SPRINGFIELD’S EARLY SCHOOLS
(1819-1860)

Spring Creek Series.

Richard E. Hart
Front Cover: Photograph of school teacher Abel W. Estabrook taken by Springfield photographer Christopher Smith German in the 1860s and mounted as a carte de visite.

Back Cover: Photograph of Edwards School at the northeast corner of Spring and Edwards Streets. This was the Third Ward School, which opened on April 14, 1856.

By law, the sixteenth section of every township was to be used for school purposes, but there being little or no sale for land, and the government price of $1.25 per acre being all that could be realized from its sale, the income to be derived from it could amount to but little. Subscription schools, therefore, had to be depended upon.¹

For my grandson “R. E.”

LINCOLN’S SPRINGFIELD

SPRINGFIELD’S EARLY SCHOOLS
(1819-1860)

Richard E. Hart

Spring Creek Series
Springfield’s Early Schools
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Introduction

Photographs are wonderfully evocative. I recently acquired a small photograph (*carte de visite*) of a distinguished looking man, taken by Springfield photographer Christopher Smith German. At the bottom of the card, written in faint pencil, is the name “Abel W. Estabrook.” I had a vague recollection of Estabrook being one of young Robert Todd Lincoln’s teachers, and the photo image of the stately gentleman prompted me to learn more about him. My research not only confirmed that he was an early Springfield school teacher who indeed taught young Robert Todd Lincoln for three years, but that he was an early abolitionist.

Most of the information I found about Estabrook was from Springfield’s newspaper of the time, the *Journal*, where Estabrook advertised his school and teaching services. Some of the advertisements named other teachers associated with Estabrook and named schools where he taught and served as principal. This drew me into an expanded search for details on the early schools of Springfield and their teachers. Again, most of the information I found came from advertisements in the *Journal* and to a lesser extent from its sister newspaper, the *Register*. The *Journal*, unlike the *Register*, has been indexed and that made the *Journal* search fairly easy. I did not do a complete read of the microfilmed *Register*, and the material from that source is no more than random findings of mine and others.

When I assembled the information I found in chronological order, an interesting story of early Springfield schools emerged. It also revealed facts that compelled partial correction of a previously accepted account of Robert Todd Lincoln attending a school taught by Estabrook at the southeast corner of Seventh and Edwards. Estabrook did teach Robert, but it was at the Springfield Academy on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Capitol. Estabrook never taught at the Central Academy at the southeast corner of Seventh and Edwards. With such similar names — both were academies — it is easy to see how the error was made. Hopefully, in future publications, Lincoln scholars will note the correct name and location of Robert’s three year attendance at the Springfield Academy. The Springfield Academy site on Fifth Street merits recognition in Springfield’s pantheon of Lincoln sites and perhaps a story board could be placed there to note its significance.

From their earliest days on the Illinois frontier, the people of Springfield and Sangamon County sought education for their children. Between 1819 and 1860, Springfield had over 54 teachers and at least 20 named schools. In rude log cabins and rented rooms, teachers set up classes in reading, penmanship, and mathematics. Several of the instructors, male and female, came direct from England or northeast America, where they had taught for years. Their scholars learned to write and deliver original poems and speeches, and to behave with civil decency. If not, whippings were common and expected by parents.
The early schools were private and supported by paid fees. Until 1856, these were all private schools charging tuition. They reflected social biases of the era, separating students by race and gender. By the 1840s, some schools offered college-preparatory instruction in classical languages, science, and philosophy. Leading citizens, such as Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, sent their children to local schools. Finally, in 1856 the private system was replaced by a system of public schools which remain the principal engine of Springfield education today. In the 1850s a public school system emerged and Springfield had its first college, Illinois State University.

From 1819 until 1860, the schools and the teachers shared a number of common characteristics — the organization, opening and success or failure of each school. Each school started out with great optimism, tightly organized and structured with grandiose statements of purpose and courses of study. But they tended to be short lived, with principals and teachers coming and going.

Schools and teachers are a basic building block of any civilized community and nation. Indeed they are perhaps the most important of such blocks. They are the transmitters of culture and the trainers of the “next generation” of every time period. They are the institutional engine for achieving the American dream of every boy and girl having an equal chance. The early schools of Springfield are a magnificent expression of the community’s efforts to achieve these noble American values.

I owe thanks to Curtis Mann and Linda Garvert at the Sangamon Valley Room at Lincoln Library. Their knowledge of the source material on early Springfield history is unmatched, and I thank them for their assistance and sharing of information. I am also indebted to Will Howarth, Springfield native and Princeton professor, for his helpful review and editing. There is no better proof reader than my assistant, Sheila Sullivan, who did the final review. Thanks to you all.

This is not intended to be final in the sense that everything about early Springfield schools has been found. But it is a beginning which I encourage others to add to and expand the knowledge of the schools of Lincoln’s Springfield.

Richard E. Hart
June 17, 2007
Springfield’s Early Schools  
(1819-1860)

1819-1828: The First Decade

During the first ten years of Springfield’s existence (1819-1828), five men, Jabez Capps, Andrew Orr, Erastus Wright, William Mendenhall, Mr. Howe and Thomas Moffitt, taught in private subscription schools in log cabins. There were no public schools.

The Issue of “Firstness”

One of the common hallmarks of 19th century local histories is their attempt to designate the official “first” of everything. The first settler, the first marriage, the first doctor, the first minister. The Sangamon County histories of that genre crowned several persons as Springfield’s “first teacher.” So, if you are looking for the definitive answer to who was Springfield’s first teacher, don’t look here. I don’t know. What I do know starts with Jabez (John) Capps in 1819.

1819

Jabez (John) Capps  
Sangamon County’s First Teacher

Jabez Capps was born in London, England on September 9, 1796. He came to America with other family members in the summer of 1817. Almost two years later in the spring of 1819, 22 year-old Jabez settled in what would become Springfield, and according to at least two 19th century Sangamon County histories was the first school teacher in Sangamon County and in addition was the town’s first shoemaker.3 If he was the first school teacher in Sangamon County, I assume such firstness is based upon his teaching in Springfield, and if so, then he was probably the first school teacher in Springfield.4

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2 (9/9/1796-1896) Obituary: Journal; April 5, 1896.
4 Ball Township in southern Sangamon County also claims that it was there that the first Sangamon County school was built and taught in 1821. Charles Wright, a New Englander, was the school’s first teacher. “He taught school a few years in Sangamon county, at one time in the neighborhood of the Drennans, on Sugar Creek.” Wright was born on July 21, 1799 at Bernardstown, Massachusetts and brought up in Vermont. He and his brother, Erastus, arrived in Springfield on November 21, 1821. Power, p. 788. 1881 History, p. 792. The issue of “firstness” gets very complicated.
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1821

Andrew Orr Teaches First School in Log Cabin on North Side of Washington Between Pasfield and Lewis

The 1881 History of Sangamon County declares that “The first school in Springfield was taught by Andrew Orr, in 1821.”5 Orr taught a school in a log cabin on a hill on the north side of Washington Street, between Pasfield and Lewis streets.6 Orr taught until about 1825.

Zimri Enos7 was a student at Orr’s school and years later he recalled the experience.

I remember going to school in a little old round-log cabin, situated on the top of the hill on the north side of what is now Washington street and between Pasfield and Lewis streets. At that time there was no recognized street west of First street but Jefferson… The road to the school house turned off from Jefferson street, opposite to Klein street, and ran southwest to the crossing of the town branch at Washington and Pasfield streets. There was no bridge over the branch, and only some small logs laid lengthwise with the branch for the use of wagons in crossing. The road continued on the same course south of west, and the path from the branch to the school house turned to the right from the road, and went up to the top of the hill to the school house in the center of a thicket of hazelnuts, crabapples, plum bushes and grapevines, where a space some 40 or 50 feet square had been cleared off a cabin built. Its dimensions were about 14 by 16 feet, with door on the east side, a stick and mud chimney at the north end, and one log cut out some 6 or 8 feet on both the south and west sides for windows, and slabs for benches, and rough boards for desks.

… I remember the teacher, as a threat to punish a scholar, told me to go out and get a switch. I took him at his word and went out and hunted around and finally picked up a hazel switch some 4 or 5 feet long, and over one-half inch thick, and brought it to him, which created such a laugh among the scholars at my expense, that I remember the circumstance. I also remember the high stake and rider fence, not more than a hundred feet west of the school house, around the lot in

5 1881 History, p. 585.
6 This site was on the north side of Washington in the block to the east of the present Springfield High School. A marker in front of present Springfield High School declares that here in 1821 was built the first school in Springfield. School Master: 1821-1822 Andrew Orr, 1822-1824 Erastus Wright, 1824-1826 William Mendenhall, and 1828-1827 Thomas Moffett. The marker was erected by the Springfield Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, April 19, 1918. The dates of the School Masters do not coincide with Zimri Enos’ recollections.
7 Zimri A. Enos was born on September 29, 1821, the son of Pascal P. and Salome Paddock Enos, natives of Connecticut and Vermont. Pascal Enos moved to Springfield with his family in September, 1823, where as Receiver of the Federal Land Office, he opened the land office in a double log cabin, at what is now the northwest corner of Third and Jefferson streets. He was one of the four original proprietors of Springfield.
which Mr. Erastus Wright kept his elk, and of climbing up on that fence to see the elk. …these incidents could not have happened later than the summer or fall of 1825.8

1825

Erastus Wright Teaches

In about 1825, Erastus Wright, followed Andrew Orr as the teacher at the little school with about 50 pupils.9 Wright was born at Bernardstown, Massachusetts on January 21, 1779. He was an abolitionist and taught school for many years.10


9 1881 History, p. 585.

10 Power, p. 788. The family is a very ancient one for New England. Erastus left a history of the family, which he always kept written up, giving the genealogy of the family for nearly two and a half centuries, beginning with Deacon Samuel Wright, who came from England and settled at Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1641. The parents of Erastus Wright left Bernardstown, Massachusetts, and went to Derby, Vermont, in 1802… Erastus remained with his father on the farm, with no other advantages for education than the country schools afforded, until the spring of 1821, when he started west, in company with his brother, Charles. They traveled … until they reached Buffalo, New York. There they embarked on a schooner for Fort Dearborn, now Chicago, Illinois. From Fort Dearborn they started on foot, making a preliminary survey of the route now occupied by the Illinois and Michigan canal, touching the Illinois river near where LaSalle now stands. They then descended the Illinois river to Fort Clark, now Peoria, and from there to Elkhart Grove, where Judge Latham resided. From there they came to Springfield, arriving Nov. 21, 1821. It had been selected as the county seat on the 10th of April before, but there had not then been any town laid out. A log court house had just been completed. Mr. Wright describes the town, as it first appeared to him, in these words: “Elijah Iles had about five hundred dollars’ worth of goods in a log cabin, ten by fourteen; Charles R. Matheney and Jonathan Kelly lived in log cabins not a quarter of a mile distant. The Indians—Kickapoos and Potawatamies—often came along in squads, and when others had built cabins near, called the place ‘log town’” Mr. Wright went with Judge Latham from Springfield to Elkhart Grove and taught school there during the winter of 1821-2. He bought a claim of Levi Ellis and entered it as soon as it came into the market in 1823. From notes on the flyleaf of a New Testament, in the handwriting of Mr. Wright, he says: “I built the first frame house in what is now the city of Springfield.” In 1824 he built a park and traded eighty acres of land in Schuyler county for an elk. Old citizens remember that Mr. Wright rode that elk and drove it in harness, the same as a horse, although he says in a note that he was rough to ride, and not very kind in the harness. Mr. Wright spent three or four years in the lead mining region of Illinois and Wisconsin, and while there he laid out the town of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, using a bed cord for his chain. He was married June 15, 1831, in Fulton county, to Jane Gardner, whose parents were from Saratoga, New York. Mr. and Mrs. Wright had three children. Mrs. Jane G. Wright died Jan. 24, 1841, and Erastus Wright married Lucy Barrows, who died …and Erastus Wright was married March 23, 1868, to Mrs. Lucy F. Carpenter … He died in
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Zimri Enos recalled his teacher, Erastus Wright.

There is one other incident connected with that school that I remember. It was in cold weather, when the children were crowding around the fire to warm, that a cousin of mine, three years older than myself, who was living in our family, as there was no school in his neighborhood, was pushed into the fire and his wrist was very badly burned. This must have occurred in the winter of 1825 and 26, as I find among my father’s papers a receipt from Mr. Wright, for the tuition of three scholars dated April 6, 1826, which could only have been for my brother, my cousin and myself. I do not recollect the teacher, but from what my mother has since told me, know he was Mr. Wright, and that he took great interest in teaching me on account of my being so young. He taught me my letters and to spell in the abs.\(^\text{11}\)

1826

Mr. How’s School at Old Masonic Hall

By the summer of 1826, Zimri Enos was attending a school taught by Mr. How on the second floor of a log house on the south side of Jefferson between Second and Third streets.

My next school experience was with Mr. How in the summer of 1826, who had his school in the old Masonic hall, which was the upper room of a two story log house, with an outside flight of stairs on the west end of it. The building was on Lot 2, Block 8, O. T. P., south side of Jefferson street, about half way between what is now known as the Western hotel and the St. Charles hotel. Our house was on the north side of the street immediately opposite.\(^\text{12}\)

Thomas Moffitt Teaches in Log House at Fifth and Jefferson

Thomas Moffitt arrived in Springfield on November 14, 1826, and succeeded Erastus Wright as the teacher at the little log school house on Washington Street. Moffitt was 29 when he arrived and began teaching. He studied law at the same time. Like many of the early Springfield residents, Moffitt was born in Kentucky—Bath County.\(^\text{13}\) Zimri Enos attended this school during the winter of 1826-27.

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\(^\text{13}\) Power, p. 528. 1881 History, pp. 50, 77, 78, 83, 84, 111, 274, 282, 298, 431, 439, 605, 849, 885, 164. Sangamon County in the Winnebago war of 1827, and in 1832 was captain of a company in the Black Hawk war. He served two years as county commissioner, and from 1843 served as Judge of the Probate Court. Under the constitution of 1848, he was elected County Judge for four years.
[I] was not sent to school any more until the winter of 1826 and 1827 when Judge Moffett opened a school in the double log house at the northeast corner of Jefferson and Fifth streets.

The only events in connection with this school that are impressed upon my memory are the talk and wonder expressed by the scholars at the four Arthur Watson children coming to school regularly a mile and half across the open prairie from their home (now Converse place) in all kinds of weather, in rain, snow and the severest cold. Mrs. George Pasfield’s mother was one of the four.\(^{14}\)

**1827**

**Thomas Moffitt’s School Exhibition**

Zimri Enos recalled preparing for a school exhibition to be given at the court house at the northeast corner of Sixth and Adams streets.

Near the end of the school term Mr. Moffett (\textit{sic}) concluded to close with a school exhibition and assigned pieces to different children to declaim and they practice speaking their pieces before the school. One boy, Nat Boyd, had a poem beginning

\begin{quote}
Ever charming, ever new  
When the landscape tires the view.
\end{quote}

And he caused great amusement and laughter whenever he attempted to speak his piece. He would, in spite of all Mr. Moffett’s efforts, rattle it off so rapidly and in such a sing-song tone that a roar of laughter would be created. I had a piece to speak, which I learned, beginning

\begin{quote}
You’d scarce expect one of my age   
To speak in public on the stage.
\end{quote}

And practiced at home. In the evenings after supper when the table was set back, I would be placed in the middle of the room and orated for the amusement of the family. The exhibition took place in the spring, in the old frame court house at the northeast corner of Adams and Sixth streets, and was considered a grand affair, but neither Nat Boyd nor myself took part in it.\(^{15}\)

The last school term Moffitt taught was in the first Sangamon County court house at the northwest corner of Second and Jefferson streets.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) Zimri Enos Account, p. 203.  
\(^{16}\) 1881 History, p. 585.
In 1828, a school house of rough logs was built near the corner of Second and Adams Streets. The building was a community center serving as a school, a church and a place for other public gatherings. Zimri Enos attended this school.

The last school I attended, previous to the deep snow, was in the log school house built in the intersection of Adams and Second streets. Its greatest length was from east to west and the door was in the middle of the south side. In going to this school we had to cross the deep channel of the branch at the alley on Second between Washington and Adams streets, and the crossing was on a big log some four or five feet above the water, and the log was only roughly leveled off a little on the top. There are two things connected with this school that are vividly impressed on my memory. One was that the teacher would for a few minutes permit the children to study aloud, when the school would become a perfect Babel. The other was, that in addition to the regular intermissions he would permit the boys, six or eight at a time, to go out ostensibly to study their lessons under the clump of big shade trees that stood a few rods northwest of the school house. We little boys used to employ the time playing marbles and mumble peg under a splendid big sugar tree until we were called in. I suppose these peculiarities were intended for relaxation and relief from the fatigue of the long twelve-hour school, more than anything else. Our teacher was no hard disciplinarian but a very kind hearted and intellectual man. One who, if his ambition and energy had equaled his mental qualifications, would have been the leading man in Illinois in his day.

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17 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Photographic Division, Springfield, Illinois.
18 1881 History, p. 585.
19 Zimri Enos Account, p. 204.
1829-1838: The Second Decade

During Springfield’s second decade, at least a dozen private schools opened, each with a single teacher. These were called “subscription schools” and sometimes “slipper schools.” Jane Bergen opened such a school in 1829 and was Springfield’s first female teacher. In addition, two private schools, Springfield High School and Springfield Academy, opened with multiple teachers and printed courses of study. There were no public schools.

1829

First Lady School Teacher, Jane Eliza Bergen, Opens School on Washington Between Fourth and Fifth Streets

Jane Eliza Bergen was born in 1813, in Madison, New Jersey, the daughter of the Rev. John G. and Margareta M. Henderson Bergen. In 1828, Jane came with her parents to Springfield where her father built a house on the south side of Washington Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets. The school had about 60 pupils. Here Jane taught school from 1829 until the fall of 1832. “That was believed to have been the first school taught by a lady in Springfield.” In April, 1833, Jane married Col. Robert Allen and retired from teaching. Zimri Enos attended Jane Bergen’s school.

I also went to school to Miss Jane Bergen, who taught in a little frame school house on the south side of Washington street midway between Fourth and Fifth streets. The only thing impressed on my memory in connection with this school is the punishment I received for misconduct.

In 1829, but one school had been sustained in the place. During that year Miss Jane E. Bergen opened a school in her father’s house, which she continued until the fall of 1832. At that time, a fatality, not entirely unknown to modern female teachers, overtook her—she was married. The school was continued under charge of a Mr. Chase, who was at the same time rector of the recently established Episcopal Church. He remained in the school about two years [1832-1834], and was followed by Mr. Clark, who continued until the summer of 1836. [1834-1836] Thus, for six years [1829-1836], two very good schools had been sustained, each numbering about sixty pupils.

John B. Watson Opens School at Sixth and Adams Streets

In the summer of 1829, John B. Watson opened a school in the “old frame court house” at the northeast corner of Sixth and Adams Street. Zimri Enos attended this school.

I do …remember going to school to Mr. John B. Watson in the old frame court house, but there are only three things connected with it that

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20 Power, p. 114.
21 Zimri Enos Account, p. 204.
22 1881 History, p. 586.
are impressed upon my memory. One is that we had to get over the prairie slough running through the southeast part of the present court house square on a few rails thrown across it; another was the severe [sic] whipping Mr. Watson gave one of the boys for some outrageous conduct, which made a great talk among the scholars; and the third was the delight and fun some of the bigger boys had in teasing and provoking Eliza Robinson until she would become so angry she would take after them, and then they would run out of her way. The date of this school was probably the summer of 1829, Mr. Watson having moved here in the spring. He was subsequently county surveyor and the first to keep any records of surveys.23

John B. Watson, born Feb. 10, 1800, in York District, South Carolina, and came to Illinois with his father, settling somewhere in Randolph county. He was married in Kaskaskia, April 9, 1829, to Mary Gillis, who was born in Wilmington, Delaware, Jan. 31, 1814. They moved to Springfield, soon after they were married, Mr. Watson having been to Sangamon county, in 1827, to look at the country. Of their seven children, all born in Springfield, the eldest died in infancy. J. B. Watson taught school the first year he resided in Springfield. He was afterwards county surveyor and engineer of the Great Western railroad. He went to California in 1849 and returned in 1852. Mr. Watson and his two daughters died of Asiatic cholera, August 11, 1852. Ellen C. died at half-past one o’clock A. M.; Margaret at half-past seven o’clock A. M., and their father died at half-past nine o’clock P.M.24

1830

John Calhoun Teaches School

“In 1830, John Calhoun conducted a school in another part of the city [other than the log school house near the corner of Adams and Second Streets.]”25 Calhoun was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1806, and moved to the Mohawk Valley, New York in 1821. There he attended Canajoharie Academy and studied law in Fort Plain. In 1830, he moved to Springfield, where he studied law and taught school. After serving in the Black Hawk War in 1831-32, he was appointed the surveyor of Sangamon County and trained Abraham Lincoln as a surveyor. He was a Democrat and held a number of public offices, including Mayor of Springfield from 1849 to 1851. The 1840 Springfield Census listed him as a lawyer, school teacher and surveyor.26

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23 Zimri Enos Account, pp. 203-204.
25 1881 History, p. 585.
Springfield’s Early Schools  
(1819-1860)

1831

Jonathan Wadley’s School Room

The Friends of Learning are requested to meet at Mr. Wadley’s school room, on Saturday evening next, at early candle-light, where he will explain to them the mode of teaching English Grammar by lectures, and offer proposals for making up a class.

Oct. 10

1832

Mary J. Cowardin’s English Female School

On April 9, 1832, Mary J. Cowardin opened an English female school in the “lower part of town, near main street [Jefferson Street], in the upper room of a house formerly the property of col. [Thomas] Cox [northeast corner of First and Jefferson Streets].” Her advertisement in the Journal of April 1 is the first of many such advertisements for “slipper” and other schools. Spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic and needle work were taught for tuition of $2.50 per quarter with an additional charge of $3.00 for grammar and geography. Only boys under 10 were also admitted.

Journal Notice of Mary J. Cowardin’s English Female School

27 Journal, November 17, 1831, p. 3, cl. 2.
28 Thomas Cox: Register of land office, appointed by President Monroe in 1823. Finest residence in village in 1823, a double hewn log cabin with porch kitchen and brick chimney. Old Tavern. In 1828, the residence of Col. Cox. Enos Description of Springfield, p. 197: “his hewn log dwelling house with a hall and brick chimneys, one the finest houses in the county. He also erected a two story building adjoining the back of his dwelling.”
29 Journal, April 1, 1832, p. 4.
1834 was a big year in Springfield education. Jane Bergen’s school continued under Mr. Clark. Miss A. Chapin opened a school for young ladies and the Springfield Academy opened.

Jane Bergen’s School Under Charge of Mr. Clark

… the fall of 1832. [Miss Jane E. Bergen’s school] was continued under charge of a Mr. Chase. He remained in the school about two years, and was followed by Mr. Clark, who continued until the summer of 1836.30

Miss A. Chapin Opens School for Young Ladies

About this time, several smaller schools were started by young ladies; among others, one for misses, by Miss Chapin.31

On April 2, 1834, Miss A. Chapin opened a school in “the different branches of an English education” for the young ladies of Springfield. For the previous 2 ½ years she had been the principal of the Edwardsville Female Academy in Edwardsville, Illinois. Tuition was from $3 to $4 per quarter, depending on the studies pursued, and 50 cents for room rent. This is the first Springfield appearance of Miss A. Chapin.

Journal Notice of Miss A. Chapin’s School for Young Ladies32

James H. Wofle Principal of Springfield Academy

On May 31, 1834, the Springfield Academy published notice in the Journal that James H. Wofle was the principal and that each school term was a session of five months. The instruction and tuition charges are set out in the following advertisement from the Journal. The notice states that it is to announce changes in the terms of the school. This implies that the

30 1881 History, p. 586.
31 1881 History, p. 586.
32 Journal, February 7, 1834.
Springfield Academy existed prior to this notice, yet this is the first evidence of its existence that I have found.

![SPRINGFIELD ACADEMY, JAMES H. WOFLE, Principal.

THE terms of the above school are changed, as follows. For further particulars, see advertisement on the first page of this paper.

For session of 5 months.

In Orthography and reading $6 per do.
Writing and Arithmetic, $8 per do.
English Grammar and Geography, $10 per do.
History and belles lettres, $11 per do.
Greek and Latin, or either, $12.50 pr do.
French an extra charge.
Springfield, May 31, 1834.

Journal Notice of James H. Woofe's Springfield Academy]

**John B. Watson Announces Fourth Quarter of School**

In June, 1834, John B. Watson announced in the *Journal* that the fourth quarter of his school would commence on July 7, 1834. His tuition per quarter was: $3.00 for spelling, reading and writing; $3.50 for arithmetic and geography and $4.00 for English grammar and Latin. There was no extra charge for room rent. “…taught here until 1834.”

![WATSON'S SCHOOL.—The fourth quarter of my school will commence on Monday, the 7th day of July next. Terms per quarter:

Spelling reading and writing, $3.00
Arithmetic and Geography, $3.50
English Grammar and Latin, $4.00
No extra charge for room rent, &c.,

SPRINGFIELD, June 29th, 1834.

Journal Notice of John B. Watson’s School]

**Rev. Samuel Chase Teaches at Jane Bergen’s School**

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33 *Journal*, May 31, 1834, p. 3, cl. 6.
34 *1881 History*, p. 585.
35 *Journal*, June 1834.
Rev. Samuel Chase, the new first minister of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, opened a school on May 2, 1836. Tuition for each session of 20 weeks was sixteen dollars. A maximum of 20 boys and girls were admitted to the school. School hours were from 8 to 12 and 2 to 5.

[Miss Jane E. Bergen’s school] was continued under charge of a Mr. [Samuel] Chase who was at the same time rector of the recently established Episcopal Church [June 1835]. He remained in the school about two years... 

An April 20, 1836 announcement published in the Journal described the courses offered and the educational philosophy.

Journal Notice of Rev. Mr. Samuel Chase’s School

36 1881 History, p. 586. http://phi.kenyen.edu/Khistory/chase/biography/ “... the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield began in March 1835, when the Diocese of Illinois was formed with the Right Reverend Philander Chase, the retired Bishop of Ohio, chosen as the first Bishop. At that time the Episcopal Diocese of Illinois was the entire State of Illinois.”

http://www.episcopalspringfield.org/Diocese/Cathedral.htm “By June of 1835, Philander Chase, newly elected Bishop of Illinois, heard that this small group desired to organize a parish and secure the services of clergy. On June 19, 1835, nineteen persons organized themselves as the “Parish of St. Paul’s, Springfield.” Bishop [Philander] Chase gave them his apostolic blessing, leaving his nephew, the Rev. Samuel Chase in charge of the new congregation.”

http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/fcmorehouse1892/04.html “It was about this time that the diocese of Illinois was formed. ...The primary convention was held on March 9th, 1835, and Bishop Chase was elected Bishop. Leaving his family on the farm in Michigan, and accompanied by the Rev. Samuel Chase, who had lately been ordained by Bishop Griswold; and by Mr. [Samuel] Chase’s wife, the Bishop started by stage for his new diocese ...to Springfield, where Mr. [Samuel] Chase remained, and where, on the 28th of June, 1835, Bishop Chase celebrated the Holy Communion for the first time.”

37 Journal, April 30, 1836, p. 3.
1837

Springfield High School Organizes and Opens

In February 1837, Springfield High School was organized by S. M. Sill and H. D. Towne, who acted as principals and teachers. Classes commenced on May 1, 1837. The tuition for a year was $200. The year was divided into two terms of study. The summer term began on May 1 and the winter term on November 1. Boarding students were to provide their own bed and bedding (bedstead excepted). There were plans to create a library.

A large and commodious building has been procured, in a retired part of the town, and where the pupils will find ample room for their necessary recreations.

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Journal’s Springfield High School
Editorial Comment

Springfield High School.—We are gratified to learn, that so great has been the success of this new institution, and such its favorable prospects. That confidence may be placed in its permanence. The number of students is quite respectable—both from the town and country. Public opinion is settled as regards the qualifications and “aptness to teach,” of the gentlemen to whose care the institution is assigned: and we are only discharging a duty to the community, when we state it as our sincere belief, that justice will be done in all cases, to students committed to their charge. Their terms, and other matters relating to the school, can be found in an advertisement in another column.

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Journal Report on Springfield High School’s Organization and Opening

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Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819–1860)

Springfield Seminary Organizes and Opens

In August 1837, the Springfield Seminary was organized with W. T. Hatch and L. Graves as teachers. It was organized pursuant to a resolution adopted at the “Illinois Annual Conference held at Rushville, Illinois,” but the name of the founding organization is not stated. I believe it was the Methodist Church, as the trustees named, C. R. Matheny, G. R. Weber and Dr. F. A. McNeil, were all members of the Methodist Church and annual conferences were part of the Methodist governance process.

Classes were to begin on the first Monday of October. There were to be two 22 week terms each year, each preceded by a four week vacation. The charge for each term was $10. There is an interesting statement in the advertisement.

Learning is established with the view of preparing students for an introduction into the College which is now being erected in the place, under the auspices of the Illinois Annual Conference, as well as to secure to children such an education as parents may desire, who are not able or disposed to give them a full collegiate education.

What happened to the plans for a college “now being erected in this place”?

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Journal Report on Springfield Seminary’s Organization and Opening

40 Journal, September 2, 1837, p. 2, cl. 7.
Springfield High School Winter Session

In October of 1837, teachers S. M. Sill and H. D. Towne published a notice in the *Journal* that the winter session of Springfield High School would begin on the first Tuesday in November for a period of five months. Pupils from outside of Springfield could reside with the family of one of the principals, provided they furnished their own bed and bedding. The charge was again $200 per year. The school had a department for the instruction of teachers.

Parents of students who had just completed the school’s summer session endorsed school. The parents so endorsing were:


First Annual Examination of Students of Springfield High School

On March 24, 1838, S. M. Sill and H. D. Towne announced in the *Journal* that the first annual examination of the students of Springfield High School would begin on Wednesday, March 28, 1838 and end on Friday, March 30, 1838. The examinations took place in the Campbellite or Christian Church. Surprisingly, the citizens of Springfield were invited to be present.

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*Journal*, October 1837.
W. T. Hatch Announces Summer Session of Select School

On April 14, 1838, W. T. Hatch announced that the summer session of his school would begin on Monday, April 9. All branches commonly studied in High School would be taught. The tuition was $10 for a 22 week session. It is not known if this was a part of the Springfield Seminary, under which name Watson conducted a school in August 1837, or a new school opened by Hatch.

Journal Notice of W. T. Hatch’s Summer Session of Select School

Journal Notice of First Annual Springfield High School Student Examinations

43 Journal, April 14, 1838, p. 3, cl. 5.
Penmanship Lessons Offered By S. Ruckel Wiley

S. Ruckel Wiley published a notice in the April 14, 1838 Journal that he had removed to the rear of W. T. Hatch’s school room where he now received pupils to “instruct in the art of Penmanship.”

S. Ruckel Wiley’s Journal Advertisement for Penmanship Lessons

Summer Session of Springfield High School

The 1838 summer session of Springfield High School conducted by S. M. Sill and H. D. Towne began on May 1, and ran for five months. Day pupils were charged $15 per session.

Journal Notice of Summer Session at Springfield High School

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44 Journal, April 14, 1838, p. 3, cl. 6.
45 Journal, September 29, 1838, p. 1, cl. 7.
Halcyon Seminary Opened By S. Ruckel Wiley

Apparently W. T. Hatch’s school did not succeed. It was to have begun on April 9 and continue for 22 weeks, but S. Ruckel Wiley advertised in the Journal that his Halcyon Seminary would open on June 25, 1838, in the school room recently occupied by Mr. Hatch. Tuition was $10 for five weeks.

Mr. Wiley also taught a class in handwriting for men. They would be taught to write in “neat, florid and expedition style, suitable to the counting room or store.” Classes would be held four evenings a week for 36 lessons and the tuition was $6 per quarter.

Journal Announcement of the Opening of the Halcyon Seminary

John Waters and Caleb Williams Teach School

John Waters taught a school for a term, and also Caleb Williams, in 1838.

Mrs. Sheldon’s School for Young Ladies

In the fall of 1838, Mrs. V. M. Sheldon appears to have conducted a “School, for Young Ladies.” In February 1839, she advertised that she would begin the second term on February 25.

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46 Journal, September 29, 1838, p. 1, cl. 7.
1839-1848: The Third Decade

During the third decade, private, single teacher schools continued, but in addition the decade saw the emergence of institutional private schools with principals, multiple teachers and printed courses of study. The Mechanics’ Union was organized and supported education. The Springfield Academy built a two-story brick school that accommodated 150 students. Reverend Francis Springer, Abel W. Estabrook and Reverend John F. Brooks, three major leaders in early Springfield educational affairs, arrived and began their Springfield teaching careers.

1839

Mrs. V. M. Sheldon’s School for Young Ladies
Announcement in Journal

On Monday February 25, 1839, Mrs. V. M. Sheldon opened a “School, for Young Ladies” at the school room near Rev. Mr. Bergen’s. The tuition ranged from $4 per term for the juvenile department to $5 per term for the Philosophy, Chemistry, Geology, Botany, Rhetoric, Logic, Intellectual and Moral Science. Each session was 12 weeks.

Journal Announcement of Second Term of Mrs. V. M. Shelton's School for Young Ladies

She offered a class in Mezzotint Painting should a suitable number wish to be instructed in the same.

A mezzotint…presents halftones. … in this type of intaglio (nonrelief) print, subtle gradations of light and shade, rather than lines, form the image. “The copper-plate it [the mezzotint] is done upon, when the artist first takes it into hand, is wrought all over with an edg’d tool, so as to make the print one even black, like night: and his whole work after this, is merely introducing the lights into it; which he does by scraping off the rough grain according to his design, artfully smoothing

47 Journal, February 18, 1839.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

it most where light is most required …” William Hogarth, The Analysis of Beauty (1753)\(^{48}\)

**Springfield Academy Established**

On March 1, 1839, the Springfield Academy was incorporated as a joint stock company. The members of the first Board of Trustees were Washington Iles, F. Webster, Jr., Stephen T. Logan, John F. Rague, Nicholas H. Ridgely, Robert Allen, Jane Bergen’s husband, and Charles R. Matheny, President.\(^{49}\)

Thus far all schools had been sustained by individual effort. No good school house had been erected, and no attempt made to establish a permanent institution. It was evident that the growing wants of the community, its safety at home and its reputation abroad, demanded better educational advantages. Many of the prominent citizens felt this want, and determined to meet it. Accordingly, a joint stock company was organized, and an act to incorporate the Springfield Academy was approved March 1, 1839.\(^{50}\)

**Springfield Academy Buys Lots on Fifth Street Between Monroe and Market**

On April 27, 1839, the Springfield Academy purchased two lots on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Market (Capitol).\(^{51}\) The Board of Trustees of the Academy paid Elvira L. Edwards $1,000 for the two lots and began construction there of a two-story brick building that would accommodate 150 students.

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\(^{48}\) http://www.metmuseum.org/TOAH/HD/mztn/hd_mztn.htm
\(^{49}\) *1881 History*, pp. 586-587.
\(^{50}\) *1881 History*, pp. 586-587.
On June 21, 1839, Francis Springer announced in the *Journal* that his school would be held in the school room recently occupied by Mrs. Lee, thus implying that Mrs. Lee was a school teacher in Springfield prior to this.

**Rev. Francis Springer Opens English and Classical School**

In May 1839, Reverend Francis Springer and his family moved from Maryland to Springfield, and he began to teach soon after his arrival. On June 24, 1839, he opened the “English and Classical School.” Springer advertised his school in the *Journal* and stated that it would be held in the school room recently occupied by Mrs. Lee. Tuition ranged from $4 to $7 per quarter depending upon the course of study. Francis continued to teach and preach until 1847, when he moved to Hillsboro, Illinois, as President of Hillsboro, College.

In February 1840, Francis bought a lot and soon after built a house at the southeast corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets.

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52 *Journal*, June 21, 1839, p. 3, cl. 1.
54 *Power*, p. 675. These were both under the direction and patronage of the Lutheran church.
Rev. Francis Springer was born on March 19, 1810, at Roxbury, Franklin County, Pennsylvania. As a young man, he learned sign and ornamental painting. He was educated at Pennsylvania College and studied theology at the Theological Seminary of the Lutheran church, both located at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He also studied under two distinguished ministers, one at Otsego and the other at Schohaire, New York. He paid his expenses by occasionally working at his trade, and teaching school. On October 18, 1836, he was licensed to preach by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and was ordained by the same body on October 17, 1837.

He was married on April 11, 1837, to Mary Kreigh, at Clear Springs, Washington County, Maryland. She was born on February 28, 1815, in that county. He taught school and preached in that vicinity from October, 1836, for about two and a half years. Francis and Mary had one child in Maryland, and moved to Springfield, Illinois, arriving in May, 1839, where four children were born. In 1847, they moved to Hillsboro, Illinois, where
they had two children, and in 1855 moved back to Springfield, where they had one child.\textsuperscript{56}

**Springfield Academy for Boys Opened on South Fifth Street**

By September 28, 1839, even before the two-story brick building was fully completed, the Springfield Academy opened as a “High School” for boys. S. M. Sill, who had operated an “academy” in Springfield for several years prior to this under the name Springfield High School, was the teacher.\textsuperscript{57}

\begin{center}
\textbf{1858 Map of Springfield Showing Location of the Springfield Academy}\textsuperscript{58}
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\textbf{Springfield Academy’s Advertisement, Register, October 28, 1839}\textsuperscript{59}
\end{center}

**1840**

**Mechanics’ Union Chartered**

The charter of the [Mechanics’] Union was granted on February 3, 1840, the same day that the town of Springfield received its charter as a city. The charter, drawn and sponsored in the legislature by Abraham Lincoln, gave as the purposes of the Union: “Relief to the sick and disabled members thereof, and to the widows and orphans of deceased members; for the establishment of a common school and a public library, and for the promotion of literature, science, and the mechanic arts.”\textsuperscript{60}

**Springfield Mechanics’ Union Postpones Plans for School**

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Power}, p. 675.
\item \textsuperscript{58} \textit{City of Springfield, Sangamon County, Illinois, 1858 Map}, Surveyed and Published by William Sides, City Engineer. (Hereinafter cited as “1858 Map.”)
\item \textsuperscript{59} \textit{Register}, October 28, 1839, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{60} \textit{The Springfield Mechanics’ Union 1839-1848}, Harry E. Pratt, Journal of Illinois State Historical Society, Vol. XXXIV, Number 1, March 1941, pp. 130-134. (Hereinafter cited as “Pratt.”)
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
In 1840 [Mechanics’ Union] school plans were postponed because of the “peculiar pressure of the times.”

Springfield Female School Opened by J. H. and M. E. Triplett

In May of 1840, the Springfield Female School was opened with the assistance of the Rev. Charles Dresser and with J. H. and M. E. Triplett teaching. The Journal advertisement dated May 5, states that the school was prepared to receive 10 or 15 additional pupils. The tuition was $15 for a 5 month session.

Journal Notice of J. H. and M. E. Triplett’s Opening of Springfield Female School

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61 Pratt.
62 Journal, May 15, 1840, p. 3, cl. 3.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

Springfield Academy Building Completed and Rev. John F. Brooks Named Principal

In September 1840, the Springfield Academy published a notice in the Journal that the Academy building had been finished and was “prepared for the accommodation of schools for pupils of both sexes according to the original design.” The school was on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Capitol (formerly Market). A lot, 80 feet by 160 feet, had been purchased and $7,000 spent in building a two-story brick sufficient to accommodate 100 pupils. The school rooms and the playgrounds were separated for boys and girls. The school opened on October 12.

The notice stated the background for establishing the school. “...a number of the inhabitants of this place, under the influence of the difficulty which had been experienced in the attempt to establish schools, from the want of rooms suitable for their accommodation, have formed an association for the purpose of erecting a good school-house.”

Rev. John F. Brooks, late of Bellville and Waverly, was called to Springfield to take charge of the Springfield Academy, and from its opening in October 1840 until the spring of 1843. He and two assistants conducted the Springfield Academy as a school open to both boys and girls.63

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63 1881 History, pp. 598-599, 687.
64 Journal, September 18, 1840, p. 3, cl. 1.
Rev. Brooks was a remarkable man and his biography from John Carroll Powers *Early Settlers of Sangamon County* follows:

Rev. John F. Brooks was born on December 3, 1801, in Oneida County, New York. His parents were New Englanders, but emigrated to New York in 1792, when the whole region was a forest, with here and there a small settlement. In 1828, John graduated from Hamilton College, in that county, and later studied for three years in the theological department of Yale College. In the autumn of 1831, he was ordained as a minister by Oneida Presbytery, and was married soon after to a daughter of Rev. Joel Bradley. They immediately left for Illinois, under a commission from the American Home Missionary Society. They traveled by canal, lake and stage to Pittsburg, thence by steamboat, down the Ohio river to New Albany, Indiana. At New Albany, Brooks purchased a horse and “Dearborn,” …a one horse wagon with stationary cover. They crossed the Wabash river at Vincennes. After passing a skirt [border] of timber on the west side, they entered the first prairie of Illinois, in the midst of a furious storm. They were far from any house, with only the carriage as a protection, and that in danger of being upset by the gale. They weathered the storm, however, by turning the back of their carriage to it, but the prairie was covered with water, and they could only discern the path by observing where the grass did not rise above the water. They sought a house to dry their garments, and that night arrived at Lawrenceville, where Rev. Brooks preached his first sermon in Illinois, the next day being Sabbath.

About three days later they arrived at Vandalia, the State capital, having been five weeks on the way from the vicinity of Utica, New York. After visiting several towns and villages, Brooks located for the winter at Collinsville, in the southern part of Madison County, preaching, alternately,

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65 *Journal*, September 18, 1840, p. 3, cl. 1.
there and at Belleville. In the spring of 1832 he moved to Belleville, where he lived for five years, preaching there and at several other points in St. Clair and Monroe counties.

About the second year of his residence at Belleville, he and his wife opened a school, which increased so rapidly they employed an assistant. They taught all grades, from A, B, C, to the classics and higher mathematics. In 1837 Brooks was chosen principal of a Teachers’ Seminary, being established in Waverly, Morgan County. He taught there with success, but the Financial Panic of 1837 caused the enterprise to fail. During the time he was teaching he tried to preach one sermon every Sabbath, but the double labor induced bronchial affection, from which he has never fully recovered. In 1840, John Brooks was called to Springfield to take charge of the Springfield Academy.

John Brooks was one of seven young men who banded together, while in the theological school at Yale to establish a college in Illinois. Illinois College, at Jacksonville is the result of their exertions. Mr. Brooks has been one of its trustees from the first.66

**Beaumont Parks Teaches in Home at Fifth and Miller Streets**

Beaumont Parks came to Springfield in the fall of 1840 and taught school at his residence at Fifth and Miller Streets.67 Parks was born on January 1775, in Norwich, Connecticut. He was an orphan at age 12. As a young man he traded with the French Canadians and Indians and used his profits to pay for his education. He and his brother-in-law, Rev. Mr. Bacon, worked and traveled by rivers and lakes from Vermont to the Georgian Bay and Lake Huron region. In preparation for approaching winter, he built a house. Col. Dunham, commander of the U. S. Fort, at Michilimacincac, found him and was astonished at seeing a boy of fourteen or fifteen years preparing to winter alone in that inhospitable region. Parks told Dunham that he was trying to raise money to pay for his education, and Dunham offered him a home with his family and promised to help him with his education. Parks accepted, went to the Fort and remained there for three or four years.68 This was probably Jane Bergen’s school.

**James C. Sutton’s Shop in Old School House**

**South Side of Washington Between 4th and 5th**

James C. Sutton, a carpenter, came to Springfield in the fall of 1840 and opened his first shop in an old school house, which stood a few feet east and on the opposite side of Washington Street from the Chenery Hotel.69

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66 Power, p. 144.
68 Power, p. 553.
69 1881 History, p. 720.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

1841

Springfield Mechanics’ Union School House Fundraising Fails

A year later [1841], a subscription paper which was passed among the members [of the Mechanics’ Union] and the business men of the city failed to raise $450 needed to build a frame schoolhouse.  

1842

Samuel R. Allard and George Kimball Open Male Department of Springfield Seminary

Samuel Richardson Allard followed Rev. Brooks as head of the girls Springfield Academy and Allard was followed by George Kimball. The Journal of February 18, 1842 contained a notice that the “Male Department” of the Springfield Seminary would open on March 7 under the supervision of Samuel R. Allard and George Kimball. The first term was for the months of September through December, the second term from January through April and the third term from May through August, excepting three weeks. The tuition was $16 per year for the “Common English branches,” $24 per year for the “English Classics” and $28 per year for Latin and Greek Language.

A Springfield Seminary had originally opened in August 1837 as an institution of the Methodist Church. It is unclear if the Springfield Seminary advertised here is the same as that of 1837. It is interesting to note that Washington Iles is President of the Seminary advertised in 1842. He was not an officer of the 1837 Seminary, but had been a Trustee of the Springfield Academy in 18__. Confusing, to say the least.

Springfield Mechanics’ Union Buys Old First Presbyterian Church: Opens School (Springfield Academy/Springfield City School)

70 Pratt.
71 Samuel Richardson Allard was born on May 29, 1809. He died on about 1899. His father was Isaac Allard, born on September 25, 1775, in Templeton, Worcester, Massachusetts. His mother was Achsah Maynard, born on December 22, 1777, in Philipston, Massachusetts. Genealogy of Richard Haven, Josiah Adams, 1843, p 38.
72 Journal, February 18, 1842, p. 3, cl. 3.
In May, 1842, the First Presbyterian Church laid the cornerstone of a new church at the southeast corner of Third and Washington streets.
The church, anxious to dispose of its old building, located just south of the new structure, offered to sell it to the [Mechanics’] Union for $500.
The deal was made, the Union paying $212 in State Bank paper-worth but 75 per cent of its face value-and giving a note for the balance.
The contract was signed in December, 1842, for the Union by Caleb Birchall, John Connelly, S. S. Kegwin and Thomas Lewis.

After the building was acquired, Michael Barry was employed at $250 a year as teacher of the school.
A school board was chosen, “consisting of Eli Cook, John Brodie, G. R. Weber, E. R. Wiley and Caleb Birchall.” Tuition fees were set low enough for all mechanics.
For $2.00 a quarter, a pupil could study spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, and composition.
For $4.00, the school offered geometry, chemistry, Latin, Greek, natural philosophy and the history of the United States.
Immediately popular, the school’s enrollment rose to 130.

Until an addition to the building could be erected in the fall of 1844, the girls were taught in the basement of the new Presbyterian Church [at the southeast corner of Third and Washington Streets].
Though deep in debt, the Union erected a five-foot fence to separate the boys’ and girls’ playgrounds.73

Abel W. Estabrook Begins Teaching in Springfield at Springfield Seminary

In 1842, Abel W. Estabrook received an A. B. degree from Illinois College at Jacksonville74 and moved to Springfield where he began a teaching career.
On August 26, 1842, George Kimball of the Springfield Seminary published a notice in the Journal that he and Abel Estabrook will “re-open the male department of the Springfield Seminary on Monday next.”
Apparently Allard moved on, as there is no further evidence of his teaching in Springfield. This would have been the beginning of the fall term that ran from September through December.
The notice stated that “Music, both in its elements and practice, will be taught, without additional charge, as a regular branch of Education in this school, by Mr. Estabrook.”

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73 Pratt.
74 Illinois College records in the Public Relations Office, Jacksonville, Illinois.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

Mr. Kimball and Abel W. Estabrook Announce
Re-Opening of Springfield Seminary

Carte de visite of Abel W. Estabrook
by Christopher Smith German
Circa 1860s

Public Invited to Exhibition at Springfield Seminary

75 Journal, August 26, 1842, p. 2, cl. 7.
The December 16, 1842 edition of the *Journal* contained an invitation to the public to attend an Exhibition at Kimball and Estabrook’s Springfield Seminary on December 22.

*NOTICE. — There will be an Exhibition at the Springfield Seminary on Thursday evening, 22d Dec. instant. The public generally are invited to attend.*

*Journal Notice of Exhibition at Springfield Seminary*  

**1843**

**Rev. John F. Brooks Resigns as Head of Springfield Academy**

In the spring of 1843, the Rev. John F. Brooks resigned as head of the Springfield Academy due to failing health. This ended his tenure that began in 1840. From the spring of 1843 until the fall of 1853, the Springfield Academy was exclusively for females.

**Birth of Robert Todd Lincoln**

Robert Todd Lincoln, the son of Abraham and Mary, was born on August 1, 1843.

**Rev. John F. Brooks Opens School for Young Ladies**

In the fall of 1843, Rev. John F. Brooks continued teaching, however, opening a school for young ladies in a small room near his house on the west side of Fifth between Cook and Edwards Streets.

The applications soon outran the size of the room, which he enlarged, and his wife again assisted him.  

After this he labored for two years under direction of Presbytery supplying vacant churches in this and adjoining counties. His health was now much impaired, and designing light labor, he opened a school for young ladies in a small room near his own house.

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76 *Journal*, December 16, 1842, p. 3, cl. 2.  
77 *1881 History*, pp. 598-599.  
78 *1881 History*, p. 598.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

Mrs. Sheldon’s Select School for Young Ladies
Announcement in Journal

On Monday, November 6, 1843, Mrs. V. M. Sheldon opened a “Select School for Young Ladies” at the former residence of J. W. Keys. The tuition ranged from $5 per term for the Juvenile department to $5 per term for the Philosophy, Chemistry, Geology, Botany, Rhetoric, Logic, Intellectual and Moral Science, and the higher branches of Mathematics. Each session was 11 weeks.

Journal Notice of Mrs. V. M. Sheldon’s Select School for Young Ladies

1844

Rev. Francis Springer Heads Springfield Academy
(Springfield Mechanics Union School)

The Rev. Francis Springer succeeded Rev. John F. Brooks as head of the Springfield Academy (Springfield Mechanics’ Union School.)

From 1844 until 1847, Rev. Francis Springer operated the Springfield Academy. He was succeeded by Abel W. Estabrook.

The Reverend Francis Springer...was employed [by Mechanics’ Union] in 1844 at an annual salary of $500. Miss Hutchins, teacher of the girls, was paid $200 per year, and Miss Torrey and Miss Cook, her assistants, $6.25 each a month. Firewood at $1.75 a cord was the greatest school expense next to the salaries.  

79 Journal, October 24, 1843.
80 Pratt.
Mrs. Anderson Opens Seminary for Young Ladies at the Academy

On January 27, 1844, Mrs. Anderson opened a Seminary for young ladies “at the Academy” on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Capitol (Market) Streets. The tuition was $4 per quarter. In addition to the usual courses, she taught French, Italian, astronomy, ornamental needlework and fancy knitting, for an extra charge.

Miss G. Olin Opens School for Young Ladies

On June 10, 1844, Miss G. Olin opened a school for young ladies in the school room owned and formerly occupied by Rev. Francis Springer. She charged $3 to $5 per pupil per term. Would this have been at the corner of Eighth and Jackson?

Mr. Sheldon Opens Select School for Young Ladies at the Seminary

On June 11, 1844, Mr. Sheldon opened a “School for Misses at the Seminary.” The tuition ranged from $3 per term for the Juvenile department to $5 per term for the Philosophy, Chemistry, Geology, Botany, Rhetoric, Logic, Intellectual and Moral Science, and the higher branches of Mathematics. Each session was 11 weeks.

81 Journal, January 22, 1844.
82 Register, June 18, 1844, p. 3.
Rev. John F. Brooks Opens School for Girls on South Fifth

By the fall of 1844, Rev. John F. Brooks’ school for young ladies had outgrown the small room where he had taught since 1843. He moved his school to his own residence on Fifth Street.84

The applications soon outran the size of the room, which he enlarged, and his wife again assisted him.85

Addition to Springfield Mechanic’s Union Building

Until an addition to the building [Mechanics’ Union] could be erected in the fall of 1844, the girls were taught in the basement of the new Presbyterian Church.86

Springfield City School (Springfield Academy)
Student Examinations

On Thursday, September 26, 1844, the Springfield City School conducted student examinations in the school room in Mechanics’ Hall on the east side of Third Street, between Washington and Adams. Evening exercises in the basement of the First Presbyterian Church at the southeast corner of Third and Washington Streets included speeches by students and an address by E. R. Wiley on behalf of the Trustees of the School and by Mr. Springer, principal teacher.

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83 *Journal*, July 4, 1844, p. 3.
84 *1881 History*, p. 687.
85 *1881 History*, pp. 598-599.
86 *Pratt*. 
Springfield’s Early Schools  
(1819-1860)

This becomes confusing. Springer had just taken charge of the Springfield Academy and remained in charge until 1847. Mr. Wiley was an officer of the Mechanics’ Union. Pratt’s article says that Springer was hired as principal of the school supported by the Mechanic’s Union. So it appears that the Springfield Academy may have also been known as the Springfield City School and it was under the egis of the Springfield Mechanics Union.

Springfield City School (Springfield Academy?) Examinations

1845

Springfield City School Opens Under Patronage of Springfield Mechanics’ Union

An announcement in the May 24, 1845 Journal informed the public that the “Springfield City School” would open on Monday, June 2, 1845 under the patronage of the Springfield Mechanics’ Union. V. M. Shelton was principal of the Male Department and Mrs. Shelton was principal of the Female Department. Tuition ranged from $2 to $4 per term, depending on the course taken. Mr. B. R. Biddle, Secretary of the Board of Trustees, was responsible for collecting the tuition at his shop on the south side of the Public Square.

The announcement thanked the Mechanics’ Union for its patronage and stated that this was an experiment in establishing a school at reduced tuition so that the tuition was within

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87 Journal, September 19, 1844, p. 3, cl. 2.
the means of all the people, or nearly all the people. During the preceding school year, five orphan children had been given free instruction and the Mechanics’ Union pledged to continue “as large a number of that unfortunate class in the school as circumstances will permit.” Note is made that the school is not just for the children of members of the Mechanics’ Union, as some believed.

Mr. and Mrs. V. M. Sheldon were employed in May, 1845 to take complete charge of the school. They were allowed seven-eighths of the income for the services of themselves and their assistant. The remaining eighth was to be used by the Union for incidental expenses of the school.

…The efforts of the Union to establish a library did not have much success. Inability to provide a permanent place of meeting was one cause, but lack of interest among the members was the chief of failure.

1846

Birth of Edward Baker Lincoln

Edward Baker Lincoln, the son of Abraham and Mary, was born in Springfield on March 10, 1846.

Common School Convention at Springfield

On December 16, 1846, a common school convention was held in Springfield. Teachers, youth and friends of education were invited to attend. Francis Springer, Mason Brayman, I. S. Britton, J. M. Sturdevant, and William H. Williams constituted the Committee of Arrangements. John B. Watson was secretary of the Convention.

88 Pratt, pp. 130-134
89 Journal, May 24, 1845, p. 3, cl. 1.
1847

Abel Estabrook and H. D. Brigaam Teach at Springfield Academy

On November 23, 1847, Abel Estabrook and H. D. Brigaam published a notice in the *Journal* that they had “taken the Academy” [the Springfield Academy] where they would teach young men. The school was divided into two departments, Classical and Primary, and the school year was divided into four quarters of 11 weeks each. Tuition per quarter ranged from $2.00 to $4.00 for the Primary Department and from $4.00 to $5.00 for the Classical Department depending upon the courses taken. The school was intended to be a college preparatory school for young men.

Abel W. Estabrook and H. D. Brigaam
Announce Opening of Springfield Academy

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91 *Journal*, December 3, 1846, p. 3, cl. 4.
92 *Journal*, November 25, 1847, p. 2, cl. 4.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

State Bank of Illinois Releases Lien on Springfield Academy Property

On November 27, 1847, the State Bank of Illinois transferred its interest (probably releasing a mortgage) in the Springfield Academy property on South Fifth Street, “being the premises on which the Springfield Academy now stands,” to the Trustees of Springfield Academy for $750. The building alone cost $7,000 when it was constructed in 1840, so this $750 must have been the pay-off amount on a debt owed the State Bank.

Rev. Francis Springer Moves to Hillsboro, Illinois

In 1847, Reverend Francis Springer and his family moved from their Springfield home at Eighth and Jackson Streets to Hillsboro, Illinois, where Francis served as President of Hillsboro College.

1848

Robert Todd Lincoln Attends “Slipper School”

Robert Todd Lincoln is said to have attended a “slipper school.” Robert would have been five years old on August 1, 1848, the age when today’s youngsters would begin kindergarten. If the same was true in the 1840s, Robert probably began his first schooling in the fall of 1848 under “the slipper-guardianship of a School mistress” and continued such until the fall of 1850 when he entered Abel W. Estabrook’s Springfield Academy.

[Robert] recalled, “I have a dim recollection of being under the slipper-guardianship of a School mistress until 1850,” and then for the next three years he was in attendance at an academy operated by a Mr. [Abel W. Estabrook] Esterbrook.

…before this academy training [in the fall of 1850], Robert had started his education in a little primary “slipper” school taught by an unnamed lady who enforced discipline upon her charges by spanking them with her slipper.

93 Albert Hale, James Lamb, Nicholas H. Ridgley, Erastus Wright and Peleg C. Canedy.
1849-1861: The Fourth Decade

During the fourth decade, the Illinois State University moved from Hillsboro to Springfield where a large brick school building was erected on the north side of Springfield. The Central Academy emerged in 1853 and faded in 1858. The emergence of a public school system spelled the end of private subscription schools, for the most part. Separate schools for the “colored children” emerged, both privately and publicly.

1849

Albert G. Burr Opens Brick School

On Monday, August 13, 1849, Albert G. Burr opened “another school,” a new brick school house in the “west part of the city.” “All the branches of a common English education will be embraced in the studies of the school.” Tuition was $2.50 per pupil for a twelve week quarter.

Albert G. Burr’s Register Notice of New School in Brick School House

Rev. John F. Brooks Opens Female Seminary at Fifth and Edwards

In two recorded transactions, in August of 1849 and January 1850, John F. Brooks purchased a two story frame building at the northeast corner of Fifth and Edwards Streets. In the fall of 1849, he opened a Female Seminary in the newly purchased building with three assistants and Mrs. Brooks teaching the primary department in “the room he previously occupied.” He taught there for four years, until 1852.

97 Register, August 4, 1849, p. 2, cl. 4.
His [Rev. Brooks’] school increased, his health improved, and he purchased the property on the corner of Fifth and Edwards streets, rearranging the two story frame building internally to suit the purposes of a school. This he opened as a Female Seminary, the autumn of 1849, with three assistants, and Mrs. Brooks in charge of the primary department, held in the room he previously occupied.

In addition to the usual course, Mr. Brooks added drawing, painting and music; two pianos were introduced, and this is believed to have been the first effort at teaching music in the schools of Springfield. This seminary prospered for four years, when Mrs. Brooks’ health failed, and it became necessary to close the institution.99

**Reverend Francis Springer Sells Residence at Eighth and Jackson Streets to Charles Arnold**

In 1849, Reverend Francis Springer sold his residence at Eighth and Jackson Streets to Charles Arnold, who retained ownership until the 1870s.100

**1850**

**Abel W. Estabrook Announces Beginning of School Term at the Springfield Academy**

On Wednesday, January 2, 1850, Abel W. Estabrook opened his school at the Springfield Academy building on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Market (now Capitol). He announced that he had “determined to limit the number of scholars in my school” to 36.

99 *1881 History*, pp. 598-599. After Mrs. Brooks’ death in 1860, Rev. Brooks devoted a large part of his time to hearing classes and giving private lessons.

Death of Edward Baker Lincoln

Edward Baker Lincoln died on February 1, 1850, at age 3 years and 11 months.

“Colored School” Seeks Funds

The following resolution was published in the June 14, 1850 edition of the *Journal* and is the first evidence of the presence of a separate school for Springfield’s African-American children. The article announced that a Public Supper to aid the “colored school” would be held on June 20th at the Colored Baptist Church. The ladies were to solicit donations “among our white friends.”

COLORED SCHOOL.

Whereas the people of color in this place desirous of educating their children, and finding themselves too weak in point of numbers to sustain a school permanently amongst them, therefore we, the Trustees of this the Colored School, in view of our weakness, propose giving a PUBLIC SUPPER, in aid of this School, on Thursday, the 20th of this month, at the Colored Baptist Church, in this city. We have appointed a committee of females to solicit donations among our white friends towards making the Supper, and we hope that their claims will not be disregarded.

Thomas Cox, James Blanks,
Jno. Jackson, Wm. Baker,
Wm. H. Butler, Aaron Dyer,
H. W. Baylor, S. S. Ball.

Seventh and Edwards Street Sold to Second Charge Methodist Episcopal Church Trustees

On July 22, 1850, Charles and Louisa Arnold sold the northeast corner of Seventh and Edwards to the Trustees of the “Second Charge Methodist

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101 *Journal*, January 22, 1850, p. 2, cl. 5.
102 *Journal*, June 14, 1850, p. 3, cl. 1.
103 Levi Hodge, Seth L. Cornell, John W. Weir, George R. Honold, Newton E. Bateman, John S. Condell and Absalom Kalb. *1881 History*, p. 1005: Absalom Kalb was favorably known in the county and city of Springfield, for the time of over sixteen years, to the day of his death, January 7, 1865, for his
Episcopal Church” for $200. The deed required the Trustees to build a “house or Place of Worship for the use of the members of the Second Charge Methodist Episcopal Church.” They did and the structure became the location of the Central Academy in 1853.

Abel W. Estabrook Teaches Robert Todd Lincoln at Springfield Academy

At the beginning of the 1850-1851 school year—probably in September of 1850—Robert Todd Lincoln entered Abel W. Estabrook’s Springfield Academy on the west side of Fifth Street between Monroe and Capitol (Market). Robert was seven years old and he would continue his education at the Springfield Academy for three school years, from the fall of 1850 until the end of the 1853-1854 school term when he was nine. There is a tradition that when Robert was learning Latin at this time, his father studied along with him and the two declined nouns together.

This must have been a stressful time in the Lincoln household. Robert’s brother Eddie died on February 1. Mary was six-months pregnant and would deliver William Wallace on December 21. Abraham was on the circuit and away from home for many days during the year. He was in Springfield from September 1 until September 12.

George Latham, Robert’s friend, also attended the Academy.

Abel W. Estabrook had been teaching in Springfield since he graduated from Illinois College at Jacksonville in 1842. In 1850 Estabrook received an A. M. degree from Illinois College and the 1850 United States Census for Springfield listed him as a 35-year-old school teacher who has property valued at $1,500. Living with him were his 22-year-old wife Laura who was born in New York and a 14-year-old boy named Lyman Moose (Moore?) who was born in Illinois.

Ossian Parks’ School House on North Fifth Street, Near Union

zealous adherence to the cause of the Union, as also for his fervency in the church of his early choice. The M. E. Church always found in him a true friend and liberal supporter, for more than sixty years.


105 Wayne Temple says at page 45 of his Abraham Lincoln: From Skeptic to Prophet that the Estabrook Academy was located at the northeast corner of Seventh and Edwards Street. This is not the case. Estabrook’s Academy was on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Market (Capitol).

106 Robert Todd Lincoln was born on August 1, 1843.


Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

The following article describing a school house on north Fifth Street, near Union, appeared in the October 7, 1905 edition of the Springfield News:

Fifty-five years ago a school house stood on North Fifth street near Union, where many of the—boys acquired the rudiments of education.

The old school house of 1850 has been preserved to the present generation through a pencil sketch… It was presented to the Springfield News by A. W. Arnold, one of the “boys” who attended the school and who, although not a professional artist, has reproduced the scene with remarkable fidelity to detail.

An inscription under the picture reads: “Mister Parks standing in the door of the empty school house watching the scholars as they study on the prairie at Fifth and Union streets fifty-five years ago.” As shown in the picture, Fifth street was closed north of this point by a rail fence, enclosing a cornfield, so that the old school house stood at the very northernmost limit of the city. The school was kept by Ossian Parks, a school master of the old regime who maintained order, as Mr. Arnold remembers with the aid of a certain leather strap which he doubled and wielded with great force and accuracy. The boys used to take their books out into the school yard and study there. It was on some such occasion Mr. Arnold relates, that instead of studying his lesson he had caught a bumble bee and was proceeding to bury it in the soft prairie soil when the watchful Parks slipped up behind and landed on him with the strap, leaving marks that turn red and tingle in imagination, whenever the memory is recalled.¹⁰⁹

[Image of the old school house]

Ossian Parks’ School House on North Fifth Street, Near Union Street

Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

First Presbyterian Church Establishes School

In 1850, the First Presbyterian Church established “a parochial school, the opening of the fall term being announced in the press. It is not known how long this school was operated.”\textsuperscript{10}

Birth of William Wallace Lincoln

William Wallace Lincoln, the son of Abraham and Mary, was born on December 21, 1850.

1851

Beginnings of Illinois State University

In 1851 the citizens, under the leadership of John T. Stuart, had bestirred themselves to secure for Springfield the academy and college which the Lutheran Church was planning to establish. When the children of Pascal P. Enos, one of the town’s original proprietors, donated ten acres of ground in the northeastern part of the city, and others made subscriptions towards the construction of buildings and the establishment of scholarships, the location was assured.\textsuperscript{11}

1852

Illinois State University Opens in Mechanics’ Union Building

In April 1852, Illinois State University opened a school in the Mechanics’ Union Building, just south of the corner of Third and Washington. The first class of the “preparatory” department had 79 students. The college had 3 students enrolled in the freshman class.

In 1852 a group of enterprising, public-spirited citizens of Springfield, Illinois, witnessed the consummation of an ambitious project—the

\textsuperscript{10} Ten Ministers, A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Illinois 1828-1953, Roger E. Chapin, p. 22.

\textsuperscript{11} Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Photographic Division, Springfield, Illinois.

\textsuperscript{12} Here I Have Lived, pp. 202 and 203.
establishment of a Lutheran college in their community. Satisfied as to the need for such an institution, and envisaging a grand future for it, these citizens, led by John T. Stuart, James C. Conkling, Thomas Lewis, S. W. Harkey, and others, convinced the Board of Trustees of Hillsboro College at Hillsboro, Illinois, that the transfer of the institution to the capital city of Illinois would assure the school not only permanency, but also adequate financial support. The trustees willingly agreed to the wisdom of such a move, although Hillsboro College was then free from debt and in possession of a building valued at $6,000. As a further inducement to the board, the civic-minded people of Springfield subscribed the sum of $37,000, which was to be used for a building and for student scholarships.113

Illinois State University began operations in Springfield in April 1852, in the building formerly occupied by the Mechanics Union…. A new edifice was at once placed in process of construction, occupying a beautiful and commanding site about one mile northeast of the public square.114

In April, 1852, the institution, under the name of the Illinois State University, admitted its first students. Until its own building, which was commenced at once, was ready for occupancy, classes were held in the Mechanics Union at the corner of Third and Washington Streets. During the first year seventy-nine students enrolled in the preparatory department and three were admitted to the freshman class of the


college. Tuition charges were $30.00 for a forty-week year in the college and $25.00 in the academy, unless one wished to undertake the “learned languages and more advanced sciences,” in which case an additional fee was collected. Most of the students were from Springfield, and the few who came from outside the city provided their own room and board. The college urged them to club together, and assured prospective students that on the basis of the first year’s experience, the entire cost of living for a thrifty student would not vary greatly from seventy-five cents a week.\footnote{115}

\textbf{Rev. Francis Springer President of Illinois State University}

In 1852 when Hillsboro College was moved to Springfield and renamed Illinois State University, Rev. Francis Springer moved also and was its first president.\footnote{116} Springer had moved from Springfield to Hillsboro in 1842 where he was the President of Hillsboro College.

\textbf{John Milton Hay Enrolled at Illinois State University}

Seventy-nine students enrolled at Illinois State University during its first school year. One of the students was John Milton Hay of Warsaw, Illinois, who remained such until the end of the 1854-1855 school term. His tuition and board were provided by his Springfield lawyer uncle, Milton Hay.

In 1852, [John] Hay [age 13 or 14] went on to college at Springfield—a promotion which might well seem to the lad as the introduction to a larger world….In the college at Springfield, which was really no more than a preparatory school, Hay studied so well that, by the spring of 1855, he began to think of going to a university. His schoolmates envied his capacity for “getting his lessons without apparently any study.” An unusual memory enhanced his innate brightness. He was “bookish,” in that he devoured books for pleasure, but he was no grind.\footnote{117}

\textbf{Illinois State University Scholarship Purchased by Abraham Lincoln}

In order to secure financial support for the University, the trustees had authorized, in 1852, the sale of perpetual scholarships for the sum of $300. The owner of a scholarship enjoyed the permanent privilege of sending one student to college without further charge of tuition. If the owner did not wish to pay the principal of the scholarship, he could enjoy the same privilege providing he paid the interest amounting to six per cent each year. The latter plan was used by Lincoln to send his son, Robert Todd, to this new school. The college ledger reveals that Lincoln purchased on October 1, 1852, the scholarship of P. C. Canedy, a Springfield druggist. The payments of interest were prompt and complete, continuing until April 27, 1860.\footnote{118}
African-American Meeting
Opposes Public Funding of Separate Colored Schools

On November 8, 1852, a group of Springfield African Americans met and unanimously adopted the following resolution concerning common schools.

Springfield, Nov. 8, 1852.

At a meeting of the colored citizens of this city, on the 8th instant, after having deliberated over the matter concerning our interests, common schools, etc. had occasion to notice the following, which we must speak of in bold terms; and which, after a vote was taken, was unanimously adopted:

The undersigned having just noticed an article written for the paper entitled, the “Western Citizens,” by the “Wood River Colored Baptist Association,” and also the Minutes of the same, wish to make the following reply:

Whereas the “Wood River Colored Baptist Association,” having met at Jacksonville, Illinois, devised ways and means for the purpose of establishing a system of common school education, under the cloak of the colored people of the State of Illinois;

We, as a portion of the colored people of this State, in Springfield, do not desire any such system of common school education, under the name of one distinct sect or denomination; nor will we join in with it; nor give our support to it; but will do everything that is in our power to indemnify ourselves against any of the above proceedings that may have been conjured up in this association;

That we deem it an injury to our present established schools, and that it will hinder the energy of those who are willing to aid, and have already aided in the support of our respective schools; and that we do not wish to give our aid in any measure that will hinder our progress that has already begun;

That we, as a portion of the colored population, representing its claims, feel a deep, very deep interest, in our schools, and think it the only sure way to redeem ourselves from the bondage we are now in, sympathize with our race, and will do everything that is in our power to educate our children by our exertions, and without the boldness to ask aid from the people of the State;

And that in examining the Minutes of the Association, we notice an article proposing to establish a press, which will be attached to the Institution, and put into operation as soon as the amount of funds necessary for its support can be raised. In regard to this we can say, that it reminds us of the bill which was handed into the Legislature two years ago—coming, in part, from the same source; and consequently we do not feel willing to embark in any such enterprize; ner shall we.

After reading the above, what patriot, as he is called, can enlist in the resolutions which that Association have gotten up, without the consent of any persons but themselves?
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)


1853

Presley L. Donnegan Petitions Legislature Requesting Black Exemption from the School Tax

On January 11, 1853, a petition signed by Presley L. Donnegan and other Springfield African Americans was presented to the Illinois General Assembly praying that African Americans be exempted from school tax and assuring the legislators that the African Americans would provide for their own schools.

...divisions within the ranks of the blacks occurred on the issues of whether they should pay a school tax and, if so, whether the tax should be returned to them and for what purpose it should be used. Three schooling petitions from blacks or blacks and whites were presented in the General Assemblies of 1853 and 1855. The first, from Presley L. Donegan and other blacks of Springfield, presented on January 11, 1853, prayed that the blacks be exempted from the school tax and assured the legislators that the blacks would then “sustain” their own schools.120

The legislature took no action on the petition.

Birth of Thomas (Tad) Lincoln

Thomas (Tad) Lincoln, the son of Abraham and Mary, was born on April 4, 1853.

Abel W. Estabrook Purchases Springfield Academy Property

On April 13, 1853, Abel W. Estabrook purchased the Springfield Academy property on the west side of Fifth Street between Monroe and Capitol [Market] “being the same premises on which the Springfield Academy (so called) now stands.”121 He paid $1,800.

Central Academy Opens in Second Charge Methodist Church at Seventh and Edwards Streets

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On May 2, 1853, the Central Academy opened in the Second Charge Methodist Episcopal Church, located at the northeast corner of Seventh and Edwards. Rev. Reuben Andrus was the principal of the school which accepted boys as well as girls. The school had a Primary and a Regular Department. Each quarter was 10 weeks. The Primary Department tuition was $3.00. Regular Department tuition was $4.00. Incidental expenses were assessed at 25 cents. The newspaper notice was signed by J. [John] S. Condell, Secretary of the Trustees.

Journal Advertisement for Central Academy

On May 2, 1853, the Central Academy opened in the Second Charge Methodist Episcopal Church, located at the northeast corner of Seventh and Edwards. Rev. Reuben Andrus was the principal of the school which accepted boys as well as girls. The school had a Primary and a Regular Department. Each quarter was 10 weeks. The Primary Department tuition was $3.00. Regular Department tuition was $4.00. Incidental expenses were assessed at 25 cents. The newspaper notice was signed by J. [John] S. Condell, Secretary of the Trustees.

122 Journal, April 20, 1853, p. 3, cl. 2.
123 Lincoln’s Friend and Biographer: Joseph Hartwell Barrett, Joseph R. Nightingale, Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Autumn 2003, footnote #62. In the early 1940s the writer’s parents purchased a home in Springfield at 607 S. Seventh St. [southwest corner of Seventh and Edwards]. In ...researching the 1999 article, the writer saw in Dr. Wayne Temple’s Abraham Lincoln: From Skeptic to Prophet, Mahomet: Mayhaven, 1995, pp. 422-3, that Louisa Todd Keyes, the next-door neighbor at 603 S. Seventh, “was certainly one of the last Todds who had actually known Robert Todd Lincoln to some degree.” ...Mr. Keyes once attended school [on the northeast corner as well] with Willie and Tad Lincoln.
The Rev. Reuben Andrus, a clergyman and educator, was born at Rutland, Jefferson County, New York, on January 29, 1824. At an early age, he came to Fulton County, Illinois. He spent three years (1844-47) as a student at Illinois College, Jacksonville, but graduated at McKendree College, Lebanon in 1849. He taught for a time at Greenfield, and entered the Methodist ministry. In 1850, he founded the Illinois Wesleyan College at Bloomington, where he was a Professor from 1850-52.

He later re-entered the ministry and held charges at Beardstown, Decatur, Quincy, Springfield and Bloomington. He was a mathematics professor at the Illinois Conference Female College (renamed Mac Murray College) Jacksonville, Illinois before becoming the second president from 1855-56. He left Mac Murray in 1856 to serve ministerial appointments with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1867 he was transferred to the Indiana Conference and was stationed at Evansville from 1867 to 1870 and Indianapolis from 1870-1872. From 1872 to 1875, he was President of Indiana Asbury University (DePauw) at Greencastle, Indiana. He was temporary President of Quincy College. He died at Indianapolis, on January 17, 1887.\(^\text{125}\)

**Second Charge Methodist Episcopal Church Sells Property at Seventh and Edwards to Trustees of Central Academy**

On May 9, 1853, Trustees of the Second Charge Methodist Episcopal Church\(^\text{126}\) sold the northeast corner of 7th and Edwards “with the Church

\(^{124}\) [http://www.phigam.org/history/Articles/Asbury.htm](http://www.phigam.org/history/Articles/Asbury.htm)


\(^{126}\) Enos M. Henkle, Absalom Kalb, John S. Condell, Joseph W. Duncan, James Good, Joseph Knotts and Thomas Condell.
building thereon” to the Trustees of the Central Academy for $426.48. Thomas Condell retained a mortgage on the property dated February 6, 1852, in the amount of $280.80.

Illinois State University’s Second Year in Mechanics’ Union Building

During the second school year of Illinois State University, ending on June 29, 1853, there were 144 students enrolled and the school was conducted in the Mechanics’ Union Building.

Central Academy’s Second Year
(1853-1854)

The Trustees of the Central Academy published a notice in the Journal dated August 11, 1853, announcing that the second school year would begin on September 5, 1853. Rev. R. Andrus’s term as principal had been a short summer one, as the superintendent was now Rev. J. S. Barwick, assisted by competent teachers. There were two departments, the Primary and the “Academical.” The school year was divided into four quarters of ten weeks each. Tuition per quarter was $4.00 for the Primary Department and ranged from $10.00 to $2.00 for the Academical Department. Lessons were also given in ornamental painting.

129 1881 History, p. 480.
Abel W. Estabrook Announces Opening of Sangamon Female Academy at the Academy on South Fifth

On September 12, 1853, Abel W. Estabrook announced that he would open the “Sangamon Female Academy” and that he would be the principal. He taught Mental and Moral Philosophy and the Ancient Languages. In addition to Estabrook, Miss A. Kirk taught natural sciences, Mrs. Hill taught mathematics, Miss H. Thayer taught modern languages and Miss S. E. Benedict taught drawing. Miss R. Starley was the Principal of the Primary Department. Mr. A. H. Lanphear taught instrumental and vocal music. The Sangamo Female Academy was located in the Springfield Academy Building on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Capitol (Market) Streets.

131 Journal, August 11, 1853.
In [the fall or winter of] 1853, when Mary Lincoln described her son Robert to an old friend, she expressed her pride in academic terms: “Our eldest at ten is studying Latin and Greek.” The emphasis, of course, was on the words at ten. At the time Robert was learning classics at Springfield’s best academy—the misnamed Illinois State University. By comparison to Transylvania and even Madame Mentelle’s, it was third-rate. At some point the Lincolns decided that Robert must go not only to college but to the best institution in the country.\footnote{Mary Todd Lincoln, A Biography, Jean H. Baker, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 1987, p. 123. (Hereinafter cited as “Baker.”)}

Rev. John F. Brooks Closes Female Seminary at Fifth and Edwards

In 1853, Rev. John F. Brooks closed the Female Seminary at the corner of Fifth and Edwards Streets.

… [Rev. Brooks’] seminary prospered for four years, when Mrs. Brooks’ health failed, and it became necessary to close the institution.\footnote{1881 History, pp. 598-599.}

1854

John Milton Hay Elected Vice-President of Philomathean Society at Illinois State University

In February 1854, John Milton Hay was elected vice-president of the Philomathean Society at Illinois State University.\footnote{Evjen, p. 65. Anniversary celebrations, Journal, February 21, 1853, p. 3, cl. 1; March 25, 1856, p. 3, cl. 1; publishes University Star, February 6, 1856, p. 3, cl. 1.; Reynolds accepts honorary membership in, February 16, 1856, p. 2, cl. 3; exhibitions, August 15, 1857, p. 3, cl. 1, March 22, 1858, p. 3, cl. 1, March 26, 1858, p. 3, cl. 1; debate with Utilior Society, February 22, 1859, p. 3, cl. 1; literary contest with Utilior Society, February 15, 1860, p. 3, cl. 3; reunion, June 28, 1860, p. 3, cl. 2.}
Rev. John F. Brooks Sells Property at Fifth and Edwards

On February 28, 1854, John F. Brooks sold his two story frame building at the northeast corner of Fifth and Edwards Streets\(^{136}\) where he had taught since the fall of 1849.

J. S. Barwick’s Receipt for Tuition at Central Academy

Mrs. Cook
To Central Academy Dr

For tuition of son H.F. 1 1/10 qrs Feb 4th, 1854  $6
For tuition of daughter Mary 1/2 qr.  $2
$8

Received pay
J.S. Barwick \(^{137}\)

Springfield Public Schools Authorized

At one time there was quite a fight over the “free school” issue. However, by the 1850s all that had died down

By the amended charter, approved March 2, 1854, the city of Springfield was placed in the Springfield school district, and the City Council authorized to establish and maintain free schools for the education of all white persons between the ages of five and twenty-one.\(^{138}\)

William Henry Herndon Elected Mayor

On Tuesday, April 4, 1854, William Henry Herndon was elected Mayor of Springfield on a reform agenda that included “laying the groundwork for a public school system.”\(^{139}\)

He was elected on a reform agenda that attracted both Whigs and Democrats and undertook several needed initiatives, such as installing gas lines for lighting, expanding the police force by turning the mayor and aldermen into police officers, renting a new city hall, and laying the groundwork for a public school system.\(^{140}\)

\(^{137}\) Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, Illinois.
\(^{138}\) 1881 History, p. 587.
\(^{140}\) The Young Eagle, Kenneth J. Winkle, Taylor Trade Publishing, Dallas Texas, 2201, p. 290.
In long-range results the most important of Herndon’s acts as mayor were his efforts to start a public school system. Billy fully understood the real need “that all the children in the city, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, may…receive a good, practical English education.” It was a project in which he was especially interested, and he named himself chairman of the council’s committee on education. Personally investigating the various sites suggested for the new public school buildings, Herndon supervised the expenditure of thousands of dollars to buy suitable lots in each of the city’s four wards. Though the schools did not begin operation until later, the Springfield educational system owed much to Billy’s forceful advocacy.141

School Board Created and Ward School Districts Defined

On August 21, 1854, an ordinance was passed defining the powers of the School Board and dividing the city into school districts. Lots had already been purchased in each ward for school purposes, and the initial steps taken for the erection of school buildings in the First and Third Wards. These building were completed in the spring of 1856.143

Central Academy’s Third Year (Seventh and Edwards) (1854-1855)

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142 Illinois Regional Archives Depository, Brookens Library, University of Illinois at Springfield, Springfield, Illinois.
143 *1881 History*, p. 587.
The Central Academy published a notice in the 1855-56 Springfield City Directory announcing that the third year of the school would begin on September 18, 1854, at Seventh and Edwards. The Academy was governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Methodist Church. The principal was Miletus Green. Associated with him were Alexander Pollock and Sarah Pollock, teacher of the Primary Department. There were 100 male and female students in attendance. The school year was divided into four terms of ten weeks each. Tuition etc.

Illinois State University’s Third Year
Move to New Building North of Town

In the fall of 1854, Illinois State University moved to its new building at the north edge of Springfield and began classes with 160 students.\(^{145}\)
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

Illinois State University as Planned

Illinois State University As Built
Robert Todd Lincoln Enters Preparatory Department of Illinois State University

In the fall of 1854, eleven year-old Robert Todd Lincoln and his friend George Latham entered the preparatory department of Illinois State University. He was one of the youngest of fifty-two fellow students. Classes were held in the Mechanics’ Union Hall on the east side of Third Street between Washington and Adams.

Robert Todd Lincoln, Circa 1858

Photograph of Illinois State University

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147 Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, Illinois.
Second Charge Methodist Church approves sale of Church building to Central Academy

In the fall of 1854, a Committee of the Second Charge Methodist Church\(^{148}\) reported on the sale of property at Seventh and Edwards to the Trustees of the Central Academy, approved the transfer and conceded that the Trustees of Central Academy now had a good title. There is then this cryptic statement:

In view of the weighty educational responsibilities already upon us as a Conference, your committee do not feel at liberty to recommend that the Conference accede to the proposal of the Trustees, “to take the institution out of their hands and assume its present liabilities,” but we recommend the institution to the fostering care of this Conference, and the confidence and support of the friends of education in this city and our people generally.

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\(^{148}\) H. Buck, R. E. Guthrie and Wm. J. Rutledge.

\(^{149}\) *Journal*, November 2, 1854, p. 3, cl. 2.

\(^{150}\) *1858 Map*. This map shows a rectangle and the name “School.”
Illinois State University Description, Faculty and Students

Illinois State University published a description of the school, its faculty and students in the 1855-56 Springfield City Directory, probably written in 1854 and printed for distribution in 1855. The article stated that classes thus far had been held in the Mechanics’ Union and that the fully described new building was in the process of construction.

151 1855-56 City Directory.
Teacher Sought for “Colored School”

An 1855 Illinois law required that in townships with Negro residents the school taxes paid by Negroes be used for colored children. On April 13, 1855, the Journal reported that Landen C. Coleman, a 25-year-old African-American Springfield shoemaker, and M. Donnegan, as Trustees of the Springfield Negro School, sought a teacher for the colored school. Applicants were to be made at Coleman’s, probably his shoe shop in the 200 block of South Sixth Street—one door east of the American House at the southeast corner of Sixth and Adams Streets.

School Teacher Wanted

Coleman and M. Donnegan, trustees, desire to employ a teacher to teach a colored school. A competent teacher, will be well paid. Apply to L. Coleman, one door east of American House.

John Milton Hay Leaves Illinois State University and Enrolls at Brown University

So Hay went back to Warsaw, his schooling over [end of 1854-55 school term], to discuss with his parents his future career. As the ‘scholar’ of the family, all agreed that he must continue his education at a university. ...They decided that he should go to Brown University, at Providence, Rhode Island, where Mrs. Hay’s father, David Augustus Leonard, had graduated as Class Orator in 1792. His uncle, Milton Hay, who had paid for his education during the past four years [1854-1855], promised to support him through college, and accordingly, towards the end of the summer [of 1855], John journeyed eastward in order to matriculate at Brown when the first term of the academic year began, on Friday, September 7, 1855. He still lacked a month of being seventeen years old.

Professor Thomas Clarke Buys Seventh and Edwards Streets and Opens Springfield Central Academy

On August 25, 1855, the Trustees of the Central Academy sold the Springfield Central Academy property at the northeast corner of 7th and Edwards to Thomas Clarke, a teacher with 24 years of teaching experience

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153 1860 Census, p. 185. Coleman was a native of Kentucky. 1854 Hart Map. 1858 Map. Wooden: two rectangles. S. 1/2 of Lot 8, Block 2, Mitchell’s Addition. residence. 1860-61 City Directory: east side of 4th, between Madison and Gemini. 151 Washington, north side, between 12th and 13th -0-. In 1860 the firm of Coleman and Donnegan, shoemakers, was located at the northwest corner of 7th and Mason Streets
154 Journal, April 13, 1855, p. 2, cl. 5.
Springfield’s Early Schools  
(1819-1860)

in England.  The purchase price was $1,500. Clarke announced that the Academy would open on the property as a co-ed school on Tuesday, September 3. He would conduct two 22-week sessions. The tuition was $10 for one session in the first class or $5 for a quarter, $15 for one session in the second class, or $7.50 per quarter. Mrs. Clarke assisted him in teaching the younger pupils. Tuition for the third class was $20 for a session, or $10 per quarter.

Register Advertisement for Professor Thomas Clarke’s Springfield Central Academy


158 Register, August 29, 1855, p. 2 cl. 5. Journal, August 28, 1855, p. 2, cl. 4.
Willow Grove Seminary Opens at Fifth and Madison Streets

On September 3, 1855, the Reverend William Sym and Miss Anna M. Sym opened the Willow Grove Seminary in a “large and commodious” house located at Fifth and Madison Streets. Tuition varied with the department—Primary Department was $3.00 per quarter of 11 weeks; Junior Department was $4.00 per quarter; and Senior Department was $5.00 per quarter. Vocal and instrumental music was taught at “Professors’ prices.”

Sangamo Female Seminary’s Second Year (Academy Building)
Abel W. Estabrook Principal
(1855-1856)

Abel W. Estabrook advertised in the 1855-1856 Springfield City Directory that the second year of the Sangamo Female Seminary would begin on September 11, 1855, in the Academy Building on Fifth Street, near Monroe Street. He announced that a few pupils could board at his residence. Estabrook was principal. Miss Hester Thayer was the Assistant Principal. Miss R. E. Dayton taught drawing. Miss Jane E. Chapin was the Principal of the Primary Department. No tuition is stated. The course of study is described in advertisement to the right.

159 Register, July 23, 1855, p. 2 cl. 4. Also appeared in the Journal, July 21, 1855, p. 2, cl. 4.
160 1855-56 City Directory.
Rev. Francis Springer Resigns as President of Illinois State University

Rev. Francis Springer resigned as head of Illinois State University in 1855 and S. W. Harkey was appointed president in his place.\textsuperscript{161}

\textbf{Illinois State University, Circa 1855}\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Power}, p. 675. He was afterwards school commissioner of Sangamon county, and was superintendent of schools for the city of Springfield, which position he resigned, and became chaplain of the 10th Ill. Cav., soon after the beginning of the rebellion in 1861. A short time after the battle of Prairie Grove, Ark. — Dec. 7, 1862—he united with Dr. James Johnson in raising a loyal regiment in Arkansas, of which he became chaplain. It was the 1st Ark. Inf. He was appointed in 1863 post chaplain at Fort Smith, which he held until 1867, when he resigned, and returned to his family, at Springfield. In 1870 he moved to Irving, Montgomery county, Ill., and continued preaching until the fall of 1873, when he was elected superintendent of schools for Montgomery county, with his office at Hillsboro, Ill. He continues to preach, as opportunity offers, and fully believes that the only reforming influence in the world is Christianity. Rev. Francis Springer is a man of lively sympathy with the rest of mankind, without regard to race, color, nationality or religion. He has large faith in the perfectibility of the human race by means of the labors and experiences of the life that now is, and the hereafter. His orthodoxy, as a religious man, does not descend to the minute particulars of a creed, but confides mainly in the cardinal fact of Christianity, that the only true ennobling of the race must be wrought out under the recognized leadership of the word’s Redeemer “the Christ of God.” The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on Rev. Francis Springer in 1869 by Wittenburg College, Springfield, Ohio.

\textsuperscript{162} \textit{The Miracle of Carthage}, p. 53.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

1856

First and Third Ward Schools Open

On April 14, 1856, the First and Third Ward Schools were opened with 739 pupils. The Springfield School Inspectors reported that:

…the schools in the First and Third Wards will be opened on the 14th of this month….the First and Fourth Wards are constituted one district, to be styled the First District and the Second and Third Wards another, styled the Third District.\textsuperscript{163}

First Ward School (Palmer)
Constructed and Opened on Mason, Between 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} Streets

On April 14, 1856, Springfield’s first public school building, the First Ward School pictured below, opened. Its principal was Rev. Francis Springer, who had resigned the year before as president of Illinois State University. It was located on East Mason, between 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} Streets and was later known as the Palmer School. The building was two stories, the lower with four rooms and the upper included a large hall, two recitation rooms and two smaller rooms.

The First Ward school building is situated on Mason, between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets. The lot is 320 feet fronting on Thirteenth. The building is of brick and two stories high. The lower floor contains four good school rooms, capable of accommodating in all one hundred and eighty pupils. The second story embraces one large hall, two recitation rooms, and two small rooms suitable for library and apparatus. Its capacity is for the accommodation of one hundred and forty four pupils, making for the entire building, accommodations for three hundred and twenty four pupils. Cost of ground and improvements, about $12, 000.\textsuperscript{164}

The old Palmer School shown above was the very first public school erected in Springfield—opened April 14, 1856. The location was East

\textsuperscript{163} 1881 History, p. 587.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

Mason Street, between 12th and 13th ... Originally known as the First Ward School, it comprised two floors—the lower with four rooms and the upper including a large hall, two recitation rooms and two smaller rooms....As will be noted, it was a plain, rather severe-looking structure, typical of its period, with a paling fence enclosing the grounds. The first principal was Rev. Francis Springer, and among his successors the following may be mentioned as outstanding in the time of this building: Andrew M. Brooks, A. W. Esterbrook..."\textsuperscript{165}

**Third Ward School (Edwards)**
**Constructed and Opened at Edwards and Spring Streets**

The Third Ward school house [Edwards School], situated on the [northeast] corner of Edwards and Spring streets, occupies a lot measuring three hundred and twenty feet on Edwards, and one hundred and fourteen on Spring street. This building is in all respects after the same pattern as that of the First Ward, and, together with its grounds, cost about the same amount of money.\textsuperscript{166} The Third Ward School principal was Abel W. Estabrook.\textsuperscript{167}

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![Third Ward (Edwards) School at the Northeast Corner of Spring and Edwards Streets]\textsuperscript{168}

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\textsuperscript{165} Vertical File Number G-21, 330, Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, Illinois.
\textsuperscript{166} Illinois State Register, August 19, 1940.
\textsuperscript{167} 1881 History, p. 587.
\textsuperscript{168} Vertical File, Sangamon Valley Collection, Lincoln Library, Springfield, Illinois.
**Central Academy Re-Opens at Seventh and Edwards Streets**

On August 30, 1856, the Central Academy announced in the *Journal* that it would re-open on Monday, September 8, at the Seventh and Edwards site and would receive pupils of both sexes. Tuition was $20 for a twenty-week session. The newspaper announcement printed below is the last that I have found for a private Springfield school in the period 1819-1860.

**German Lutheran School Begins**

The German Evangelical Lutheran Church records show a parish school as far back as 1856, shortly after the church was organized.¹⁷⁰

**Robert Todd Lincoln Elected to Philomathean Society at Illinois State University**

In December 1856, Robert Todd Lincoln was elected a member of the Philomathean Society at the Illinois State University.¹⁷¹

**New Years Eve: Citizens Meet to Establish Female Seminary**

In the evening of Wednesday, December 31, 1856, a number of citizens in favor of establishing a Female Seminary in Springfield met at the Court House. John T. Stuart is appointed president. Stuart, Lincoln and Mr. McKeever of Pennsylvania spoke, and a general discussion followed. It was then resolved that a committee of one from each ward be appointed to inquire further into the matter.¹⁷²

**1857**

**Abel W. Estabrook Sells Springfield Academy Building on Fifth Street to Joseph Thayer**

On July 17, 1857, Abel W. Estabrook sold the Springfield Academy building on the west side of Fifth Street, between Monroe and Market (now Capitol) to Joseph Thayer.¹⁷³

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¹⁶⁹ *Journal*, August 30, 1856, p. 2, cl. 4.
¹⁷¹ Evjen, pp. 62-63.
Springfield’s Early Schools
(1819-1860)

Two New Public School Buildings Built

Two school houses, for city free schools, one in Second, and one in Fourth ward; built of brick; two stories and basement; each building 45 by 75 feet; planned by T.J. Dennis, built by Armstrong and Conly; are to cost when completed, each $12,000; already expended about $15,000 on the two. The brick work was done by J. P. Irwin. They are designed to accommodate about 400 scholars each, and will be a credit and ornament to our city.¹⁷⁴

Second Ward School Constructed on Mason Street

In 1857, construction of the Second Ward School (Trapp School) began on Mason Street between First and Second Streets.

The Second Ward school house is also on Mason street, between First and Second streets. The lot is three hundred and fifty feet fronting on Mason, and one hundred and fifty-seven feet each, on First and Second. The building is of brick, and is three stories high. When completed, its capacity for pupils will be about four hundred. Cost of grounds and improvements, about $12,000.¹⁷⁵

This old school building which stands decrepit and forlorn, with its windows boarded up and grounds unfenced, and which is now used merely as a warehouse for a tent and awning company, was once one of the largest attended and most popular of the Springfield grade schools. It was also one of the earliest schools of the city, having been completed in the Fall of 1858. Edward L. Clark was its first principal.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ 1857 Improvements, p. 8.
¹⁷⁵ 1881 History, p. 588.
¹⁷⁶ 1881 History, p. 588. Northeast Corner: 1854 Hart Map. No improvements, but name: “J. Johnson”. 1858 Map. Brick-rectangle. Lots 5, 6 and 7, Block 8, Mason’s Addition. Photograph in the Register of August 19, 1940. It was known as the Second Ward School until 1882, when it was named the Douglas School in honor of Stephen A. Douglas. The school was renamed the Trapp School in 1887, for Dr. Albert H. Trapp, prominent physician here and for several years a member of the Springfield Board of Education. Dr. Trapp declined the honor, but the school name stuck until 1882, when it was officially changed again to the Douglas School. By that time the building had outlived its usefulness and it was soon abandoned, the school site being moved to Walnut and Reynolds Streets, where a new building was erected in 1916. During its approximately 60 years in this building, the old Trapp School had many of the best known teachers in the system. Among the principals held in fond recollection by the many “old grads” of the school were Mr. [Edward L.] Clark, the first incumbent, Lucius Kingsbury, A. J. Smith (later superintendent of schools), Edward Anderson and J. Ed Taylor (later county superintendent of schools).
Fourth Ward School Constructed at Market and Twelfth Streets

In 1857, construction of the Fourth Ward School began at the corner of Market and Twelfth Streets.

The Fourth Ward school house, on the corner of Market and Twelfth streets, is constructed precisely on the same model as that of the Second Ward. The size of the lot is two hundred and forty feet on Market, by one hundred and fifty-seven feet on Twelfth. The expenditure of grounds and improvements, as also the capacity of the house are the same as that of the Second Ward.\(^{177}\)

Building Improvements at Illinois State University

The *Journal* reported on Springfield building improvements made during the year 1857, including this description of the improvements to buildings at Illinois State University.

Improvements on Illinois State University buildings, by H. G. Fitzhugh & Co.; Willard & Zimmerman, painters; McCalley & Bricker plasterers. cost 1,350 dollars.\(^{178}\)

Angle Describes Illinois State University in 1857

In five years the college was fairly well established. An “elegant four story edifice,” with the first story of cut stone and the balance of brick, provided class-room facilities for 119 students, thirty-three of whom were taking college courses. Four professors, all ministers, a principal of the grammar school and a steward made up the faculty. The curriculum was exclusively classical. The freshman started with Latin and Greek grammar, Livy, Xenophon, algebra and universal history, and the senior would up on Terence of Plautus, Sophocles, the evidences of Christianity, mineralogy and geology, and a general review. Studies in the Greek Testament, and “English Composition and Declamation,” were continued throughout the entire four years. In the college catalogs it all looked very academic and imposing, but local youths like Robert Lincoln and Clinton Conkling, and John Hay, who came from Pittsfield to enter, learned to their disappointment that the combined efforts of four ministers, sincere though they might be, still fell short of the august requirements of Harvard and Yale and Brown.\(^{179}\)

However, Hay was admitted to Brown in September 1855.

\(^{177}\) *1881 History*, p. 588.

\(^{178}\) *1857 Improvements*, p. 8.

\(^{179}\) *Here I Have Lived*, pp. 202 and 203.
1858

Professor Thomas Clarke Offers Church and Seminary Property at Seventh and Edwards Streets for Sale

Professor Thomas Clarke did not last long as the principal of his Springfield Central Academy that he began in September of 1855. By July of 1858, he had decided to close the school and sell his “church and seminary property” at the northeast corner of Seventh and Edwards Streets. The advertisement for the sale of the property appeared in the *Illinois State Democrat* of August 11, 1858, and stated the purchase price as $4,000, $1,000 or $500 down and the balance in payments “to suit the purchaser” at 10% interest. The ground alone was said to be worth at least $1,500.

![Advertisement for the sale of the church and seminary property.](image)

Professor Thomas Clarke Offers for Sale the Church and Seminary Property at Seventh and Edwards Streets\(^\text{180}\)

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\(^{180}\) *Illinois State Democrat*, August 11, 1858, p. 3.
The trustees of the Springfield Seminary held their first meeting on notification [on September 2, 1858] at the Third Presbyterian church, present, Dr. John G. Bergen, Dr. John Brown, Rev. Albert Hale, Rev. C. P. Jennings, Rev. John F. Brooks, Mr. E. R. Wiley, Mr. John Armstrong, Mr. John E. Owsley, Mr. James Campbell, Mr. J. S. Vredenburg. The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Brown and the board was organized by the choice of the Rev. Albert Hale as president; Rev. C. Jennings, vice-president; John Brooks, secretary; and Colonel John Williams, treasurer.

Resolved, That the executive committee (Officers, John Owsley and J. S. Vredenburg) be directed to proceed immediately to procure the use of a suitable building and to see what arrangements can be made for instructors and what other provision is necessary to open a school without delay and that they report to the board at the next meeting.

They next met on September 9 and the business committee reported “that the Academy building on Fifth street owned by J. Thayer could be obtained as a school for $400; that Mr. Thayer would make all necessary repairs. They therefore recommended that the building be engaged, and that a salary of $500 per annum be offered Miss E. C. Bradley as first teacher, $400 to Miss H. A. Thayer as second teacher, and $400 to Miss Sophia Chapin as third teacher.”

Second Ward School (Trapp) and Fourth Ward School Opened

Construction of the Second and Fourth Ward Schools continued through the spring and summer of 1858, and on September 20 of that year both opened along with the First and Third Ward Schools. There were 853 pupils and 22 teachers.

In the spring and summer of 1858 buildings for the ward schools were erected in the Second and Fourth Wards, at an expense of $10,000 each, and on the 20th of September, 1858, free schools were opened in each of the four wards of the city. Twenty-two teachers were employed.

Ursuline Order Buys Building at Sixth and Mason Street for School

In 1858, the Ursuline Order secured a building at the corner of Sixth and Mason Streets which was used as a parochial school and academy until the close of the Civil War.
Abel W. Estabrook Opens Furniture Store

By November of 1858, Abel W. Estabrook had opened a furniture store on the north side of Washington Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets. Ironically, he was selling school room furniture. Perhaps the furniture came from his Academy.

Abel W. Estabrook’s Advertisement for His Furniture Emporium

First Public Colored School Opened at Fifteenth and Madison Streets

On January 10, 1859, a separate public school for colored children opened at Fifteenth and Madison Streets in what was known as the “Cottage District.” Thomas York was the teacher and principal.184

The authentic record show that our first [public] colored school was established in the Cottage Garden district on North 15th St. just north of Madison St. It was built in 1859 and its corps of teachers included Prof. [Thomas] York, (1859 to 1867). The old building, a silent monument of an ancient dispensation has resisted the ravages of time and still [1926] stands in its original location.185

184 Here I Have Lived, p. 201.
185 History of the Colored People of Sangamon County, an inclusion in the 1926 “Directory of Sangamon County’s Colored Citizens,” W. T. Casey.
High School at Springfield Academy Building and Springfield Colored School on North Fourth Street

The High School occupied a building on Fifth street, between Monroe and Market [the old Springfield Academy], while the colored children were compelled to attend school in a shanty in the rear of the African church, on North Fourth street. This African school was established the year previous [1859], under Mr. Cutcheon’s administration. Says Superintendent Springer of it in his first report: “Humble as it is, the school it contains has furnished the most satisfactory evidence of the capacity and aptitude of the colored children to acquire the rudiments of a good education. In rapidity of advancement and propriety of behavior, these youthful descendants of the African race compare very advantageously with the more favored children of Caucasian blood”\textsuperscript{186}

Springfield School Board Meets and Appoints Committee to Establish Central High School

On April 22, 1859, a special meeting of the Springfield School Board was held. Present were William Jayne, L. P. Clover, N. W. Miner, J. N. Bradford, Francis Springer and Noah W. Matheny. Dr. William Jayne was elected President for the ensuing year. The Board authorized a music teacher, A. W. Estabrook was requested to teach vocal music for the remainder of the school year, and a committee of three, Bradford, Matheny and Springer, were appointed to confer with the City Council with regard to establishing a central High School.

\textit{Journal} Report of Special Meeting of School Board\textsuperscript{187}

\textsuperscript{186} 1881 History, p. 588.

\textsuperscript{187} Journal, April 23, 1859 p. 3, cl. 1.
Robert Todd Lincoln Leaves Springfield for Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard

Robert Todd Lincoln completed his courses at Illinois State University in the spring of 1859. In the late summer of 1859, Robert traveled east to Cambridge, Massachusetts where he took and failed the Harvard entrance examinations.

Rarely did the sons of even Springfield’s wealthiest families venture across the prairies to eastern universities. Among Robert’s contemporaries only a handful did so. Ninian Edwards sent his oldest son to Yale, where Clinton Conkling, Merece’s son, and Vergie Hicks [Hickox] went as well. (Later, when Vergie ended up in the state insane asylum, Springfield blamed college life at Yale.) John Hay, Lincoln’s secretary in the White House and a future secretary of state, went to Brown, and two other sons of Springfield attended, though did not graduate from, Union College in Schenectady, New York. So it was highly unusual when in the summer of 1859 sixteen-year-old Robert left for Harvard, where he failed fifteen of his sixteen entrance exams and needed a postgraduate year at Phillips Exeter Academy before his admission in 1860.188

1860

Public Schools Open on September 10th

On June 20, 1860, the Journal reported that the School Board had met in a Special Meeting and that Francis Springer had been elected Superintendent for the ensuing year. For the first time, the four ward elementary schools, the high school and the “colored” school were all ready to open at the end of the summer vacation on September 10, 1860. Teachers and principals were named for the six schools and committees for each school, other than the “colored” school, were named to conduct the annual examinations “next week.” Abel W. Estabrook was named Principal of the First Ward School (Palmer).

188 Baker, p. 123.
Abraham Lincoln Becomes Trustee of Illinois State University

On June 28, 1860, Abraham Lincoln became a member of the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University. The minutes of the board read as follows: “Abraham Lincoln was elected for a term of one year to fill the unexpired term of Rev. R. Dodge.”

189 Journal, June 20, 1860, p. 3, cl. 3.
Faculty and Students at Illinois State University

The Faculty and students at Illinois State University were listed in the 1860 Springfield City Directory.

Faculty:
Reynolds, William M., Dr.
President of Illinois State University
Lutheran Clergyman: English Lutheran Church: pastor.
  northwest corner of 11th and Madison (Mason)
  1860 census, p. 140 (Penn.)(48).
Croll, Luther H., Professor of Mathematics.
  boards Harrison G. Fitzhugh’s.
Suesserott, Benjamin C., Professor
  residence northwest corner of Mason and 8th.
  1860 census, p. 201 (Penn.)(27)
  1860 C.D. Principal of Springfield Female Seminary
  north side of Mason, opposite 8th

Students:
Bertzen, S.
  boards at University.
Carnell, S. P.
Clark, William T.
Cook, J. J.
Dodds, Alexander R.
  boards west side of 5th,
  between Washington and Adams.
Easterday, F. R.
Easterday, L. F.
Eichaltz, C. S.
Esping, S. P.
Gottermann, John
Harcher, John
Headly (Hedly), J. N.
  1860 census, p. 191 (Ill.) (18).
  southwest corner of Edwards
  and College.
Holland, B.
Hologue, T.
Jacobson, Abraham
  boards west side of 5th,
  between Washington and Adams.
Jenson, Isaac
Johnson, Amon
Kossenbader, E.
Larson, S. G.
Lipe, W. A.
Mahard, William
McCoy, T. H.
Musser, J.
Olsen, George
Pherson, John
Rape, John C.
Schmitt, W. A.
Schnur, J. P.
Schnur, G. H.
Sunison, O.
Wible, Frank

Lincoln Writes to George Latham: Harvard Turn Down

On July 22, 1860, Abraham Lincoln wrote to George Latham about his failure to be admitted to Harvard.


I have scarcely felt greater pain in my life than on learning yesterday from Bob’s letter, that you had failed to enter Harvard University. And yet there is very little in it, if you will allow no feeling of discouragement to seize, and prey upon you. It is a certain truth, that you can enter, and
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graduate in, Harvard University; and having made the attempt, you must succeed in it. “Must” is the word.

I know not how to aid you, save in the assurance of one of mature age, and much severe experience, that you can not fail, if you resolutely determine, that you will not.

The President of the institution, can scarcely be other than a kind man; and doubtless he would grant you an interview, and point out the readiest way to remove, or overcome, the obstacles which have thwarted you.

In your temporary failure there is no evidence that you may not yet be a better scholar, and a more successful man in the great struggle of life, than many others, who have entered college more easily.

Again I say let no feeling of discouragement prey upon you, and in the end you are sure to succeed.

With more than a common interest I subscribe myself Very truly your friend,

A. Lincoln.

Mary A. Corcoran Teaches

The 1860 Springfield City Directory lists Mary A. Corcoran as a teacher.

1861

Abraham Lincoln Leaves Illinois State University Scholarship Certificate With Robert Irwin

February 9?, 1861

Abraham Lincoln leaves with the under-signed for safe keeping, and to receive interest, the following papers—-
One certificate of Scholarship in Illinois State University.
Robert Irwin.

Alphabetical Listing of Teachers

Allard, Mr.                    Cowardin, Mary J.                    Sheldon, V. M. Mr.
Anderson, Mrs.                Dayton, R. E.                      Sill, S. M.
Barry, Michael                Estabrook, Abel W.                 Springer, Francis
Barwick, J. S., Rev.          Graves, L.                          Starley, R., Miss
Benedict, S. E., Miss         Green, Miletus                    Sym, Anna M., Miss
Bradley, E. C., Miss          Hill, Miss                         Thayer, Hester
Brigaam, H. D.                Hutchins, Miss                    Torrey, Miss
Brooks, John F.               Kimball, Mr.                       Towne, H. D.
Burr, Albert G.               Kirk, A., Miss                     Trippett, J. H.
Calhoun, John                 Lanphear, A. H., Mr.                Trippett, M. E.
Capps, Jabes (John)           Lee, Mrs.                          Wadley, Mr.
Chapin, A., Miss              Mendenhall, William                Waters, John
Chapin, Jane E.               Moffitt, Thomas                    Wiley, S. Ruckel
Chapin, Sophia                Olin, G. Miss                      Williams, Caleb
Chase, Mr.                    Orr, Andrew                        Wofle, James H.
Clark, Edward L.              Parks, Beaumont                    Wright, Erastus
Clarke, Thomas, Professor     Parks, Ossian                      York, Thomas, Prof.
Cook, Ms.                     Pollock, Alexander                 
Corcoran, Mary A., Miss       Pollock, Sarah                     
                               Sheldon, Mrs.

Alphabetical Listing of Schools

Brick School
Central Academy
Colored School
Female Seminary
Halcyon Seminary
Illinois State University
Old School House
Sangamo Female Seminary
Sangamon Female Academy
School for Young Ladies
Select School For Young Ladies
Seminary for Young Ladies at
the Academy
Springfield Academy
Springfield Central Academy
Springfield City School
Springfield Female School
Springfield High School
Springfield Mechanics’ Union
Springfield Seminary
Ward Schools: First, Second,
Third, Fourth
Willow Grove Seminary
Chronological Listing of Schools

1819  Jabez (John) Capps, teacher
1821  Andrew Orr
1824  William Mendenhall
1825  Erastus Wright
1826  Thomas Moffitt, teacher
       Mr. How, teacher
1828  log school at 2nd and Adams
1829  Jane Eliza Bergen’s school
1830  John B. Watson’s school, 6th & Adams
1831  John B. Calhoun’s school
1832  Jonathan Wadley’s School Room
1833  Mary J. Cowardin’s English Female School
1834  Mr. Clark’s school
       John B. Watson’s school
       Miss A. Chapin’s School For Young Ladies
       Springfield Academy, James H. Wolfe, Principal
1836  Samuel Chase’s school
1837  Springfield High School
       Springfield Seminary
1838  R. Ruckel Wiley’s Halcyon Seminary
       W. T. Hatch’s Select School
       Mrs. V. M. Sheldon’s School for Young Ladies
       John Waters
       Caleb Williams
1839  Rev. Francis Springer’s English and Classical School
       Springfield Academy
       Mrs. Lee
       Rev. Francis Springer’s English and Classical School
1840  Springfield Female School, J. H. and M. E. Triplett
       Beaumont Parks
1842  Springfield Seminary, opened by Samuel A. Allard and George Kimball;
       Abel W. Estabrook begins teaching at
       Springfield Academy, Mechanics’ Union opens
1843  School For Young Ladies, opened by Rev. John F. Brooks
       Select School For Young Ladies, opened by Mrs. Sheldon
1844  Seminary For Young Ladies at the Academy, opened by Mrs. Anderson
       School For Young Ladies, opened by Miss Olin
       Select School For Young Ladies, opened by Mr. Shelton
       School For Girls, opened by Rev. John F. Brooks
       Springfield Academy: Springfield City School, Springfield Mechanic’s Union School
1845  Springfield City School, opens under patronage of Springfield Mechanic’s Union
1849  Albert G. Burr’s Brick School
       Female Seminary, opened by Rev. John F. Brooks at 5th and Edwards
1850  Springfield Academy, Abel W. Estabrook opens School at; Robert Lincoln attended
       for three years
       Colored School
       Ossian Parks’ School House
       First Presbyterian Church establishes school
1852  Illinois State University, opens in Mechanics’ Union Building
1853  Central Academy, opens at 7th and Edwards
       Sangamon Female Academy (Seminary), Abel W. Estabrook buys Springfield Academy
       building and opens
1854  Robert Todd Lincoln attends Illinois State University in Old Mechanics’ Union
       Building
1855  Willow Grove Seminary
       Springfield Central Academy, Thomas Clarke buys 7th and Edwards and opens
1856  First and Third Ward Schools open
       Female Seminary, citizens meet to establish
       German Lutheran School opens
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1858 Second and Fourth Ward Schools open
Ursuline Order buys building at 6th and Mason Street for school
Springfield Seminary, opens at Springfield Academy site

1859 First Public Colored School
High School
## Springfield’s Early Schools (1819-1860)

### School Year | First School | Jane Bergen’s
--- | --- | ---
1823-24 | Andrew Orr | 
1824-25 | Andrew Orr, William Mendenhall | 
1825-26 | Erastus Wright, William Mendenhall | 
1826-27 | Thomas Moffitt | 
1827-28 | Thomas Moffitt | 
1828-29 | Thomas Moffitt | 
1829-30 | Jane Bergen Opens | 
1830-31 | Bergen | 
1831-32 | Bergen | 
1832-33 | | 
1833-34 | | 
1834-35 | Clark | 
1835-36 | Clark | 
1836-37 | Clark, Chase | 
1837-38 | Chase | 

### School Year | Springfield Academy | Francis Springer Residence | Mechanics Union | Springfield Central Academy | Illinois State University
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1834-35 | James H. Wolfe, principal | | | | 
1835-36 | | | | | 
1836-37 | | | | | 
1839-40 | Chartered, opens, buys property; Town & Sills opens | Springer opens | | | 
1840-43 | Brooks, heads | Springer | Chartered; Postpone plans | | 
1841-42 | Brooks, heads | Springer | Fail to raise funds to build school | | 
1842-43 | Brooks, heads; Mr. Kimball; Estabrook | Springer | Buys old 1st Presbyterian Church | | 
1843-44 | Brooks resigns; Mr. Allard; Mr. Kimball | Springer | Brooks | | 
1844-45 | Springer heads; Mrs. Anderson; Mr. Sheldon | Miss G. Olin | Brooks | Springer | 
1845-46 | Springer heads | Brooks | Patron of Springfield City School | | 
1846-47 | Springer heads | | | |
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