federal bureaucracy expanded during the war, and the war continued to drain manpower, criticism abated, and more positions became available to women throughout the government.

The Treasury Department employed the most women, so that by 1865, 447 women were on that department’s payroll. Most worked at menial tasks such as note cutting, or money drying, while those who possessed good penmanship held clerk or copyist positions. By the end of the war, these positions paid \$720 annually, which for many women was the most they could earn in the workplace. These women filled a vital role in the war effort by working in positions that men could not or would not take.²

Many women like Louisa Knowlton wrote to Lincoln seeking a job because of financial hardship. Most of these women were the daughters, wives, or widows of men who were in uniform, and they were unable to support their

families. These women looked to the government, and specifically to President Lincoln, for support, but they wanted to earn that support by entering the workplace. With pay higher than in most traditional female jobs like teaching and nursing, full-time positions in the Treasury Department offered many women a way out of their war-related financial straits.

A few women seemed motivated purely by ambition. Fifteen-year-old Grace Bedell, famous for suggesting to candidate Lincoln when she was eleven that he should grow a beard to improve his chances of being elected, wrote President Lincoln in 1864, asking him for a job:

I have heard that a large number of girls are employed constantly and with good wages at Washington cutting Treasury notes and other things pertaining to that Department. Could I not obtain a situation there?³

Louisa Knowlton introduced herself in person to Lincoln and reminded him of her father, Lincoln B. Knowlton, an acquaintance of Lincoln’s when he was an attorney in Illinois. Abraham Lincoln worked with Lincoln Knowlton in several legal cases, and both participated in Whig party politics. Before his death in 1853, Knowlton, a Peoria lawyer-politician, was known as the “Henry Clay of Illinois.” After Knowlton’s death, his widow, Lucretia Knowlton, struggled to support and educate her five children. After her visit with Lincoln, Louisa Knowlton addressed a letter of application to him (page one of the letter is pictured at right).

Dear Mr. Lincoln,

I wish to see you on business: but never having transacted any for myself before, I feared my courage might fail me, did I resort to a verbal communication, before so many strangers.

I introduced myself to you, yesterday, as the daughter of Lincoln B. Knowlton, deceased some ten, or eleven years since. While living, I believe you and my honored father were acquaintances. I am a native of dear, old Illinois, as you are also. These two incidents, have induced me to ask your influence in aiding me to secure a position in some department under government. I should prefer a situation as copyist, but should [that] be difficult of obtaining, any situation, respectable and remunerative, will suffice.

I have come on from Mass. with the fond hope you would assist me. My mother has had a hard struggle to properly educate her family of five children. I am seventeen years of age, and feel it necessary to assist myself and my mother.



Money Drying Room, c. 1863

Image courtesy of the Office of the Curator, Department of the Treasury, Washington, DC.

I intended delaying my visit to you, until I had rec^d some letters of introduction I expect. One, from Mr. Baldwin of Worcester Co. Mass.; the other, from ex senator Knox of Ill. The latter, I think, was provided as my father's substitute to Congress, when his health was too feeble to fill the office himself. You probably know of him if not personally acquainted with him. The letters have not yet arrived but as soon as they do, I will bring them to you. I thought delay might be dangerous, and thus come without them.

Mr. Lincoln, I know you have a great many applications, which seem trivial and harrassing to you, but which are everything to the applicants.

Please do not turn a deaf ear to my petition, but consult the feelings of your own warm, honest heart, and be assured, the blessing of the widow, and her orphaned children, shall rest upon you, for ever more, and God will show mercy even as you have done.

I remain Sir, your true friend
and well wisher.

Louisa W. Knowlton

Washington.

Oct^r 20th/64⁴

In his endorsement on her application for employment, Lincoln recommended Louisa to Secretary of the Treasury William P. Fessenden:

I do not personally know this lady, but she is, I have no doubt, as she says within, the daughter of my old friend L. B. Knowlton. She writes a very good hand, and I shall be really glad, if she can get employment. Hon. Sec. of Treasury please see her.

A Lincoln.

With the recommendation of President Lincoln, Louisa Knowlton received an appointment on December 12, 1864. In 1878, she still worked for the Comptroller of the Currency at an annual salary of \$900.⁵

By Christopher Schnell, Assistant Editor

Notes:

¹ Louisa W. Knowlton, b. c. 1846, in Peoria, Illinois. U.S. Census Office, *Seventh Census of the United States* (1850), Peoria County, IL, 150; *Annual Report of the Comptroller of the Currency*, 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), appendix.

² Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Bonnet Brigades* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 132-36.

³ Grace Bedell to Abraham Lincoln, 14 January 1864, box 35, RG 56, Entry 210: Part II, Records of Various Divisions within the Office of

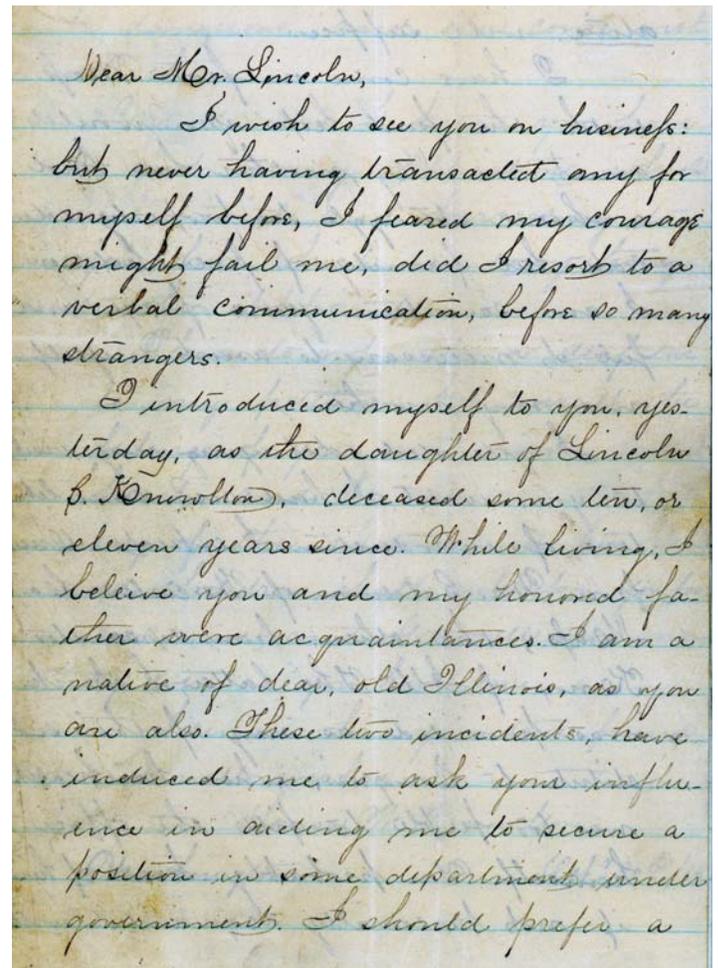


Image courtesy of the National Archives, College Park, MD.

the Secretary of the Treasury, Records of the Division of Appointments, Correspondence of the Division, Applications and Recommendations for positions in the Washington, D.C. Offices of the Treasury Department, 1830-1910, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as RG 56, Entry 210); see also, Mrs. A. Hoffman to Abraham Lincoln, c.1861-1865, box 274; Eugenie G. Mearis to Abraham Lincoln, 16 January 1864, box 395; Mary A. Snead to Abraham Lincoln, c. January 1864, box 541; Carrie Roser to Abraham Lincoln, 3 March 1862, box 500; Nellie M. Pike to Abraham Lincoln, 6 October 1864, box 460, all in RG 56, Entry 210.

⁴ Louisa W. Knowlton to Abraham Lincoln, 20 October 1864, box 330, RG 56, Entry 210; Register of Female Clerks, 2:353, RG 56, Entry 222: Records of the Division of Appointments, Correspondence of the Division, Register of Female Clerks, 1861-1868, National Archives, College Park, MD.

⁵ Both Louisa and her mother Lucretia worked for the Treasury Department, possibly for many years. According to Washington D.C., city directories they lived together in the 1880s and both worked as clerks in the Treasury Department. Lucretia listed herself in the directories as the widow Lincoln B. Knowlton. *Annual Report of the Comptroller of the Currency*, 2:86, appendix for 1878; William H. Boyd, comp., *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1887* (Washington, DC: William H. Boyd, 1886), 538; William H. Boyd, comp., *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia 1889* (Washington, DC: William H. Boyd, 1888), 548.

PROJECT AND STAFF NEWS

Eleanor Saxton, a 2008 graduate of Columbia University, worked temporarily for the project, from December 2008 to April 2009, scanning pardon files at National Archives II in College Park, MD.

The project continues to obtain digital images of Lincoln documents. This quarter, the Massachusetts Archives scanned ninety-four Lincoln documents in their collection for the project. Most of these documents are pressbook copies of letters from John A. Andrew, Civil War governor of Massachusetts, to Abraham Lincoln. The project would like to thank Jennifer Fauxsmith and Michael Comeau for their efforts in obtaining these images.

Special thanks to Richard Hourahan of the Queens Historical Society for providing the project with an image of the society's Lincoln document, an order to affix the seal of the United States to the pardon of Hartman K. Furniss.

We would also like to thank the Colorado State Archives for providing images of several documents from the Governor John Evans Collection. The project appreciates the assistance of Lance Christensen and Elena Cline.

In February, Director Daniel Stowell visited two repositories and a collector in northern Illinois. The project wishes to thank Scott Krafft and Susan R. Lewis at Northwestern University in Evanston, Jennifer Putzier and Dennis Buck at the Aurora Historical Society in Aurora, and Keith Hallam in Hinckley for allowing the project to image their documents.

In late February and early March, Daniel Stowell visited three repositories and three private collectors during a trip to Washington, DC. The project appreciates the assistance of Patty Bruinsma at the Tippecanoe County Historical Association in Lafayette, Indiana; Sally Bosken at the United States Naval Observatory in Washington, DC; Joellen ElBashir at Howard University, also in Washington; and private collectors Dr. James Beck, Wendell Mettey, and Harry Yeaggy.

In March, two private collectors kindly brought their Lincoln documents to Springfield for project staff to scan. We extend our gratitude to Chuck Hand of Paris, Illinois, and Kent Tucker of Rantoul, Illinois.

Also in March, Associate Director John Lupton traveled to Urbana, Illinois, to scan a letter owned by Marilyn Webber Thies and Carl M. Webber. Thanks to both of them for providing access to their Lincoln document (pictured at right).

Because of the increased interest generated by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial celebrations, members of the staff have been busy giving presentations, talking to reporters, participating in documentaries, and writing articles.

In January...

John Lupton gave a program to the Caxton Club in Chicago. He talked about the Papers of Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln's handwriting.

Research Associate Erika Holst presented a program entitled "Old Abe, Dear Sir: Colorful Selections from Lincoln's Mailbag" at a brown bag luncheon sponsored by the Illinois State Museum in Springfield.

In February...

Daniel Stowell spoke to the students at New Berlin Junior and Senior High School about the context and meaning of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The event was

Bloomington, Sept 12. 1853.

J. R. Webber Esq.

My dear Sir:

On my arrival here to court, I find that Mr Dearborn has entered the land and other property of the Central Railroad, for the purpose of ~~county taxation~~. An effort is about to be made to get the question of the right to so tax the lco. before the court, & ultimately before the Supreme Court, and the lco. are offering to engage me for them - As this will be the same question I have had under consideration for you, I am somewhat embarrassed by what has passed between you and me; feeling that you have the prior right to my services; if you choose to secure me at something near such as I can get from the other side - The question, in its ^{magnitudes} ~~magnitudes~~ to the lco. on the one hand; and the counties, in which the lco. has land, on the other, is the largest law question that can now be got up in this State; and therefore, in justice to myself, I can not afford, if I can help it, to mix a fee also together - If you choose to release me, say so by return mail, and then an end - If you wish to retain me, you better get authority from your Court, come directly over in the State, and make common cause with the county.

Very truly your friend
A. Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln to Thomson R. Webber
12 September 1853

Image courtesy of Marilyn Webber Thies and Carl M. Webber.

DONORS

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

The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts
Champaign (Illinois) Public Library
Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Cohen
Cullom and Ann Davis, in memory of The Honorable Harlington Wood Jr.
J.M. Lloyd
John A. Lupton
Georgia L. Northrup, in memory of The Honorable Harlington Wood Jr.
Mrs. Grover R. Smith, in memory of The Honorable Harlington Wood Jr.
George and Anne Smith, in memory of The Honorable Harlington Wood Jr.

part of a simultaneous reading of the Gettysburg Address by students in schools across the state.

John Lupton and Daniel Stowell participated in an American Bar Association teleconference entitled “What We Still Can Learn from Lincoln the Lawyer.” Lupton spoke specifically on Lincoln in the courtroom. Stowell acted as the moderator for the program in which more than one hundred lawyers from across the country participated.

Daniel Stowell, John Lupton, Assistant Editor Stacy McDermott, and Secretary Carmen Morgan attended the Abraham Lincoln Association’s annual banquet, featuring President Barack Obama as the keynote speaker.



President Obama spoke in front of a huge reproduction of LeRoy Neiman’s portrait of Lincoln at the annual banquet of the Abraham Lincoln Association on February 12, 2009.

Image courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, IL.

Daniel Stowell spoke to the Lincoln-Douglas Inns of Court at the United States Courthouse in Springfield on February 18. Stowell gave the attorneys and judges present a brief history of the project and its publications on Lincoln’s law practice. He also provided lessons for contemporary lawyers drawn from Lincoln’s cases and legal correspondence.

Lupton spoke in Springfield at an event of the Capital Area Consortium, an organization of libraries that includes the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. He talked to thirty librarians about the Papers of Abraham Lincoln.

Erika Holst presented a program entitled “Abraham Lincoln: Statesman and Scientist” to the Illinois Society of Professional Engineers’ during their annual banquet in Springfield.

Daniel Stowell spoke to the Rotary Club of Peoria about Abraham Lincoln’s political and legal connections to Peoria and Peorians.

Assistant Editor Chris Schnell spoke to members of the Oakland Landmarks, Inc., the Oakland Historical Foundation, and members of the general public in Newman, Illinois. He talked about Lincoln’s law career, his circuit practice, and the Matson trial.

In March...

Daniel Stowell and John Lupton made a presentation to librarians at the Rolling Prairie Library System’s annual seminar in Decatur, Illinois. Stowell and Lupton provided a brief overview of the project and demonstrated the project’s online publications.

John Lupton presented a program to the Champaign Public Library as part of their Lincoln Bicentennial speaker series. He talked about Lincoln’s handwriting and the art of detecting forgeries.

John Lupton, Daniel Stowell, and Stacy McDermott participated in a round-table discussion moderated by Guy

continued on page 8...

Fraker on Lincoln's law practice. The Illinois State Bar Association filmed the segment for their Continuing Legal Education video on lessons learned from Lincoln's law practice.

Daniel Stowell presented a paper entitled "Abraham Lincoln and the Contest for the General Land Office in 1849" at the annual Illinois History Symposium in Jacksonville.

John Lupton traveled to Southern California to speak at the annual meeting of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers. He talked about Lincoln's law practice and discussed Lincoln's views on being a lawyer.

Daniel Stowell published "Murder at a Methodist Camp Meeting: The Origins of Abraham Lincoln's Most Famous Trial" in the Fall/Winter 2008 issue of *The Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*.

John Lupton served as a guest editor on the Fall 08/Winter 09 issue of *Quiddity: International Literary Journal*. The special edition, entitled "Better Angels" consisted of short stories and poems on Abraham Lincoln's life. The journal is a publication of Springfield (Illinois) College-Benedictine University.

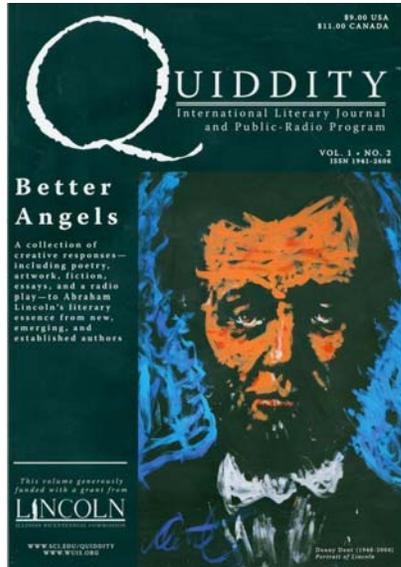
Daniel Stowell and John Lupton published "Lawyer Lincoln" in the February 2009 issue of the *Illinois Bar Journal*. Lupton published "The Common Touch at Trial" as a

part of the larger article entitled "Abraham Lincoln, Esq." in the February 2009 *ABA Journal*.

John Lupton provided comments on the Albert L. Van den Berghen statue of Lincoln in Clinton, Illinois, and Daniel Stowell provided thoughts on Mark Lundeen's statue of Lincoln on a bench in Springfield for Ron Schramm's and Richard Hart's book entitled *Lincoln in Illinois: Commemorating the Bicentennial of the Birth of Abraham Lincoln*.

Daniel Stowell, John Lupton, Stacy McDermott, and Chris Schnell appeared on the WILL-TV (PBS-Champaign-Urbana) documentary entitled, "Lincoln, Prelude to the Presidency." The documentary debuted on 150 public television stations across the country during the week of February 12, and is available on DVD. Former project director Cullom Davis also appeared in the program.

Stacy McDermott and John Lupton appeared on the WTVP-TV (PBS-Peoria) documentary entitled, "Lincoln's Illinois Scrapbook." This program also aired during the week of February 12.



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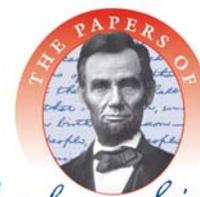
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How You Can Help:

- By advising project staff of known or reported Lincoln documents in your locality. We are seeking copies of any document, letter, or contemporary printed account that relates to Abraham Lincoln's entire life, 1809-1865.
- By making a tax-deductible donation to the Papers of Abraham Lincoln in support of the project. Such gifts provide crucial support in furtherance of the project's objectives.



Abraham Lincoln

This project has been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency, and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.