



# For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association  
Volume 5, Number 4 Winter 2003 Springfield, Illinois

## “You Can Fool All of the People” Lincoln Never Said That

By Thomas F. Schwartz

Undoubtedly the most famous utterance ever attributed to Lincoln is, “You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.” Early recollections place the saying in an 1858 speech Lincoln delivered in Clinton, Illinois. The first appeared in 1904 by E. E. Pierson, who remembered Lewis Campbell, a respected citizen of DeWitt County, telling him of the 1858 speeches that Lincoln and Douglas delivered in Clinton. According to Campbell, Lincoln said, “Judge Douglas cannot fool the people: you may fool people for a time; you can fool a part of the people all the time; but you can’t fool all the people all the time.”<sup>1</sup> The following year, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Brooklyn Eagle* undertook investigations in an attempt to solve the mystery. Many remembered Lincoln speaking in Clinton but fewer remember his exact words with only a handful indicating that Lincoln uttered something about fooling people. The findings of these newspaper investigations became part of a 1905 revised and expanded edition of Lincoln’s writings originally edited and compiled by John Nicolay and John Hay. A footnote for the Clinton speech entry reads: “The question has been widely discussed and still remains unsettled as to whether Lincoln originated the memorable epigram: ‘You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.’ In 1905 the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Brooklyn Eagle* combined efforts in an endeavor to solve the enigma for all

time. After investigation several witnesses were found, notably Lewis Campbell of DeWitt County, Ill.; J. J. Robinson of Lincoln, Ill.; and J. L. Hill of Fletcher, O., who agreed that Lincoln had expressed the sentiment, if not the exact words generally quoted. It is supposed that he used the phrase in the above speech while addressing the people of Clinton, though the ‘Pantagraph’ fails to cite it. Naturally, the newspaper reports in those days were never complete, and the editor on this particular occasion even apologizes for his lack of space to give the entire report of this speech.”<sup>2</sup> Nicolay and Hay remained suspicious of recollected words. Since Nicolay died in 1901 and Hay on July 1, 1905, the inclusion of the note was undertaken by the editor of the revised edition, not Nicolay and Hay. The editor also assigned the incorrect date of September 8, 1858, to the speech.

The Reverend William Eleazer Barton, a prolific author of many books on Lincoln and his family, published regularly in the *Dearborn Independent* on Lincoln topics. His sleuthing uncovered the Pierson recollection and other accounts of the quote by Lincoln’s contemporaries. Barton points out the problems with the recollected testimony but concludes: “The evidence is far from conclusive but it is not lacking in probability. It sounds like Lincoln.”<sup>3</sup>

Paul Angle, the young executive secretary for the Lincoln Centennial Association, quickly realized the public’s interest in the mysterious Lincoln quote. Among his many responsibilities was to answer research queries about Lincoln utterances. At the top of the list was whether Lincoln uttered the famous words at Clinton. Angle wrote a memorandum outlining his

evaluation of the evidence: “This epigram is almost universally believed to have been coined by Lincoln in a speech at Clinton, Illinois, on September 2, 1858 (usually dated Sept. 8), and many qualified students accept it as indubitably genuine. While it is not printed in the text of the Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln, the editors (or editor?) give it a qualified certification in a footnote to the report of Lincoln’s Clinton speech, and reproduce it without qualification in the anthology which accompanies that compilation. It should be remembered, nevertheless, that there is no contemporary authority for the apothegm. Our only source of information regarding what Lincoln said at Clinton is a summary, avowedly incomplete, which was printed in the *Bloomington Pantagraph* for September 9, 1858. Not until 1905—years after the remark had won a secure place in American folklore—did several men who had heard Lincoln speak at Clinton come forward to assert that on that occasion he had used these words. The recollections of these men, however, differ not only from each other in important particulars, but also vary materially from established facts. Naturally, implicit confidence cannot be placed in their statements. Moreover, several who were present at the Clinton meeting have no recollection of Lincoln’s use of the epigram. Dr. William E. Barton has pointed out (*Dearborn Independent*, Sept. 11, 1926) that if Lincoln actually struck upon such a felicitous expression at Clinton, it is strange that he did not repeat it in any of the five remaining debates, all of which were reported verbatim. The words are Lincolnian in

*continued on page 3*

## President's Column

By Robert S. Eckley

As an economist and one-time economic historian, I have neglected Lincoln's economic thinking. Two landmark studies on the subject appeared in the 1970s. One dealt with his well-engrained background in Whig economics, fulfilling a longstanding need in the literature to underscore this aspect of Lincoln's public policy initiatives. The other caused a complete upheaval in our understanding of the economics of American slavery, for which its lead author was awarded a share in the 1993 Nobel Prize in economics. A generation later, neither work is adequately reflected in subsequent Lincoln biographical studies or those dealing with the Civil War and its aftermath.

After more than a quarter century, Gabor Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (1978), still stands as a prodigious work, demanding attention from those who would profess to know Lincoln well. Bisected by the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), the first half deals with the Whig legislator and Congressman, and the second to Lincoln's rising concern with the extension of slavery and subsequent war policies. He leads the reader through a careful articulation of Lincoln's overwhelming commitment to economic issues until the moral threat of slavery expansion absorbed his attention. His economic interests were consistent from his 1832 statements: "My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank . . . the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff." That year he was reported to be capable of a "sensible speech" favoring the Bank of the United States. Once in the Legislature in 1835, he supported internal improvements, including the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the State Bank of Illinois. His first debates with

Stephen Douglas occurred during the 1840 presidential campaign on the bank question. Four years later he was chosen to develop a Whig address for the people of Illinois and his tariff advocacy won him the compliment of David Davis as "the best stump speaker in the state." Before going to Congress, he was replying to the brilliant legal scholar, Democrat David Dudley Field, at the Chicago River and Harbor Convention on internal improvements. (He would later appoint Field's brother to the United States Supreme Court). His Congressional performance was consistent with his prior interests, including a speech advocating internal improvements. According to John Todd Stuart and William Herndon, Lincoln's tutelage for these policies included his perusal of the books of the economic writers of the day, Francis Wayland and Henry Carey. Boritt found he did not "champion any of the non-economic (Whig) principles."

As a recurrent single-issue candidate, Lincoln's emphasis shifted in his third public decade after 1854 to the problem of the "peculiar institution" of slavery and to a resolution of the war that ensued. The Whig in him that believed in economic opportunity for all saw that vision threatened by the encroachment of slavery in the territories and its possible consequences for the free states foreshadowed by the Fugitive Slave law and the Dred Scott decision. This fear was clearly present in his 1856 speeches in Peoria and elsewhere, and in the 1858 House Divided speech, his beginning argument in the contest with Douglas for the Senate. While it was not possible for Lincoln to know then the extent of the economic challenge slavery held, he understood enough to frame the issue on moral grounds. Not that his economic thinking ever really changed—his one speech on agriculture in 1859 anticipated his stand on the Home-

stead Act, and his many forays into banking led to support for Chase's banking reforms, including our first truly national currency. The tariff, the transcontinental railroad, and even his furtive and failed ventures into encouraging cotton trading attest to his continuity with his Whig past. While there is great complexity in the shoals of the "dismal science," Boritt steers through them carefully and well, and anyone following his lead will be rewarded by understanding Lincoln better.

The second book (or books as it became), published in 1974, was *Time on the Cross: the Economics of American Negro Slavery*, by Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engerman. It was a preliminary publication in a massive investigation utilizing statistical and econometric techniques, which by then was yielding results challenging previous notions of the economic weaknesses of slavery going back to the days of the abolitionists. Dozens if not scores of faculty and graduate students at Chicago, Harvard, and Rochester universities were involved in the project (including former Secretary of the Treasury and current Harvard president Lawrence Summers). Evidence supporting the economic viability of slavery in terms of superior productivity and profitability created an outcry of opposition when first published. A follow-up volume, *Without Consent or Contract: the Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, was published by Fogel in 1989, accompanied by three supplements, one on *Evidence and Methods* and two volumes of *Technical Papers*. The belief that American slavery was not about to fail of its own inefficiencies proved controversial, and the authors made efforts in the later volumes to flesh out the moral and political reasons for its demise.

The surprise rests in the fact that the South was riding to an economic crest in the 1850s—the gang system of

*continued on page 5*

THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
ASSOCIATIONROBERT S. ECKLEY  
*President*MOLLY M. BECKER  
RICHARD E. HART  
RICHARD MILLS  
*Vice-Presidents*THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ  
*Secretary*JUDITH BARRINGER  
*Treasurer*DONALD R. TRACY  
*Immediate Past-President**Board of Directors*Dan W. Bannister  
R-Lou Barker  
Roger D. Bridges  
Michael Burlingame  
John Daly  
Brooks Davis  
Rodney O. Davis  
Donald H. Funk  
Allen C. Guelzo  
Edith Lee Harris  
Kathryn M. Harris  
Earl W. Henderson Jr.  
Fred B. Hoffmann  
Barbara Hughett  
Robert W. Johannsen  
Robert J. Lenz  
Susan Mogerman  
Larry M. Newell  
Georgia Northrup  
Phillip S. Paludan  
James W. Patton III  
Mark Plummer  
Gerald Prokopowicz  
James A. Rawley  
Marvin Sanderman  
Brooks D. Simpson  
Richard Norton Smith  
Robert A. Stuart Jr.  
Louise Taper  
Andy VanMeter  
Margaret VanMeter  
Daniel R. Weinberg  
Vibert White  
Robert Willard  
Douglas L. Wilson  
Kenneth J. Winkle*Honorary Directors*Governor Rod R. Blagojevich  
Senator Richard Durbin  
Senator Peter Fitzgerald  
Congressman Ray LaHood  
Congressman John Shimkus  
Mayor Timothy J. Davlin  
The Honorable Rita Garman*Emeritus Directors*John R. Chapin  
Cullom Davis  
John J. Trutter  
Harlington Wood Jr.*Distinguished Directors*Mario M. Cuomo  
David Herbert Donald  
John Hope Franklin  
Harry V. Jaffa  
Garry Wills"You Can Fool All of the People"  
Lincoln Never Said That*continued from page 1*

character, to be sure, but that fact is hardly a sufficient reason for believing implicitly that Lincoln actually spoke them."

Angle reflected the growing view exemplified in the academy by Professor James Garfield Randall, that to find the "real" Lincoln, evidence must be sorted and evaluated according to accepted canons of historical methodology. Without locating the phrase in a contemporary newspaper account or diary, recollected words many years after the fact were weak pegs to hang the quote upon. While historians in the Lincoln field followed Angle's admonition, popular writers continued to use the phrase. Archer Shaw places the quote in *The Lincoln Encyclopedia* (1950), citing the Nicolay and Hay

reprint as the source without mentioning the qualifications. Roy P. Basler reasserts Paul Angle's position in a footnote to the September 2, 1858, speech contained in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (1953).

Citing the Bloomington *Pantagraph*, September 3, 1858, as the source for the entry, Basler summarizes the history of the mysterious Lincoln utterance: "Tradition has come to attribute to the Clinton speeches one of Lincoln's most famous utterances—'You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all of the time.' In 1905 testimony was gathered by the Chicago *Tribune* and Brooklyn *Eagle* to prove that Lincoln

*continued on page 6*

## Holiday Reading

Lincoln buffs will enjoy the selection of new and interesting offerings on the Sixteenth President. For those who have not read the late William E. Gienapp's biography of Abraham Lincoln, we urge you to do so. David Herbert Donald explores the theme of friendship in *We Are Lincoln Men*. This book was the recent recipient of the New York Lincoln Group's Award of Achievement. Donald E. Markle has edited the diary of David Homer Bates who worked in the War Department's telegraph office. Finally, John A. Corry has published *Lincoln at Cooper Union*, a book that James M. McPherson praises as "a wonderful book that is not only a clear exposition of this important speech but also a fascinating account of how it came about and what its consequences were. This is an important contribution to Lincoln scholarship." Please make your checks out to "IHPA," and Illinois residents must add 7.25 percent sales tax.

William E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America*

Retail: \$26.00

ALA member price: \$20.80

David Herbert Donald, *We Are Lincoln Men: Abraham Lincoln And His Friends*

Retail: \$25.00

ALA member price: \$20.00

Donald E. Markle, ed., *The Telegraph goes to War: The Personal Diary of David Homer Bates, Lincoln's Telegraph Operator*

Retail: \$27.95

ALA member price: \$22.50

John A. Corry, *Lincoln at Cooper Union*

Retail: \$21.99

ALA member price: \$17.60

Shipping/handling costs: Orders \$20.00 to \$41.00 - \$6.00

Orders \$41.01 to \$75.00 - \$8.00

U.S. dollars only

## The Brady Letter Time for A Serious Look

By John E. Walsh\*

For more than ninety years a document has existed that appears to charge Abraham Lincoln, in his conduct of the famous Almanac Trial (the Armstrong murder case, won by Lincoln and for which he took no fee), with actions that amount to witness tampering and suppression of evidence, at least, and perhaps subornation of perjury. Until recently, however, because the details of the case were little known or understood, the document has escaped close scrutiny by historians. Now with attention drawn afresh to Lincoln as a lawyer by publication of a documentary history of his career at the bar, a frank examination of those overlooked—and certainly surprising—charges seems in order.

In 1858 young William “Duff” Armstrong (son of Lincoln’s old friend and wrestling opponent at New Salem, Jack Armstrong) was indicted for first-degree murder in the death of a neighbor, James Metzger. The one-day trial was held in May in Beardstown, Illinois. During a drunken brawl, stated the grand jury indictment, the accused struck Metzger in the face with a “certain hard metallic substance commonly called a slung-shot” (a sort of long-handled blackjack, having a lead ball encased in leather with a cord attached for swinging). The blow fractured the man’s skull and he died several days later. A second assailant in the same fight had earlier been tried separately, being convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to eight years in the Joliet penitentiary. That aspect of the case is separate from the present discussion.

The document in question is a letter written in 1909 by one of the Armstrong jurors, John T. Brady, in which he reports a private conversation he had shortly after the trial with one of the defense witnesses, Nelson Watkins. In the letter Brady replies to an inquiry from a Beardstown lawyer named James Gridley, then preparing an article on the case. It is available

only as part of Gridley’s April 1910 article in the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*.

As Brady explains, some two months after the trial—which saw Armstrong acquitted—by accident he met the witness, Watkins, purported owner of the slung-shot, and “it naturally followed that we talked of the trial.” With that, in three short paragraphs totaling some three hundred words, Brady records what he was told. Lincoln, stated Watkins, as Armstrong’s attorney, “sent for him to come to Springfield; he questioned him about the slung-shot, and asked how it happened to be lost and then found near the spot where Metzger was killed. He said he told Mr. Lincoln that when he laid down that night under the wagon to go to sleep, that he laid the slung-shot upon the reach of the wagon, and in the morning forgot it, and when the wagon was driven away, it dropped off at the place where it was found. Watkins said that he told Mr. Lincoln that he (Lincoln) did not want to use him (Watkins) as a witness, as he knew too much, and he began to tell Lincoln what he knew, and Mr. Lincoln would not allow him to tell him anything and said to Watkins: ‘All I want to know is this: Did you make that slung-shot? And did Duff Armstrong ever have it in his possession?’ Watkins said he replied: ‘On cross-examination they make me tell things I do not want to tell,’ and Mr. Lincoln assured him he would see to it he was not questioned about anything but the slung-shot. Watkins told me that Duff Armstrong killed Metzger by striking him in the eye with an old-fashioned wagon hammer and that he say him do it. Watkins said that Douglas and all the other eight or ten witnesses for Armstrong who swore that Armstrong hit Metzger with his fist, all swore to a lie and they knew it.”

Of course testimony like this is easy to dismiss, having on it three strikes: it is late, it is anecdotal, and it is second (or third) hand. Neither the Brady letter nor the Watkins testimony

in it is to be found in *The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln: Complete Documentary Edition*. Yet each of the three deficiencies can be answered or at least minimized. The lateness, for instance, is only in the date of the letter itself. The Watkins testimony it contains was received by Brady—and perhaps written down by him in some form—with in a few weeks of the trial. As for its being hardly more than casual reminiscence set down at two removes from the source, there is a pretty effective rejoinder. Quite aside from this case, almost everything known about Lincoln’s youth and young manhood stems from just such a hodge-podge of late anecdotal sources, much of it second or third hand, most of it written down from the lips of surviving witnesses by the dedicated William Herndon. If all the stories now known and cherished about young Abe can be so uncritically received by the public and historians alike, as they have been and are, there is really no basis or excuse for further neglect of the Brady-Watkins revelations. They are as worthy of serious attention as anything collected by Herndon after the assassination. The gap in time is about comparable, forty or so years as against fifty.

This, of course, does not mean that Watkins should be accepted without a good deal of hesitation and careful analysis. What follows is an attempt to pin down exactly how he described to Brady his pretrial sessions with Lincoln, and what it all implies as to Lincoln’s handling of the case.

It was Lincoln who initiated the contact, says Watkins, “sent for him to come to Springfield,” meaning Lincoln’s law office. There he was invited to act as a defense witness, testifying on Duff’s behalf. Crucial would be his claim that the slung-shot was his personal property and that he’d accidentally left it under a wagon, implying that Duff could not have had access to it. At the same time, however, he warned Lincoln that he would not make a good defense witness, for the reason, as

he expressed it, “that he knew too much.” On the stand, he feared, “they may make me tell things I do not want to tell.” At this point, he adds, he began to confess to Lincoln “what he knew” about Metzger’s death. With that, and rather abruptly it seems, Lincoln stopped him and “would not allow him to tell him anything.” This is peculiar behavior for a defense attorney, to say the least, and very much appears to smack of prior knowledge. Knowing full well what Watkins was about to tell him, Lincoln cuts him off. Not wanting to have certain matters spoken of in his presence, Lincoln refuses to listen.

That conclusion is really irresistible. Talking with Brady some weeks after this session in the Lincoln law office, Watkins specifies exactly what he meant by saying “he knew too much.” As an eyewitness to the assault on Metzger, he watched as Duff struck his opponent in the face *with a weapon*: “saw him do it.” He then enforces the claim by adding that all the defense witnesses, some eight or ten of them, in testifying that Duff used only his fists, “swore to a lie and they knew it.” Here coaching of the witnesses by Lincoln is implied.

The cap to this curious exchange between lawyer and witness comes in Lincoln’s response to Watkins’ fear of being cross-examined. Lincoln, he says, “assured him” that the questioning by the prosecuting attorney would touch no other aspect of the case, but would be strictly limited to “the slung-shot.” How and why Lincoln might expect to control his opposite number in this strong way would be interesting to know (his opponent was state’s attorney Hugh Fullerton, a man well-known to Lincoln from other cases in which both participated).

That Watkins did in fact take the stand cannot be proved, the existing court record failing to note such individual appearances. But that he was present at the trial, and probably testified, is established by a court travel voucher placing him in Beardstown for six days. Dated May 8, 1858, which was the day after the trial, the voucher states that Nelson Watkins “attended

said court as a witness.” That Lincoln actually succeeded in walling him off from the prosecutor’s probing, as he promised, is indicated by the fact that no least hint survives of adverse testimony by Watkins at the trial. If any had occurred while he was on the stand, surely some trace of it would have made itself heard.

The defense of Lincoln against these charges will be obvious to all, and hardly needs stating. Watkins could have misremembered or misstated the facts, even deliberately distorted them. Brady in later writing down what Watkins told him could have gotten it wrong, adding errors of detail or emphasis. Gridley, in quoting Brady’s letter in his article, could have dropped out relevant portions or qualifying phrases. All these things could have happened, leaving intact Lincoln’s high reputation for rigid, unflinching probity as a lawyer.

It is also possible that none of them happened, and that Nelson Watkins’s memories of his contact with Lincoln and the trial are true and authentic. If so, there can be no lingering doubt that Lincoln, in saving his friend’s son from prison or the gallows, sharply skirted the law by criminal manipulation of a witness—the only time, apparently, that this can be said of him during a law practice covering some twenty-six years and five thousand cases.

As for why he did it—if he did—the reason is easily found. It was to pay off an old and heavy debt of gratitude. When young Abe in his New Salem days needed a friend he gained one in Duff’s father, Jack Armstrong, whose approval of the awkward newcomer brought acceptance in that rough pioneer society, soon leading to better things. Thirty years later in a Beardstown courtroom, that gangly youth, grown immeasurably in stature and about to contest Stephen Douglas for a seat in the United States Senate, finally paid off that old debt, whether he did it by fair means or foul.

\*John E. Walsh is the author of *Moonlight: Abraham Lincoln and the Almanac Trial* (St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

## President’s Column

*continued from page 2*

the large plantations provided 39 percent higher output for similar inputs relative to free farms or smaller slave farms not using the gang system. The South had “an advantage of about 35 percent” compared to the North. “The average wealth of gang-system farms [was] . . . more than 15 times the average either for southern yeomen or for northern farmers.” In the twenty years leading up to 1860, real per capita income of the South was rising faster than for the nation as a whole. Free Southern farm income was also rising rapidly—possibly a reason for the support of nonslaveholding Southerners for the Confederacy. The studies also impart a global dimension to the trans-Atlantic slave trade—of almost ten million Africans forcibly transported, only 7 percent came to the United States, Brazil absorbed 41 percent, and British and French Caribbean and Spanish South American colonies received 47 percent.

Oddly, in concentrating on the economics of slavery, *Time on the Cross* never mentions Lincoln. Fogel’s second summary volume has four index references to Lincoln (although I found a couple the index preparer missed), all pertaining to his actions prior to emancipation! Boritt emphasizes Lincoln’s careful avoidance of attributing economic weakness to slavery, while arguing for the blacks’ entitlement to the fruits of their labor. I presume most of Boritt’s work preceded publication of *Time on the Cross*, although he mentions the econometricians dispelling the inefficiencies of slavery after a century in an endnote. In bringing these two economic research projects to the attention of those interested in Lincoln, the work of Kenneth Stampp, Eric Foner, and many others should be recognized also as important in this context.

## “You Can Fool All of the People” Lincoln Never Said That

*continued from page 3*

used the epigram at Clinton. The testimony was conflicting and dubious in some particulars, but the epigram has remained a favorite in popular usage. Neither the report in the *Pantagraph* which provides the text of the Clinton speeches, nor any other contemporary Lincoln reference located by the present editors, make any reference to the epigram.”<sup>4</sup>

Historians focused attention on the earliest claims traced back to Clinton. Another claim dating a few years later posits that Lincoln uttered the words in 1856 at Bloomington, Illinois. William Pitt Kellogg, an Illinois lawyer, politician, and contemporary of Lincoln, wrote a lengthy recollection of Lincoln. In response to a solicitation from Lincoln Centennial Association secretary James R. B. Van Cleave, Kellogg penned his remarks on February 8, 1909. Kellogg detailed his memories from the 1856 Republican Convention held in Major’s Hall where Lincoln delivered what is known as the “Lost Speech.” Kellogg claimed: “I was so fortunate as to occupy a seat well in front, and listened to speech with close attention. When he came forward to speak of course there was much excitement. Mr. Lincoln began very slowly, holding in his left hand a card upon which he had evidently jotted down some of his leading thoughts. From time to time, as he reached some climax in his argument, he would advance to the front of the platform as he spoke, and with a peculiar gesture hurl the point, so to speak, at his audience; then as the audience rose to their feet to cheer, he would walk slowly backward, bowing and glancing at the card he held in his hand, again he would resume his speech, making his points in the same manner and with like effect. I was in this speech, discussing the question of popular sovereignty, and declaring that Douglas’s position upon the question of unfriendly legislation was rank sophistry, that Lincoln used the epigram, ‘You can fool all the people some

of the time, you can fool some of the people all the time, but you can’t fool all the people all the time.’ It was here also that he made that often quoted declaration, ‘We say to the southern disunionists, we *won’t* go out of the Union, and you *shan’t*.’”<sup>5</sup> Kellogg’s view was shared by Richard Price Morgan, who worked with the Chicago & Alton Railroad from 1852 until 1857 and founded the town of Dwight, Illinois. Addressing a group in Pontiac, Illinois, on February 12, 1909, Morgan claimed: “It was in the summer of the year that I received this letter—1856—that I stood next to Mr. Lincoln and heard him say: ‘You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.’ He was addressing an assemblage of about three or four hundred people from the raised platform of the entrance of the Pike House in Bloomington, Ill., upon the subject of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and reviewing the arguments of Douglas in support of it. His application of his epigram was so apt and so forcible that I have never forgotten it, and I believe that no verbal modification of it would be accurate. In his final peroration of that address, referring again to the arguments favoring the Kansas-Nebraska Act, he said, with wonderful energy and earnestness: ‘Surely, surely, my friends, you cannot be deceived by such sophistries.’”<sup>6</sup> While not in agreement on the exact phraseology, Kellogg and Morgan both seem to think Lincoln uttered the sentiment in a different town at an earlier time. Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher, finding nothing in the record to support Kellogg and Morgan’s claims, rate the recollections with a “D” grade.<sup>7</sup>

A final variation was advanced in the 1920s. *Hoyt’s New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations*, revised by Kate Louise Roberts in 1922, attributes the quote to Phineas Taylor Barnum, the great nineteenth-century showman. An entry note in part reads “Attributed to

Lincoln but denied by Spofford.”<sup>8</sup> Harriet Elizabeth Prescott Spofford was a popular writer of fiction and poetry who wrote for popular magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. Two years following the publication of *Hoyt’s*, Mrs. Mida McGillicuddy, described by the International News Service as a “Dallas historian,” repeated the claim that the showman P. T. Barnum actually coined the phrase and Abraham Lincoln merely quoted Barnum in Clinton.<sup>9</sup> If the epigram is Lincolnian in sentiment, one could equally argue that it is Barnumian: the supporting evidence in both cases is equally tenuous.

<sup>1</sup>As cited in William E. Barton, “‘But you Can’t Fool All the People All the Time’—Did Lincoln Say It?” *Dearborn Independent*, Sept. 11, 1926, 8, 18.

<sup>2</sup>John Nicolay and John Hay, eds., *The Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Francis D. Tandy, Co., 1905), 3:349.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>4</sup>Roy P. Basler et al., eds., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 2:81.

<sup>5</sup>William Pitt Kellogg to James R. B. Van Cleave, Feb. 8, 1909, TS, Henry Horner Lincoln Collection, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

<sup>6</sup>Morgan’s recollection is found in Paul Angle, ed., *Abraham Lincoln By Some Men Who Knew Him* (Chicago: Americana House, 1950), 73–74.

<sup>7</sup>Don E. and Virginia Fehrenbacher, eds., *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 277, 335–36.

<sup>8</sup>Kate Louise Roberts, *Hoyt’s New Cyclopedia of Practical Quotations* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1922), 182.

<sup>9</sup>“Says Epigram Credited To Lincoln Is Barnum’s,” *Murphysboro Independent*, Sept. 24, 1924, newspaper clipping, reference files, Henry Horner Lincoln Collection.

## Member News and Announcements

It is with great sadness to report the passing of Professor William E. Gienapp who died from complications related to cancer. Bill taught at the University of Wyoming and Harvard University. His *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (1987) remains a foundational book in understanding the Lincoln era. His more recent *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography* (2002) ranks as one of the best one-volume Lincoln biographies. He leaves behind his wife Erica and two sons, William and Jonathan.

Congratulations to Richard Norton Smith who was recently named to head the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. Smith has served as director of the Herbert Hoover, Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, and Gerald Ford presidential museums.

Forthcoming books include Allen C. Guelzo's *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation* that will be released in February. It is the first detailed study of the proclamation since John Hope Franklin's book published in 1963. Geoffrey Perret's study of Abraham Lincoln as Commander and Chief will be released in April. Harold Holzer's *Lincoln at Cooper Union* will be released

in May. Wayne Calhoun Temple's "*The Taste Is In My Mouth A Little*": *Lincoln's Vittles and Potables*, a book on Lincoln's favorite recipes, will be available in early 2004. Max Skidmore has two books being released, *After The White House*, dealing with the careers of all former presidents, and *Presidential Performance*, which evaluates all presidential administrations without trying to rank them.

Lucas Morel will be the featured speaker at the February 2004 annual dinner of the Lincoln Club of Delaware.

Kathryn Harris and Dan Guillory will be presenting special programs during the exhibition of *Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation*, which is showing at the Decatur Public Library from November 17 through January 9. For more information call 217.424.2900 or visit [www.decaturlib.il.us](http://www.decaturlib.il.us) on the Web.

The Abraham Lincoln Institute, Inc., is looking for nominations for the 2004 book prize of \$5,000. Any book published during calendar years 1999-2003 on Abraham Lincoln's life and legacy can be submitted for consideration. Send them to [lincoln-institute@erols.com](mailto:lincoln-institute@erols.com) by January 31, 2004.

The Lincoln Group of New York

presented a Special Citation to Lincoln College for their contribution to the video *Lincoln in Logan County*.

The Membership Committee asks that if you have not sent in your membership renewal, to do so. Membership renewals are sent out in October and will cover the period from January 1 through December 31, 2004.

Announcement flyers for the annual symposium and banquet will be mailed to members the week following Christmas. If you do not have your announcement by early January, please call the Association to reserve a seat at the banquet.

*For the People* (ISSN 1527-2710) is published four times a year and is a benefit of membership of the Abraham Lincoln Association  
1 Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, Illinois  
62701

Newsletter design and layout by  
William B. Tubbs  
[wbt60@ameritech.net](mailto:wbt60@ameritech.net)

### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Association in the category indicated:

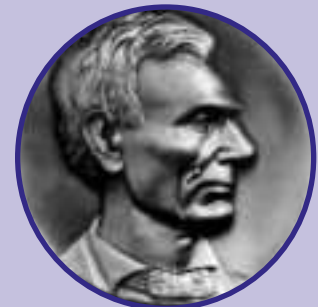
Railsplitter \_\_\_\_\_ \$35  
(\$25 Student)  
Postmaster \_\_\_\_\_ \$75  
Lawyer \_\_\_\_\_ \$200  
Congressman \_\_\_\_\_ \$500  
President \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000

*Members residing outside the U.S. add \$3.00.*

Mail this application (or a photocopy) and a check to:

The Abraham Lincoln Association  
1 Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, Illinois  
62701

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_



Web site: [www.alincolnassoc.com](http://www.alincolnassoc.com)

## A Mystery Solved

By Thomas E. Schwartz

Since 1941 the Illinois State Historical Library has owned a small artist's pencil sketch of Abraham Lincoln. Arthur Lumley, the artist, is not as widely known as his contemporaries Alfred Waud or Thomas Nast. Lumley is perhaps best known for his aerial drawings of the Civil War that appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. The Lumley sketch carries the notation "Brady's May 16/61" and on the verso the following: "This sketch of Lincoln was made from life, while he was waiting to have a photograph taken in Brady's Gallery Pennsylvania Ave. Washington DC 1861. Arthur Lumley." A quick examination of any Lincoln photographic reference work indicates that there is no photograph of Lincoln listed for that date. There are, however, a number of suspiciously similar images that are dated "circa 1862."

The Lumley sketch solves the problem by revealing the actual date of the photographs was one year earlier than the currently presumed date of

sometime in 1862. Not only does the Lumley sketch provide contemporary evidence for Lincoln being at Mathew Brady's studio on May 16, 1861, it also comports with the series of photos that

photographic historians have heretofore only guessed at dating. For a fuller discussion of the problem, see my article in the recent *Journal of Illinois History* (Autumn 2003), 215-22.



*The Arthur Lumley sketch of Abraham Lincoln (left) and one of the photographs from Mathew Brady's Washington, D.C., studio previously believed to have been taken in 1862 (right).*

## For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association  
1 Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

**FORWARDING AND RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Springfield, Illinois  
Permit No. 263

