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Lincoln's Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans

by

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND: THE CITY AND THE MEN

In 1821 an agent engaged in a survey of bounty lands in the Military Tract met a party following the course of the Mississippi north. Among them was an old Methodist who, climbing the Indian Mound Quincians later called Pisgah jutting high above the muddy waters, shouted in ecstacy, "Glory, glory, glory!....I'm on the Mount of Glory!" Stretching out as far as the eye could see was over five million acres of grassy prairie slashed through with timbered ravines.[1]

The travellers were on the western boundary of the Military Tract, a large area in west central Illinois lying approximately between the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers.[2] To the site on which the old gentleman had been so exalted and in the same year, a young farmer,

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[1]The land agent was John Tillson, jr., later prominent in Quincy as a land agent and hotelman. In Christina Holmes Tillson A Woman's Story of Pioneer Illinois, edited by Milo Milton Quaife (Lakeside Classics, vol. 8, Chicago, 1919), pp. 22-23. Mrs. Tillson was the wife of the land agent mentioned above.

[2]Specifically, the Military Tract lay between these two rivers, extending south to their juncture and north to the southern boundary line of Rock Island County. It contained approximately 5, 360,000 acres of which 3,500,000 acres was reserved for soldier bounty, each veteran of the War of 1812 patenting one-quarter section. Much of the land was purchased from soldiers by Eastern land speculators. John Tillson, Quincy Past and Present, 41-44.

John Wood, later to become governor of Illinois, guided two ex-soldiers, beneficiaries of government land bounties; and liking the location himself, purchased it with his partner from one of the soldiers.[3]

The county of Adams was formed four years later; and Quincy, a tiny village grown up around Wood's first cabin and named for John Quincy Adams, became the county seat.[4] In the middle thirties, the location of the land office in Quincy brought a steady increase in the population, the town becoming the largest in the Tract.[5] To it also came a large part of the Germans who settled in Illinois.[6] Later years brought river trade, a variety of industries,[7] and finally a railroad.[8] In 1840 it boasted a population of some 4,000 souls, of whom some 25 or 30 were lawyers who had a thriving business in land claims.

The politics of the infant town were typical of the times -- bitter and partisan. A Democratic newspaper, later known as the Herald, was established in 1835, and

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[3]John Tillson, Quincy Past and Present, 10-12.

[4]According to John Tillson, the commissioners were sent to locate a county seat near the center of the new county, and were deliberately guided by Willard Keyes, Wood's partner, through all the swamps and creeks in the area. The commissioners were most happy to be led back to Quincy and name it the county seat. John Tillson, Quincy Past and Present, 19.

[5]Carlson, Military Tract, 66.

[6]Ibid., 83.

[7]On June 25, 1845, the Quincy Whig listed some six flour mills, three saw mills, a machine shop and foundary. To attract the settlers were twelve churches, seven hotels and inns, and a large variety of shops.

[8]The town was involved in the building of the North-

the Quincy Whig in 1838.[9] The first city elections in 1840 went to the Whigs, but neither party ever attained sufficient majority in the area to relaw its relentless warfare on its opponent.[10]

One of the town's most prominent Whigs during this early period and later was Archibald Williams. Williams was born in Montgomery County, Kentucky, in 1801, "with moderate advantages but natural fondness for study...."[11] After having first tried manual labor and teaching, he was admitted to the bar in Tennessee in 1828, and emigrated the following year to the newly-settled village of Quincy to try his fortune.

A lean six-footer, Williams was a strikingly ugly man, an ugliness accentuated by eccentricity in dress. When he made some of his early appearances in court clad in buckskin pants, onlookers first laughed, then listened as the odd-looking youth with the large mouth spoke. His speaking, both in the court and on the stump, was reasoned and logical -- not the spread-eagle oratory of so many of his comtemporaries.[12]

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ern Cross Railroad, incorporated in 1864, as a part of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad System. Carlson, Military Tract, 100-103.

[9]John Tillson, Quincy Past and Present, 74.

[10]Ibid., 78-79.

[11]Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois (Chicago, 1901), 590; Collins and Perry, Past and Present of Quincy, 272.

[12]Browning Diary, 1:30n; Collins and Perry, Past and

He soon won the trust of his fellow townsmen, was elected a trustee of the town in 1834, and sent to the Illinois Senate in 1832. It was in the legislature that Williams first met Abraham Lincoln, then a member of the House of Representatives. The two men sat near each other in the southeast corner of the State House in Vandalia and shared the reputation of being among the ugliest men present. They were great friends then, Lincoln once commenting that "Archie Williams was one of the strongest-minded, clearest-headed men in Illinois."[13]

It was in this same legislative session that Williams' name was put before the legislature as a candidate for the United States Senate. On each of the three ballots taken, Lincoln voted for Williams; although the prize went to another.[14]

Williams also served a term in the General Assembly as a representative. On December 20, 1838, as chairman of the Finance Committee, a post Lincoln held in 1839, he offered a resolution deprecating "the practice of the General Assembly of electing members of their own body to fill State offices....", and was met with bitter opposition. With Lincoln's support the resolution was

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Present of Quincy, 223; Hamilton (III) Representative, July 17, 1858; John McA. Palmer, Bench and Bar of Illinois (2 vols., Chicago, 1899), 2:880.

[13]Palmer, Bench and Bar, 1: 183.

[14]Pratt, Day by Day, 1809-1836, 59.

adopted with some changes.[15]

The two men also associated politically outside the regular functions of the House. In February, 1839, a committee of nine, including Lincoln, Williams and his fellow townsman, Orville H. Browning, were appointed by a caucus of Whigs in the House of Representatives to draft an address to the people of Illinois "setting forth our opposition to the present administration...."[16]

Browning, also a Kentuckian by birth but some five years younger than Williams, had followed the road north to Quincy only a year later than Williams.[17] Like Lincoln and Williams, he was a lawyer by profession and a Whig in politics.

In appearance, however, Browning offered a sharp contrast. Of "imposing stature, a really handsome man, with speaking darkish eyes, and in dress, a most exquisite dandy. He wore a dress-coat of peculiar cut, -- Prince Albert fashion, -- with an outside pocket,....What made him really conspicuous was his ruffled shirt and large cuffs...."[18]

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[15]Not before, however, one of the opposition threatened revenge. Lincoln met the threat resolutely, stating that, "he had no objection about settling this matter at another tribunal...if the gentleman insisted on it." quoted from the Alton Telegraph, Dec. 29, 1838 in Basler, Collected Works, 1:124-125.

[16]Ibid., 146.

[17]John Tillson in Past and Present of Quincy says 1831.

[18]Koerner, Memoirs, 1:479.

In 1838 the courtly Browning followed Williams as the state senator from his district. The new senator had that year married Eliza Caldwell of Kentucky, a young lady noted for charm rather than beauty. Lincoln met Browning's bride the first year of her marriage, and his esteem and respect for her wise, if youthful counsel is evident in the letter he wrote her in 1838. In it he unburdens himself rather more fully than he was wont to do on a most intimate subject; his courtship of a somewhat portly Kentucky girl, Mary Owens.

From the first paragraph there is evidence that the Browning-Lincoln friendship existed before their meeting in Vandalia. Lincoln writes:

> "...I shall make the history of so much of my own life, as has elapsed since I saw you, the subject of this letter. And...in order to give a full and inteligible [sic] account of the things I have done and suffered since I saw you, I shall necessarily have to relate some that happened before."

In the remainder of the letter, Lincoln traces the story of his peculiar courtship which began in the fall of 1836. Apparently confident of Eliza Browning's sympathy, he reveals a half-mocking picture of himself drawn into a semi-engagement with a young lady he had met some three years before on her visit to Springfield, and found "intelligent and agreeable". On her second visit, he was unpleasantly surprised to find his Miss Owens a "fair match for Falstaff;...." "Nothing, "he wrote, "could have

reached her present bulk in less than thirtyfive or forty years...." Feeling bound to his word, Lincoln had held back, then summoning his moral courage, proposed. To his astonishment and embarrassment, he was flatly rejected.

Obviously feeling relief at having a friend to whom he could tell such a tale of foolishness, Lincoln concludes by urging his young confessor to "write me a long yarn about something to amuse me."[19]

The following year, Lincoln and John J. Hardin sent a comical petition to Mrs. Browning to lighten their bachelor society by joining her husband in Springfield, "bringing in your train all ladies in general, who may be at your command, and all Mr. Browning's sisters in particular."[20]

In Springfield this same year and probably an attendant at Mrs. Browning's "court", was Andrew Johnston, an assistant clerk of the House of Representatives. Johnston, a member of a wellknown Richmond, Va., family, had arrived in Quincy in 1837. A literary young man, he had

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[19]This letter is included in Basler, Collected Works, 1: 117-119.

[20]Abraham Lincoln, E.B. Webb, J.J. Hardin and John Dawson to Mrs. Orville Browning, Springfield, Dec. 11, 1839 in Basler, Collected Works, 2: 156.

A second letter was written at the same time by John J. Hardin, which reveals that Mrs. Browning had resided in Springfield, but had returned to her Quincy home when she became ill. He promises her a parlor, and jokingly adds, that "His Excellency will be considered when you arrive, as the minor part of the Quincy Delegation." Lincoln had endorsed this letter on the back of the second page. Basler, Collected Works, 2: 157-158.

served as one of the first editors of the Quincy Whig in order"to establish a Whig press in this county, where lately the press spoke not, except by order of the administration."[21] He held this position only until a professional newsman could be secured. Johnston was active in the little community's social life as well, helping in the establishment of the first library association there. In 1838, he began his legal practice in Quincy, a few years later becoming the law partner of Archibald Williams. He too, was a Whig, and active in the town and county organizations, campaigning for them and serving as city treasurer and city attorney under that banner.[22]

Undoubtedly well-known to the Brownings and to Williams, Andrew Johnston probably met Lincoln through them. At any rate, when he was nominated and defeated for the clerkship of the House, Lincoln voted for him.[23]

Little is know about Johnston's appearance, but a friend later described him as a learned man whose "advise and suggestions to me as to my reading and study and as to the conduct of my life were of the greatest service to me....I shall never cease to be grateful to him for the kindness shown me...."[24]

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[21]Quincy Whig, August 18, 1838.

[22]Asbury, History of Quincy, 77: John Tillson, Past and Present of Quincy, 72-73; Quincy Whig, May 5, 1838; May 16, 1840; June 6, 1840; Sept. 25, 1841.

[23]Pratt, Day by Day, 1809-1836, 215.

[24]From an address given by Lorenzo Bull, well-known

Associated with Browning, Williams and Johnston as an active political worker in Quincy was Abraham Jonas, an English Jew, born in 1801, who had migrated at the age of 18 to the United States. He had settled first in Cincinnati, had then moved on to Kentucky, where as a Whig, he had served four years in the legislature. Jonas was one of the Middle West's outstanding Masons, organizing several lodges and twice holding the post of Grand Master.

In middle age, he moved to Quincy and set up a store, a business in which several brothers joined him. His ambition was for the law, however; he worked briefly in Browning's office, and was admitted to the bar in 1843.[25]

Jonas was a man of "about middle size, a trifle stooping from habit, warm and cordial in manner, genial and pleasing in conversation...."[26]

Lincoln may have become acquainted with Jonas when the latter served a term in the Illinois General Assembly in 1842-43. Although not a member of the legislature in that term, Lincoln was in Springfield and active in Whig counsels in which Jonas undoubtedly also took part. The first meeting of which there is any record took place

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Quincy Banker, reprinted in Collins and Perry, Past and Present of Quincy, 222-223.

[25]The Masonic Trowel, Apr. 15, 1862 and July 15, 1864. The bound volume of the Trowel, 1862-1866 and Illinois masonic paper, can be found in the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, Ill.

[26]Ibid., Apr. 15, 1862.

at a Washington birthday dinner in Springfield, when Jonas, as a prominent Mason, spoke.[27]

The common meeting ground of these five men was politics. They were to know each other long and, in campaign after campaign, to serve the same cause. However, with two of them, Orville Browning and Andrew Johnston, the political comradeship was to become friendship.

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[27]Segal, "Jonas Role in Nomination", 99.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING QUINCY CONTACTS

Lincoln and Johnston came into close association through the medium of poetry. Lincoln, as a middle-aged man, already prominent as a lawyer and politician, sought support in a poetic venture from Andrew Johnston, "a man highly educated not only in the law, but in all departments of literature."[1] In 1846 and 1847, Johnston, now busy with an extensive law practice in Quincy, received four letters from Lincoln.[2] In the first letter Lincoln approached him rather hesitantly on the subject. After discussing briefly a poem he was enclosing, Lincoln mentioned his own writing: "By the way, how would you like to see a piece of poetry of my own making? I have a piece that is almost done, but I find a deal of trouble to finish it."[3]

"Friend Johnston", as Lincoln sometimes addressed him had acted before as a literary advisor for other, younger men,[4] and was happy to encourage his correspond-

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[1]Bull in Collins and Perry, Past and Present of Quincy, 222-223.

[2]Archibald Williams and Johnston were law partners from 1841 to 1847; the firm "ranked with the best lawyers in the state." Ibid.

[3]Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, Springfield, Feb. 24, 1846 in Basler, Collected Works, 1:366-367. The poetry Lincoln enclosed in the letter was "Mortality" by William Knox.

[4]Bull in Collins and Perry, Past and Present of Quincy, 222.

ent. A few weeks later, he answered and sent Lincoln both a few words of encouragement and a parody of Poe's "The Raven" that had been printed in a local paper.[5]

Lincoln found the parody, which pictured omnipresent odor of skunk rather than presence of raven, "decidedly funny"; although he agreed with Johnston it would probably be funnier had he read the original.

Gaining courage from Johnston's letter, Lincoln copied out some ten short stanzas of his poem and sent them for Johnston's perusal and criticism. At some length, he explained the inspiration which had originated the verses:

> "In the fall of 1844...I went into the neighborhood in which I was raised (Spencer County, Ind.)....seeing it, and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry....whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question."

The novice poet was planning a lengthy work of four cantos.[6]

The first canto was a melancholy, almost morbid meditation on the death of those loved ones he had known as a child. This selection is typical:

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[5]The parody, telling the story of a farmer who chased a skunk out of his chickenhouse, was called "The Polecat", and signed Marmaduke Mar-Rhyme. It appeared in the March 18, 1846, edition of the Quincy Whig.

[6]Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, Tremont, Ill., Apr. 18, 1846, Springfield, Apr. 18, 1846 in Basler, Collected Works, 1:377-378.

"Where many were, how few remain
Of old familiar things!
But seeing these to mind again
The lost and absent brings." [7]

The second canto did not follow for almost five months. The inspiration for this set of twelve verses had again been his visit to his old home, but was more specific in its topic. Lincoln had met an old schoolfriend, Matthew Gentry, who had become hopelessly insane. Lincoln was impressed with the contrast between the present pathetic existence of a man whom he had once envied as the "son of the rich man in...(a) very poor neighborhood".

Despite encouragement, Lincoln was still afraid he was boring his learned friend with his "little canto s "; but promised to send another -- "the subject will be a 'bear hunt'. "[8]

Johnston then offered to have Lincoln's poem published in the local paper, one of the best possible encouragements to a new writer. Lincoln was delighted but, somewhat hesitantly sent his approval in February, 1847: "I am not at all displeased with your proposal to publish the poetry, or doggerel, or whatever it may be called... I consent...." He offered to return the favor for Johnston if desired.[9]

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[7]"My Childhood Home I See Again", ibid., 367-370.
[8]Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, Springfield, Sept. 6, 1846, ibid., 384-386.
[9]Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, Springfield, Feb. 25, 1847, ibid., 392.

With this letter, he included the third canto, possibly the "Bear hunt" he mentioned previously; but in the promised publication, this half-mocking tale of country life was omitted, probably because it fitted poorly with the mood of the preceding parts.[10]

The poem appeared in the Whig, with new title and subtitles and an introduction by Johnston, which quoted extensively from Lincoln's letters. At Lincoln's request, for "risk of being ridiculed"[11] "The Return", as Johnston titled it, was published anonymously.[12]

Despite the publication, Lincoln apparently wrote no more verse for his Quincy friend. At Johnston's request, he had, in 1846, written in great detail an account of the notorious Trailor murder trial in Springfield. This strange narrative of a man accused by his brothers of murder and acquitted by the reappearance of the "victim", was also published in the Whig.[13]

The correspondence between Lincoln and Johnston apparently ceased when Andrew Johnston, dissolving his law partnership with Archibald Williams left Quincy,

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[10]"The Bear hunt", ibid., 386-389.

[11]Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, Springfield, Feb. 25, 1847, ibid., 392.

[12]Quincy Whig, May 5, 1847.

[13]William H. Herndon to Ward H. Lamon, Springfield, Feb. 25, 1870, in Emanuel Hertz, The Hidden Lincoln, from the letters and papers of William H. Herndon (New York, 1938), 67. Herndon states that the material was sent to Abraham Jonas; but, according to Basler, Collected Works, 371n, the request was made by Johnston. Herndon also gives, incorrectly, the date of publication as 1856.

December, 1847, and returned to his native Richmond.[14] Johnston reappeared in the Middle West only on several brief visits with Orville Browning in Quincy in 1854 and 1855. Insofar as is known, he neither saw nor met Lincoln again.[15]

Another probable reason for the closing of the correspondence between Lincoln and Johnston besides the distance which now separated them was that, other than their mutual interest in poetry -- the basis for their correspondence, Johnston had little to offer this man increasingly absorbed

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[14]Andrew Johnston's sister was the mother of George Pickett, later famous as the Confederate general who led the famous charge at Gettysburg. In 1841 and 1842, in order to obtain an appointment to West Point from Illinois, young Pickett lived with his uncle in Quincy. Back in Richmond by April, 1842, he received his appointment on the recommendation of John T. Stuart and a Captain Symington. Bull in Collins and Perry, Past and Present of Quincy, 222; Lt. Col. John B. Shuman, A.D.G., to Brig. Gen. John McA. Palmer, U.S.A, retired, Washington, Sept. 21, 1926. Letter in Johnston file, Ill. State Historical Library in Springfield, Ill. According to LaSall Corbett Pickett, George Pickett's wife in Pickett and His Men (Atlanta, 1899), 126-128, Lincoln was Johnston's law partner and a frequent visitor to the office in Quincy. Mrs. Pickett claims that it was through Lincoln's help and against Johnston's wishes that Pickett entered the Military Academy. She further stated that Lincoln visited the family in Richmond in April, 1865, on his tour of the captured city. In her book she printed a letter which Lincoln was supposed to have written young Pickett Feb. 22, 1842. The existence of such a friendship and the authenticity of the letter, however are questionable. Lincoln was never Johnston's law partner and did not pay his first visit to Quincy until 1856 (Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Apringfield, Ill, July 21, 1860 in Basler, Collected Works, 4:85-86). Also the second paragraph of the letter quotes directly from the Lincoln Temperance Address of Feb. 22, 1842. It is more likely that Stuart obtained the appointment for Pickett as a reward for Johnston's services to the Whig cause. See also the Johnston file in the Illinois State Historical Library.

[15]Browning Diary, 1:148-151 and 1:212-213; Quincy Whig, Dec. 1, 1847.

in politics. Other than in local and county politics, Johnston had little political ambition and pursued his political career no further than to serve briefly where he was needed for some temporary job.

Not so their mutual friend, Orville Browning, whose political reputation and prestige were, like Lincoln's, powerful forces among Illinois Whiggery. The Lincoln-Browning association, social and political, had begun early in their careers and was to continue to the end of Lincoln's life.

The two men differed radically in character. Browning was a polished and courtly gentleman with a great delight in the company of women. His kindly attentions to the fair sex extended from his Negro servant woman, whose sickbed he faithfully attended, to escorting groups of ladies to the theatre or concert. He paid a great deal of attention to his appearance; was pious and conventional in religious matters; and, devoted to his wife, enjoyed a happy and serene home life most of his days.

Both, however, were devoted to the principles of the Whig Party, switching over to the Republican Party, but carrying their basic political tenets with them. Browning, in particular, cherished the standards of an earlier day long after it was politically practical to do so.

The two were considered among the state's outstanding lawyers, Browning maintaining the recognized leadership of the Quincy bar for fifty years and carrying on an

extensive practice both in and out of Illinois. Lincoln and Browning often met in court, sometimes cooperating but as often opposing one another.[16] Opposition in court, however, appeared to make no difference in their enjoyment of each other's company outside the courtroom. Herndon relates that, in Springfield,

> "Lincoln would come from his home to the Supreme Courtroom about seven or eight o'clock in the evening. The lawyers -- Browning, Logan, Bushnell[17] and other lawyers--were studying their cases.... Lincoln would come into the room in a good humor, in one of his best moods, speak kindly and pleasantly to all, and say'You men sitting here so mum puts me in mind of a story.' The lawyers would say: 'What is the story, Lincoln: Come, tell it' and tell it he would, and that story would suggest another, and so he would break up all reading...; he would keep on till twelve o'clock or one o'clock in the night."[18]

In Chicago, attending Federal Court, the three lawyers, Browning,Nehemiah Bushnell, and Lincoln, would often spend a relaxing hour over tea.[19] The theatre was

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[16]See in Basler, Collected Works:2: 103-104 on the Hoyt case, 1851, a patent case--Lincoln, Browning and Bushnell for the defendant; in Browning Diary, 1:47-48, the Williamson case, 1852, a criminal trial--Browning and Lincoln for the defendant; also in Diary, 1:191, Forsythe vs. Peoria, 1855, a land dispute based on land claims during the French period--Browning for the defendant, Lincoln and Williams for the plaintiff. This is only a sampling of the many cases in which Browning and Lincoln and sometimes Williams also participated.

[17]Nehemiah Bushnell, Browning's law partner and later an outstanding railroad attorney.

[18]William H. Herndon to Jesse W. Weik, Springfield, July 19, 1888, in Hertz, Hidden Lincoln, 215.

[19]July 11, 1855. Browning Diary, 1:190.

a common interest, a favorite means of enjoyment for both Lincoln and Browning. Browning writes in 1857 in Chicago: "At work in the Court--At night Bushnell, Lincoln & myself went to theatre & heard Burton in the Toodles--His acting is very fine--"[20] and again a week later, "At work in court--Lincoln & myself went to the Theatre and saw Burton ...in the play of Dombey & Son--This is very admirable--".[21]

In 1856, Browning was sent as a delegate to the Anti-Nebraska Convention in Bloomington, only a short time after a number of Quincians, largely former Whigs, had banded together under the same name. Men were beginning to organize into a political force those elements in the state which were opposed to Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, but there were many shades of opinion among them. "No resolutions had been prepared for the Convention tomorrow," wrote Browning when he arrived in Bloomington the day before the convention was to open," and no program of Proceedings settled; and many discordant elements to be harmonized. I procured a room, got 15 or 20 of the leading men of all shades of opinion together, settled on the order of proceeding tomorrow, and prepared and offered a resolution intended to reconcile both Know-nothings and Germans to act with us."[22]

This convention was a forerunner of later days when

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[20] Ibid., 294.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., 237-238.

Browning was to bring his organizing talents to Lincoln's support. Both Browning and Lincoln were advocates upon the floor of the convention, and both addressed the group.[23]

That winter, after Fremont's defeat by Buchanan, Lincoln called on Browning to use again his accomplished political pen to rally and unite the Republican forces: "It has been suggested by some of our friends that ... the Republicans ought to get up a sort of party State address; and again it has been suggested that you could draw up such a thing as well if not better than any of us. Think about it."[24]

Lincoln's use of an indirect approach and compliments to persuade Browning to a certain stand in this and other political matters may have ensued from his understanding of his friend's pride. Most certainly, though, Lincoln, astute politician that he was, realized that while Browning was a friend of long-standing, he was also

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[23]Henry C. Whitney, an Illinois lawyer, tells a rather interesting story of the convention: "At the Bloomington convention in 1856 he (Lincoln) introduced the polished and courtly Browning to the unpolished and irreverent Wentworth. They had never met. 'I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, but I have heard much of you.' began the facile Browning. 'Damned much against me,' ejaculated Wentworth. It struck Lincoln as being very comical. I heard him repeat it a dozen times that day."

Wentworth, a Chicago Republican, had been involved in some rather sordid political dealings.

Henry Clay Whitney, Life on the Circuit with Lincoln, introduction and notes by Paul M. Angle (Caldwell, Idaho, 1940), 179.

[24]Abraham Lincoln to Orville H. Browning, Springfield, Dec. 15, 1856, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:86.

a competitor for leadership in the party. This competition was rarely acknowledged openly by either, but that it existed is evidenced by the number of times they were considered for the same position and the concern and quiet watch each kept on the career of the other.

As early as 1849, Lincoln had written to Joshua Speed from Washington refusing a possible offer of the General Land Office. "I believe that, so far as the whigs in Congress, are concerned, I could have the General Land Office almost by common consent; but then Sweet, and Don: Morrison, and Browning, and Cyrus Edwards all want it."[25]

In 1852 both Browning and Lincoln were endorsed by the Chicago Daily Journal as Whig candidates for the governorship.[26] In 1856, during the Presidential campaign, Lincoln refused an invitation to speak in Iowa, but asked to be notified if Browning consented to speak there.[27]

Again, in 1858, the Republicans of McDonough County passed a resolution endorsing Browning for the United States Senate, although the Quincy Whig & Republican claimed to "know that Mr. Browning is not an aspirant for the office, but anxious for the election of Mr.

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[25]Abraham Lincoln to Joshua F. Speed, Washington, Feb. 20, 1849, Ibid., 28-29.

[26]Thomas, Day by Day, 1847-1853, 281.

[27]Abraham Lincoln to James W. Grimes, Springfield, July 12, 1856, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:348.

Lincoln--."[28] Browning's unusually sparce coverage in his diary of that convention which finally endorsed Lincoln in 1858 for the Senate leads to doubt on Mr. Browning's dearth of ambition in that particular instance.

Douglas apparently thought it possible, at least, that Browning's pride had been damaged by the convention's endorsement of Lincoln as the first and only choice for the position; for he attempted to drive a wedge between Lincoln and other leading Republicans, Browning among them, by implying that the convention's wording of the endorsement had insinuated that the others were "nowhere", "nobody" and "not to be considered".[29]

Despite the strain which ambition placed on their relationship, however, the two men and their families remained close and congenial friends.

As Lincoln's contacts with Browning increased, he also developed political connections with his old Vandalia comrade, Archibald Williams. Williams was widely known and respected by his political co-workers, and, in view of his long service to the Whig cause, was looked upon as an elder statesman of the party. The

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[28]Quincy Whig & Republican, June 14, 1858.

[29]In the Ottawa Debate, August 21; the Jonesboro Debate, Sept. 15; and at Charleston, Sept. 18, 1858. In Basler, Collected Works, 3:7,109, and 174.

two men often associated in legal work, also.[30]

Lincoln did not hesitate to seek Williams' help in a matter requiring both tact and persuasiveness. As one of the Whig members of Congress known as the "seven young Indians", Lincoln and the others of this group favored Zachary Taylor, hero of the Mexican War, as the standard bearer of the party in 1848. Williams agreed with this choice.

At the Constitutional Convention in Springfield in 1847, in caucus with 55 other Whig delegates, Archibald Williams had moved that the group, as individuals, publicly endorse Taylor as the candidate for president in the coming election. Orville Browning disagreed, however, and held out for the renomination of Henry Clay. The Quincy Whig was wavering between the old and the new party favorite.[31] Lincoln, convinced that Clay would never be elected, sought to strengthen Taylor in the western part of Illinois by urging Williams to use his influence in getting Browning to switch to Taylor:

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[30]See footnote 16, Chapter II; also in Basler, Collected Works, 1:344, Bruen vs. Ganes, 1845--Lincoln acting for Williams; and in Thomas, Day-by-Day, 1847 to 1853, 209, Smith et al vs. Dunlap, 1850--A Bank of Illinoise case involving the value of State of Illinois indebtedness, Bushnell and Lincoln for the plaintiff and Williams for the defendant.

[31]Quincy Whig, September 8, 1847; September 22, 1847; and November 3, 1847.

"Washington, Apr. 30, 1848

Dear William:(sic)

I have not seen in the papers any evidence of a movement to send a delegate from your circuit to the June convention--I wish to say that I think it is all important that a delegate should be sent--Mr. Clay's chances for an election, is just no chance at all--He might get New York, and that would have elected in 1844, but it will not now, because he must not, at the least, have Tennessee which he had then, and in addition, the fifteen new votes for Florida, Texas, Iowa and Wisconsin--I know our good friend, Browning, is a great admirer of Mr. Clay, and I therefore fear, he is favoring his nomination--If he is ask him to discard feeling and try if he can possibly, as a matter of judgment, count the votes necessary to elect him.

In my judgment, we can elect nobody but Gen. Taylor, and we can not elect him without a nomination. Therefore don't fail to send a delegate--

Your friend as ever

A. Lincoln "[32]

Whether Williams convinced Browning of Taylor's political virtues or not is unknown, but the Whig turned definitely and vigorously to the support of Taylor.[33]

Immediately after Taylor's inauguration, Lincoln, in recognition of Williams' valuable services and long legal experience, recommended him for the office of U. S. District Attorney for the State of Illinois, to which post Williams was duly appointed.[34]

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[32]Abraham Lincoln to Archibald Williams, Washington, April 30, 1848. Letter in the possession of Mrs. Martha W. Franklin of Quincy, Illinois.

[33]Quincy Whig, June through November, 1848.

[34]Abraham Lincoln to the Hon. John M. Clayton, Secretary of State, Washington, March 8, 1849, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:31.

As further recognition of his party standing, Williams was several times chosen by his fellow delegates to preside over the state convention. In 1843 at Springfield and in 1844 at Bloomington, the rangy Williams wielded the gavel when Lincoln addressed the meeting. Again in 1856, at the Anti-Nebraska Convention in Bloomington, Williams, who had worked industriously since 1855 to organize Anti-Nebraska sentiment in Quincy, presided until a permanent president could be chosen.[35] Presumably, on both occasions he was in close contact with Lincoln.

Although he generally showed little interest in running for office, Williams took time out from his busy legal career[36] to run as the Free Soil candidate for Congress in the Fifth District in 1854. There was not much hope of victory in the district that year, but Lincoln willingly assisted in the campaign to give "Mr. Williams a little life."[37]

While his relationship with Browning and Williams developed, Lincoln also had occasional contacts with Abraham Jonas. Jonas' own political career never progressed beyond service in the General Assembly in 1842. In 1844 he ran for the state senate but was defeated by

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[35] Browning Diary, 1:238; Pratt, Day by Day, 1840-46 pp. 204 and 234.

[36] According to John McA. Palmer, Williams had no extensive county practice in Adams County, but took part in "cases of great magnitude".. Bench and Bar, 2:880.

[37] Abraham Lincoln to Richard Yates, Naples, Illinois, October 30, 1854, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:284.

a small majority. The following year he returned to Quincy from Columbus where he had moved in 1840 to lead the futile fight of that town to have the county seat moved from Quincy to Columbus. His service in the Taylor campaign in 1848 was rewarded with the Quincy postmastership, a job he promptly lost possession of in 1852 to Austin Brooks, editor of the Democratic Herald.[38] Nevertheless, he was very active politically as a campaigner for men who rose to high office in the state and nation; and it was in this capacity that his path sometimes crossed that of Lincoln.

Traveling for two days by rail and stage, Lincoln arrived in Quincy after dark on October 31st, 1854. Abraham Jonas, also assisting in Williams' campaign of that year, met him at the Quincy House, the largest and finest of the town's hotels. The next day, Lincoln dined and took tea with Orville Browning before addressing the people at Kendall's Hall, a popular place for political meetings and theatricals.[39]

The audience was large and "listened with unwearied attention and an approbation emphasized by repeated outbursts of enthusiastic applause."[40]

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[38]Korn, American Jewry, 190; John Tillson, Past and Present of Quincy, 147; Trowell, April 15, 1862, 1:1.

[39]Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Springfield, July 21, 1860, in Basler, Collected Works, 4:85-86.

[40]Quincy Whig, November 3, 1854.

Unfortunately, the newspaper gives only a bare outline of the Lincoln speech:

> "The address was one of the clearest, most logical, argumentative and convincing discourses on the Nebraska question to which we have listened. Commencing with the history of its earliest events which led to the Compromise of 1820, he traced that Compromise up to the present time, showing that it had ever remained in the hearts of the people a sacred thing which no ruthless hand should have dared to destroy." [41]

The editor was evidently impressed by the speech; for he closed by acclaiming Lincoln as "one of the 'truly great men' of Illinois."[42]

After the meeting, Lincoln, Jonas and others went to the oyster saloon and spent an hour there. Then Jonas escorted Lincoln to his hotel, where they parted; for Lincoln was to take the stage to Naples before daybreak the next morning.[43] Still, on election day, Williams was defeated as were many Free Soilers throughout the state.[44]

In the Fremont campaign of 1856, Jonas was again a political jack-of-all-trades--preparing the resolutions for the first Anti-Nebraska meeting in Quincy; elected as a delegate to the state meeting; nominated, as was Lincoln, as a presidential elector; and vigorously

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Lincoln to Jonas, July 21, 1860, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:286-287.

[44] Abraham Lincoln to Orville H. Browning, Springfield, November 12, 1854, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:286-287.

stumping the Fifth District for the new party.[45]

In October, the Whigs of the district planned a Fremont Mass Meeting for the 23rd. Lyman Trumbull, Senator from Illinois, was to be present; and Jonas also extended an invitation to Lincoln. However, Lincoln found himself "so 'hobbled' with a particular case, that I can not leave, & consequently, can not be with you....Please make the best apology, for me, in your power."[46] Despite pouring rain, an immense crowd estimated by the Whig at eight to ten thousand was present for the rally.[47]

It was precisely Jonas' familiarity with the local politics of Quincy which fitted him into an orbit in which he could be of assistance to Lincoln in the campaign of 1858.[48]

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[45]David W. Lusk, Eighty Years of Illinois--Politics and Politicians, Anecdotes and Incidents (Springfield, 1889), 35; Quincy Whig, October 25, 1856.

[46]Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Urbana, Illinois, October 21, 1856, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:380.

[47]Quincy Whig, October 25, 1856.

[48]During 1857 Lincoln assisted Abraham Jonas' son, Benjamin, in an interesting case involving a free negro who was in danger of being sold into slavery in Louisiana. Benjamin Jonas, although raised in Adams County, Illinois, went south to the University of Louisiana for his education as a lawyer. At 23, he was practising law in New Orleans. Exactly how Lincoln was brought into the case is not known; he may have been contacted by Polly Shelby, the young negro's mother, or by Benjamin Jonas. A letter which young Jonas wrote to Lincoln would indicate that it was the young lawyer who had first informed Lincoln of the matter. According to Benjamin Jonas, he had contacted Lincoln because the young negro had mentioned his name as one who would be interested in the case and because he had recognized Lincoln as an old friend of his father. (Footnote continued on page 28).

John Shelby had, in the fall of 1856, hired out as a hand on a New Orleans bound steamboat. Arriving there, he had gone ashore without the proper papers to indicate his free status. He was imprisoned, and being without funds, was unable to pay his fine. According to the black codes of the state, after a certain length of time, young Shelby would have been sold into slavery to pay his expenses in jail.

Lincoln, after being informed of the matter, contacted both the governor of Illinois and of Louisiana who refused to act in the case. So he had sent young Jonas a draft for $69.30 to cover the expenses of freeing young Shelby and starting him on his way home. According to Annie Jonas, Benjamin's sister, the young lawyer had accepted no fee in the matter. Charles M. Segal, "Lincoln, Benjamin Jonas and the Black Code", Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, 46: 3--277-282 (Autumn, 1953).

CHAPTER III

THE QUINCIANS AND LINCOLN'S RISE TO POWER

Springfield was bulging with excited, exultant Republicans on June 16, 1858. High hopes for victory animated the convention of over a thousand delegates from all corners of Illinois, gathered together to name a slate of state officers, and most important, an opponent for the "Little Giant", Stephen A. Douglas, who was seeking reelection as United States Senator. Douglas would have to battle not only against the Republican nominee but also the Buchanan men; for Douglas, by opposing Kansas's pro-slavery LeCompton Constitution backed by President Buchanan, had been read out of the party. In nearly every district administration Democrats attached the Douglasites as bitterly as the Republican opposition.[1]

Among the convention delegates that lovely June day were Orville Browning, Archibald Williams and Abraham Jonas.[2] Almost a week before, Browning had travelled by packet to St. Louis and Alton, then proceeded by rail to the convention city on June 8, arriving early in order to attend court.[3]

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[1]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 7-11 passim.
[2]Quincy Whig and Republican, April 1, 1858 and May 28, 1858.
[3]Browning Diary, 1:326.

On the opening day of the convention, Browning read to the assembled delegates the platform which he had written. The Schuyler Citizen reported:

> "...the vast assembly hung with breathless attention on every word,...he came to the third resolution, where the wrongs of the administration are enumerated,...a solitary voice, apparently forgetful of time and place,...broke suddenly on the stillness with a strong nasal spontaneity, 'That's so !' The effect was...so unexpected, so ludicrous, that the whole assembly involuntarily sent up such a chorus of applause as probably had never before been heard in these walls."[4]

The unanimous adoption of the resolution which nominated Abraham Lincoln as the "first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate ..." was not reported in Browning's diary, nor was the famous "house divided" speech which Lincoln delivered that evening. Perhaps it was as difficult for the able Browning to subdue his own ambition asit was for Lincoln to accede to the Trumbull compromise several years before.

In any case, Browning overcame whatever emotion had caused his silence, and while attending court in Chicago, was present for the opening salvos of the campaign. On the evening of July 9, Douglas spoke at the Tremont House to a crowd of over 12,000,including both Browning and Lincoln. On the next night, from the same place, Lincoln

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[4]Quoted in the Quincy Whig and Republican, June 26, 1858.

answered with a point-by-point attack on Douglas' speech. Browning, who himself had battled Douglas around the district in a race for Congress some years earlier, stood near Lincoln; and Lincoln called attention to his presence to show the link between the conservative Whigs and the "Black Republicans":

> "I have always been an Old Line Whig. I have always hated it [slavery] , but I have always been quiet about it until this new era of the Nebraska Bill began. I always believed that everybody was gaginst it, and that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. (Pointing to Mr. Browning, who stood near by) Browning thought so; the great mass of the nation have rested in the velief that slavery was in course of ultimate extinction."[5]

Then Lincoln had finished, the crowd, milling in the streets below the balcony, roared its approval of the man and his cause. "I was called for loudly & long, but did not appear", reported Browning.[6]

On the 12th, in campaign council, Lincoln and Browning took tea with Guerdon S. Hubbard.[7]

Subsequently, the Lincoln strategists planned for their candidate to follow close along the heels of Douglas; this, however, was abandoned for the more aggressive program of joint debates. Douglas hesitated to grant such an advantage to his less well-known opponent; but, fearing that avoiding the debates suggested by Lincoln would bring

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[5]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 12-13; Basler, Collected Works, 2:487-492.

[6]Browning Diary, 1:330

[7]Ibid.

such unfortunate publicity as the crowing taunt of the Quincy Whig and Republican that "that rugged Russian bear is afraid of the 'living dog'",[8] he acceded to the plan, limiting the debates, however, to a total of seven in districts in which the candidates had not yet campaigned.

The debates were scheduled for Ottawa, August 21; Freeport, August 27; then south to Jonesboro, September 15; Charleston, September 18; Galesburg, October 7; Quincy, October 13; and finally south again to Alton, October 15. Each debate was to last three hours, the first speaker having an hour for the opening and a half-hour for rebuttal.[9]

Quincy was kept in close contact with the debates and the numerous other speeches made by Douglas and Lincoln through its three partisan newspapers, one only recently established as an administration mouthpiece.[10] Local Republicans were also earnestly stirring up the political fires. In July, Abraham Jonas, later to be Quincy's Republican chairman of debate arrangements, invited Lincoln to speak at Augusta, a small town in the Fifth District. Lincoln assented:

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[8]Quincy Whig and Republican, July 23, 1858.

[9]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 18-19; Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln, 2:145.

[10]Quincy Daily and Weekly Democrat, operated by W. H. Carlin, new postmaster. The previous postmaster, Austin Brooks, editor of the Herald, had been removed by the administration for supporting Douglas on the LeCompton issue.

> "My mind is at once made up to be with you at Augusta on the 25th. of August, unless I shall conclude it will prevent my being at Freeport on the 27th. when and where, by appointment, I am to meet Judge Douglas."[11]

Special arrangements to transport Quincy Republicans to the rally by rail were made by the local committee headed by Jonas, including the Republican clubs bearing colorful banners and Steig's Brass Band, to greet Lincoln at the Augusta station. Jonas urged Republicans to attend not only this meeting but any Lincoln speech within fifty miles of Quincy.[12]

In September, the Whig and Republican proudly announced that Browning would begin a short speaking tour of the district:

> "The notice...is not only hailed with joy by the Republicans of this District, but throughout the State....We hope also to be able to announce that Hon. Archy Williams--one of the truest, best and most worthy Republicans in the State...will speak to the people....The people will turn out en masse to hear either of these old Whigs and Republicans...."[13]

Browning, who had declined "all solicitations to become a candidate",[14] appeared at Oquawka and Macomb in September, and several times in Quincy; although ill health and legal business limited his activities somewhat.[15]

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[11]Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Springfield, August 2, 1858, in Basler, Collected Works, 2:533-534.

[12]Quincy Whig and Republican, August 17 and August 27, 1858.

[13]September 2, 1858.

[14]Browning Diary, 1:334.

[15]Ibid., 1:337-338; Quincy Whig and Republican, October 2, 1858.

The services of "Archy" Williams in the 1858 campaign were highly lauded by the local Republican paper:

> "Old ARCHY WILLIAMS is doing good service for the Republican cause...He has already spoken at Macomb, Oquawka, Monmouth, Cameron, Galesburg, and other points in this and Kellog's district; to large assemblages; and everywhere, he has created enthusiasm and confidence among our friends, and animated the lukewarm....In the winter of his life.... Mr. Williams is found battling for the cause of Republicanism...."

The editor closed by admonishing the young men of the district to go and do likewise.[16]

Quincy politics that year were of the rough and ready sort. Although an administration Democrat was stumping the district for Congress, the local Democrats had remained in the main loyal to Douglas who had lived in the town as a congressman and judge.[17] Jackson Grimshaw and Isaac Morris, Republican and Douglas Democratic candidates for Congress, had fought with fist and knife until the speaking platform collapsed.[18] The Republican's editor, Dallam, had been bested in a brief but gory fistfight with several Germans during the spring elections.[19]

In the midst of such a hectic political atmosphere preparations were begun for the debate with the appoint-

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[16] Ibid., October 11, 1858.

[17] Approximately from 1841 to his election as United States Senator. John Tillson, Past and Present of Quincy, 112.

[18] Quincy Whig and Republican, September 22, 1858.

[19] Ibid., April 21, 1858.

ment of the reception committee for Lincoln in September. In charge was Abraham Jonas, who like Browning and Williams, had stumped the district. The committee began its work October 5, meeting in Jonas' office to appoint a marshal for the procession which was to meet Lincoln's train and lead him to the Browning home which was to be his headquarters while he was in Quincy.[20] Daily announcements were inserted in the paper as well as at least part of the text of the five preceeding debate speeches. Two aids and some forty-seven assistant marshals were selected to appear on horseback, decked in "two blue scarfs and Lincoln badges,...."[21]

The Republican and Democrat committees did not forget to solicit the influence of the ladies, and ordered special seating built under the joint auspices of both parties. Republican ladies were reported to be preparing to take part in the procession.[22]

Jonas's committee invited delegations from surrounding towns and made special arrangements for low rates with the railroads. In a letter to the editor, a Galesburg man, calling himself "Old Pike", solemnly warned that steamers were bringing less welcome Douglas delegations from Missouri who intended to make Lincoln "dry up".[23]

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[20] Ibid., October 7 and 8, 1858.
[21] Ibid., October 11, 1858.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., October 8 and 13, 1858.

The night before the debate found the city full of excited partisans watching or marching in the torchlight processions staged by the two parties. On the great day the city was in a holiday mood: Lincoln and Douglas badges and pictures were hawked, buildings were draped with banners and pictures of the candidates, a balloon ascension was to be made before the speeches.[24]

The political festivities opened at 9 o'clock with the Republican parade to the depot to receive Lincoln. In procession, the parade, headed by the Marshal and his aids, proceeded through the city's principal streets to Browning's home. Lincoln, who rode in a carriage with Jonas and others of the committee, was the presented with "a beautiful and elegant bouquet...by the Republican ladies of Quincy....Mr. Lincoln replied in a few brief remarks, saying that it was a source of much gratification...that the ladies...took such a deep interest in this contest."[25] The parade disbanded then, and Lincoln was entertained at luncheon by Mrs. Browning, Browning himself being in Carthage on legal business.[26]

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[24]Quincy Herald, October 11, 1858; Quincy Whig and Republican, October 13, 1858.

[25]Ibid., October 15, 1858.

[26]Browning Diary, 1:338; "Reminiscences of Mrs. Helen Finlay Bristol", an undated clipping in the Quincy Historical Society Scrapbook, 1:97. Mrs. Bristol, a teenage girl at the time of the debate, was a sister of James F. Carrott, a lawyer in Browning's office.

Long before the appearance of the political protagonists, Washington Square, a grassy park enclosed by a high open fence, literally swarmed with people, variously estimated from eight to fourteen thousand. Wagons and carriages lined the oaken rail at the outside of the fence.[27]

Both speakers were escorted to the square by processions shortly before 2 o'clock. Before the speakers could begin, however, the seats so thoughtfully provided for the ladies collapsed with a terrible crash, and several of the occupants were carried through the crowds.[28] After the crowd had again settled down, Jonas introduced Lincoln who was to open the Quincy debate.[29]

That evening, the Quincy committee arranged for the appearance of Karl Schurz to draw the German vote. Schurz, who met Lincoln for the first time in Quincy, spoke first in German and then English.[30] The two weary condidates left the next day on the Alton-bound packet, the City of Louisiana, for the final debate.[31]

The Quincians made their last effort for this Lincoln campaign at City Hall in Quincy, Browning and Jonas both addressing the assembled crowd several nights before the election.[32] The Fifth District was one of the doubt-

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[27]Ibid., Quincy Whig and Republican, October 16, 1858.
[28]Ibid.
[29]Thornton Capps to Quincy Journal, Greenfield, Illinois, clipping dated 1908, in the Quincy Historical Society Scrapbook, 1:24.
[30]Quincy Whig and Republican, October 16, 1858.
[31]Angle, Day by Day, 1854-1861, 250.
[32]Browning Diary, 1:341.

ful ones; although the Democrats generally had the edge, there were enough Republican votes in the area to promise a possible upset.

Jonas was proud of the part he had taken in the campaign, and wrote in February of 1860 to Lincoln, requesting a copy of the debates as a memento of the occasion. Lincoln replied in a cordial but rather formal tone, addressing Jonas as "My dear Sir", but softening the somewhat stiff tone of the letter by continuing, "As you are one of my most valued friends, and have complimented me by the expression of a wish for the book, I propose doing myself the honor of presenting you with one, as soon as I can."[33]

During 1859, Browning continued to drop in on the Lincolns when he attended court in Springfield, as a guest at the Lincoln parties or with others, discussing politics over tea.[34] In Chicago, where Lincoln and he had cases in the federal court, he showed his customary gallantry to the ladies by taking a number of his colleagues' wives, including Mrs. Lincoln, out for tea and a drive in the city.[35]

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[33]Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Springfield, February 4, 1860, in Basler, Collected Works, 3:516.

[34]Jackson Grimshaw, a Quincy lawyer and Republican politican, was also present at this meeting. In 1858 he had been defeated for Congress.

[35]Browning Diary, 1:349, 367, 370.

Despite long acquaintance and, in Browning's case, friendship, neither Browning nor Jonas nor Williams was among those who placed much faith in the political gossip of a possible presidential chance for the defeated senatorial candidate. On Christmas Eve, 1859, Horace Greeley lectured at Kendall Hall in Quincy. Jonas called on him and arranged for Greeley to meet with some local Republicans the next morning. At the appointed time Williams, Browning, and Henry Asbury, Jonas' law partner, and others met with the noted Republican editor in Jonas' office. Greeley wanted to know whom the western men saw as presidential nominee for 1860. The group discussed Seward, McLean, Bates; then, Asbury writes, "I said Gentlemen there is one name you have not mentioned, one that I think we shall all hear of before long. To this Mr. Greeley and one or two others asked who I meant. I said Gentlemen I mean Abraham Lincoln Illinois." According to Asbury his suggestion was met with silence until Jonas, probably to save his partner embarrassment, added that there might be something in the idea.[36] However, at this time, Lincoln himself expected little from the coming national convention except a strengthening of his chances for becoming United States Senator.[37]

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[36]Henry Asbury to K.K. Jones, Quincy, Illinois, October 2, 1882, in the files of the Illinois States Historical Library in Springfield, Illinois.

[37]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 5.

Browning's own presidential preference was Edward Bates of Missouri, a distinguished Whig jurist with Know-Nothing connections. Browning felt that Bates would attract Southern support and allay the fear that Republicanism was wholly sectional and bent on an invasion of the rights of the states. Browning himself feared the "ultra tendencies of the Republican party" and hoped that Bates would be able to hold such tendencies in check.[38]

He took care to search out his candidate in St. Louis as early as September 28, 1859. Finding that Bates and he were "in harmony in all our political opinions, inclusive of the tariff, and slavery in the abstract and in the Territories"[39] Browning went on to discuss the candidacy of the judge with N.B. Judd of Chicago. Even though Judd was one of Lincoln's backers, he expressed himself as "willing to go for him [Bates] if he shall appear to be the strongest man..." Judd was eager to become governor, and was more than willing to offer Browning such empty assurances on Browning's promise that he was not interested in running for governor himself.[40] Browning then proceeded to query a Southern correspondent on Bates' strength in that area.[41]

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[38] Browning Diary, 1:407-408.
[39] Ibid., 1:381.
[40] Ibid., 1:382.
[41] G.D.Prentice to Orville H. Browning, Louisville, Kentucky, January 9, 1860 in the Orville H.Browning Letters, Illinois States Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

This open avowal of support for Bates was undoubtedly the reason Browning was not invited to attend the caucus of Republican legislators and lawyers in Springfield in late January, 1860; for his status in the party would certainly have otherwise guaranteed him a place in the secret council in which Lincoln firmly scotched a move to secure him the second place on the national ticket. Both Jackson Grimshaw and Nehemiah Bushnell of Quincy were present. It was probably through the latter that Browning learned of the proceedings.[42]

About a week later, Lincoln paid a visit to the Springfield hotel room of Browning. Fearing that Browning had been offended by his exclusion from the caucus, Lincoln openly discussed the presidential situation with him, and even flattered Browning by reservedly agreeing with him on Bates' virtues as a candidate. Lincoln knew his friend too well to press the matter, and certainly had no desire to antagonize him further.[43]

Lincoln knew, too, from previous experience, Browning's value as a convention campaigner; and in the state convention at Decatur on May 8, 1860, insisted that his friend be one of the delegates-at-large to the national convention in Chicago despite objections from others.[44]

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[42]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 142-143.
[43]Browning Diary, 1:395.
[44]Asbury to Jones, October 2, 1882, in Illinois State Historical Library.

In Chicago, Browning, under instructions to Lincoln, worked out of the Tremont House headquarters set up by Judge David Davis. He was one of the small core of Illinois men who from this base met with delegation after delegation in a sort of piecemeal hotel room convention. Browning's own chronicling of the intrigue and bargaining which made Lincoln candidate is disappointing; but Gustave Koerner, with whom Browning often operated as a team in Chicago, has left a record of Browning's work there. Browning, still basically convinced that Bates was the right man for the times, worked with brilliance and loyalty for the man to whom he was pledged. In fact, the very fact that Browning was a known Bates supporter was of great value, Davis presenting him to several delegations as a convert to the Lincoln cause. Browning also had his own commanding appearance and polished oratory to offer as well as his conservative Whig reputation to attract the right-wingers of the Republican party.

At one point, the Lincoln men used a Bates meeting with the Indiana and Pennsylvania delegations, both groups weighted with Whigs and Know-Nothings. Bates himself was present as well as his chief manager, Frank Blair. One of the Indiana delegates gave away the secret, and Davis despatched Browning and Koerner "to counteract the movement", with some Lincoln rooters close at their heels.

Koerner spoke as the representative of Lincoln's German support and Browning of Lincoln's Whig support.

Browning was at his best; Koerner relates, "He wound up with a most beautiful and eloquent eulogy on Lincoln which electrified the meeting." The counteraction was probably helpful since Pennsylvania decided to cast its vote for Lincoln on the second ballot and Indiana on the first ballot.[45]

Earlier, Davis had used Browning to counteract a move on the part of the Bates men to capture the New England delegations, largely uninstructed. On the evening of May 15, Browning, just arrived that day in Chicago, spoke to the Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts groups. Davis himself and Thomas Marshall, delegate from Charleston spoke to the groups as well. They were able to secure a first ballot pledge from both Maine and New Hampshire.[46]

Abraham Jonas was not an official delegate to the convention, but attended anyway. "With that delegation 'at large' Mr. Jonas exerted great influence, as he also did among delegates from every section of the country, and especially with those of his own faith, among whom he was a representative man greatly respected."[47]

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[45]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 268-270; Koerner, Memoirs, 2:87-89.

[46]Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 230-232; Browning Diary, 1:406-407.

[47]K. K. Jones, "Abraham Lincoln. How He Was Nominated--not by Abraham Jonas, but by Norman B. Judd", Chicago Tribune, September 28, 1882.

Lincoln's backers were greatly alarmed over the organized clamor of the Sewardites; and, to block it, planned to pack the Wigwam with Lincoln shouters on Friday, May 18, when the first ballot was to be taken. In order to keep out the Seward men, Ward Lamon and Jesse Fell from the Lincoln headquarters had a large supply of counterfeit blue tickets printed to distribute to the Lincoln claque; several men worked all night to forge the official signature on the admissions. K. K. Jones, a Quincian and later a famous newspaperman, tells of Jonas's part in this maneuver:

> "While on that eventful Friday morning the convention was settling down...I saw 'Old Abe' Jonas working his way towards me.... Said he in his quick, decisive, enthusiastic way: 'Our Eastern brethren have been setting up a job on us. They imagine they have got a large majority of their friends in this wigwam. But it is not as big as they think! ....Two can play at that game. We must beat them--beat them,' said he, emphatically slapping his hands together, 'at their own game.' 'How?' I said. 'I have got things all fixed,' he replied. 'Our friends are stationed in every part of this wigwam, and when 'Old Abe' is put in nomination we will show our Eastern brethren what Western vim... can do.'" 48

And so they did. When Lincoln was placed in nomination, the crowd of Lincoln men, admitted on forged tickets, began a howl that shook the walls of the Wigwam.[49] According to Jones, the scheme was Jonas's originally;

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Baringer, Lincoln's Rise to Power, 267-278 passim.

at the least, he had aided and abetted the plot by helping to get out the tickets and organize the claque.

Both Browning and Jonas rendered valuable service in the campaign which followed. Browning's special assistance was an attempt to persuade Edward Bates openly to support Lincoln. Shortly after the Chicago convention, Browning received a "long letter from Hon. David Davis, Tho. A. Marshall, N.B. Judd, E. Peck & O. M. Hatch entreating me...to go...to St. Louis, and see Judge Bates, and try and prevail upon him to come into Illinois, and assist us in the campaign."[50] Feeling gratified and somewhat smugly misinterpreting the letter as an admission of error on the part of the writers, he nevertheless acted immediately on the suggestion, wrote to Bates the same day, and followed the letter to St. Louis the next day. Bates declined to make any speeches, but promised to write a letter for publication.[51] Still, Bates delayed in sending the letter almost a month--friends objected and he feared to offend them. Browning wrote again; and, on July 19, 1860, the letter, a somewhat reserved approval of Lincoln, appeared in a St. Louis paper.[52]

Jonas' special contribution to Lincoln's campaign

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[50] Browning Diary, 1:409-410.
[51] Ibid., 1:411.
[52] Ibid., 1:416; Samuel T. Glover to Orville H. Browning, St. Louis, June 13, 1860, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

was, as was usual in the relationship between the two men, of a local nature. Quincy Democrats had, after Lincoln had spoken in Archibald Williams' behalf in 1854, started a story that Lincoln had visited a Know-Nothing Lodge. Obviously they hoped to force Lincoln upon the horns of a dilemma. If Lincoln denied the falsehood, he would offend the Know-Nothings. If he allowed the lie to stand by his silence, he would lose the support of the foreign-born. Lincoln was informed by Jonas that the story was being resurrected for use in the 1860 campaign, and that Isaac Morris, a leading Quincy Democrat, was getting affidavits from certain Irishmen that Lincoln was seen emerging from a Know-Nothing lodge.[53]

Lincoln denied the story in his reply to Jonas: "I was never in one, at Quincy, or elsewhere. I was never in Quincy but one day and two nights, while Know-Nothing Lodges were in existence, and you were with me that day and both those nights."[54]

Lincoln asked Jonas to secure affidavits from known Quincy Know-Nothings to counter the Morris affidavits, but, aware of the trap his enemies had set for him, warned Jonas, "Our adversaries think they can gain a point, if they could force me to openly deny this charge,....For

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[53]Abraham Jonas to Abraham Lincoln, Quincy, Illinois, July 20, 1860, in the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection in the Library of Congress. This collection is available on microfilm at the Wisconsin State Historical Library in Madison, Wisconsin.

[54]Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Springfield, July 21, 1860, in Basler, Collected Works, 4:85-86.

[55]Ibid.

this reason, it must not publicly appear that I am paying any attention to the charge."[55]

Again, as in 1858, both Browning and Jonas were among the active Republican campaign speakers in western Illinois. Browning was one of the major speakers at a huge Lincoln rally in Springfield on August 8, and at Stone's Prairie, later in the same month, Browning, Jonas, and Jackson Grimshaw spoke at a Republican picnic which some "Douglass [sic] Democrats who were drunk and disorderly tried to break up...."[56]

It is interesting to note that during June, 1860, Browning had somewhat warily called on his old friend several times and was pleased to find that "Lincoln bears his honors meekly." The friendship between the two men was strong enough to survive the political conflict of past months, and they enjoyed a "free and easy talk...." as in old times on the circuit.[57]

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Browning Diary, 1:425.
[57] Ibid., 1:415-416.

CHAPTER IV

PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND THE QUINCIANS

"We are on the eve of a great convulsion, or a great compromise....the discontents of the south have reached that height, that all parties...are agreed upon the necessity of a final peace or a final separation....My heart ....is fastened on both sides of that which may be a division line of nations.", wrote Andrew Johnston, watching from Richmond the tension which built after the election of his old friend, Abraham Lincoln.[1]

Another friend of old Quincy days, Orville Browning, was earnestly engaged in enjoying his close acquaintance with the president-elect; and indulging in the favorite game of Republican politicans at that time: cabinet making. In a letter to Lincoln, he urged the appointment of his presidential favorite, Bates, for Secretary of State;[2] he joined the Davis forces who worked to keep N.B. Judd out of the cabinet; he suggested to Lincoln that he keep on Buchanan's Secretary of War, Holt.

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[1]Andrew Johnston to John H. Williams, Richmond, December 18, 1860, letter in the possession of the Herbert Wells Fay estate in Springfield, Illinois. A copy of the letter is in the Johnston file in the Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, Illinois.
John Williams was the son of Archibald Williams.

[2]Browning Diary, 1:440.

Browning's stand on these matters fitted well with Lincoln's plans. While it was almost certain that the major cabinet post would be offered to Seward, Lincoln agreed with Browning that Bates' borderstate background would make him a good choice. Browning's other suggestions were not influential in Lincoln's decisions, Hamlin and Lincoln had already agreed that no Illinois man should sit in the cabinet.[3] As to retaining part of the Buchanan cabinet, others had offered the same idea; and Lincoln was willing to use the idea as a fence to hold off other aspirants until he could make his own final decisions.[4]

On February 9, 1861, Browning, by request, called on Lincoln in Springfield and spent an hour with him, talking over the state of the nation:

> "He agreed with me no concession by the free states short of a surrender of everything worth preserving, and contending for would satisfy the South....and...that far less evil & bloodshed would result from an effort to maintain the Union and the Constitution, than from disruption and formation of two confederacies." [5]

Browning was having a difficult time adjusting to his old friend's position and power; after so many years as equals and companions, Lincoln's spectacular elevation left Browning unable to adjust to the new situation. The egotism that was a part of his nature is evident in Brown-

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[3]Baringer, House Dividing, 180-183.
[4]Ibid., 290.
[5]Browning Diary, 1:453.

ing's satisfaction that Lincoln "agreed with me" and proved "firmer than I had expected."[6]

When the president-elect took what was to be his final departure from Illinois, Browning was one of the group of friends and advisors invited to accompany the president-elect on the train to Washington. Despite Lincoln's personally tendered offer, Browning at first refused--legal business would demand his presence at home.[7]

Then when a ticket was sent to him anyway, Browning agreed to go; but only as far as Indianapolis where a grand reception was planned. The noisy and crowded royal progress was pleasant enough, though Browning, but "just about as much of that sort of thing as I want".[8] On the trip, Browning "had much conversation with Mr. Lincoln on public affairs."[9] On February 12, during one of these talks Lincoln asked Browning to read the address he was preparing for his inauguration and offer his criticisms. "I thought it able, well considered and appropriate," recorded Browning, himself a political penman, "and so informed him. It is in my judgement, a very admirable document."[10] Browning did suggest some changes, however,

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[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 452.
[8] Ibid., 455.
[9] Ibid., 454.
[10] Ibid., 455.

one considered the most important alteration Lincoln made in the speech--the omission of the phrase "reclaim the public property and places which have fallen" and the substitution of a more conservative promise of "holding, occupying, and possessing" the places the Federal government still controlled. The suggestion was incorporated into the speech, Lincoln then presenting his friend with a copy of the speech on "his promise not to show it except to Mrs. Browning."[11]

At Indianapolis Browning spent an uncomfortable night in a crowded hotel, sleeping four to a room, two to a bed. The next morning, after breakfasting with the presidential party, he departed for home.[12]

The role of presidential advisor was one Browning enjoyed, however; far from the troubled national capital, he bombarded Lincoln with letters, largely devoted to advice on running the country.[13]

While Browning was taking care that Lincoln should not forget him, he also took care that other old friends, also faithful workers in the field, should be rewarded. In the same letter in which he had recommended Bates for the cabinet, Browning asked Lincoln to offer the Quincy post office to Abraham Jonas.[14] This Lincoln did on

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[11] Ibid., 455n and 456; Randall, Lincoln the President, 1: 302.

[12] Browning Diary, 1:456.

[13] Ibid., 460-467.

[14] Ibid., 440.

April 29, 1861; the elderly Jewish lawyer held the position until his death in 1864. Although his own family was split by the war, four sons serving the Confederacy, Jonas assisted Browning in a recruiting trip for the Union and spoke out stoutly against southern treason in local elections.[15] In recognition of this loyalty, Lincoln allowed Jonas' request for the release of an outspoken Missourian, one Thomas Thoroughman of St. Joseph, who was under arrest in Quincy for disloyalty.[16]

Jonas was not well the last few years of his life; it came as no surprise to Browning when, on May 29, 1864, Annie Jonas wrote him in Washington that her father was dying. She requested one further service from her father's old friends--would Browning see if Lincoln would parole Abraham's son, Charles, a captain in the Confederate Army and military prisoner at Johnson's Island?

Browning went immediately to the president and got the order, and that afternoon had the order and some thirty dollars of his own for travelling expenses at the Commissary General of Prisoners' office.[17]

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[15] Ibid., 567,627.

[16] Charles, Benjamin, Julian and Samuel Jonas served in the Confederate Army; another son, Edward, was a major in the Union Army.

[17] Orville Browning to Annie Jonas, Washington, June 2, 1864, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

Abraham Jonas died on June 9, and was buried with Masonic rites, the order of which he had planned several months before, in the Hebrew cemetary in Quincy.[18] The day after his death, Browning "sent to the Presidents sic and got his promise to appoint Mrs. Jonas Post Mistress at Quincy in place of her deceased husband."[19]

Lincoln also remembered the political service and legal knowledge of "Old Archie" Williams in distributing the presidential bounty; and, in 1861, appointed him United States District Judge for the state of Kansas.[20] Later that year Williams, then residing in Topeka, carried out treaty negotiations with the Kansas Delawares in order to facilitate the building of the Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western Railroad.

According to the Treaty of Saxcoxieville, ratified the year before, the road had purchased lands valued at $286,742.15 from the Indians. Part of the money thus received was to be used to give the tribe a start in agriculture, the rest to be "invested in safe and profitable stocks."[21]

However, the railroad found it was unable to pay. Lincoln not wanting the treaty to fail, Williams nego-

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[18]Browning Diary, 1:672; Quincy Daily Whig and Republican, June 9, 1864; Trowel, 3:7-102.

[19]Browning Diary, 1:672.

[20]Ibid., 30n.

[21]"Delaware Treaty of 1861", in Basler, Collected Works, 4:401.

tiated a change in the 1860 treaty whereby the railroad was to pay in bonds, and mortgage the 100,000 acres of land to build the railroad. Williams examined the bonds and mortgage; and, after explaining the situation to the Delawares, obtained the assent of the chiefs.[22]

President Lincoln approved the work Williams had done; but before sending the new treaty to Browning for guidance through the Senate, Lincoln amended the treaty briefly to guarantee payment for the Indians as well as sufficient time for the railroad to complete its contract.[23]

The last time Lincoln and Williams met was in May, 1862, when the Judge, on a visit to the capitol, went with Browning to the White House for a talk about old times.[24] Williams died in Quincy September 20, 1863 in his daughter's home after an illness of several weeks. Browning temporarily in Quincy, had been at the old campaigner's side almost to the last. "A self-educated, self-made man...," mourned the Whig and Republican at his passing,"his feeble frame, his overtasked mind overcame his bodily strength, and he passed away calmly in the vigor of his mental prowess."[25]

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Abraham Lincoln to Orville Browning, Washington, July 20, 1861, in Basler, Collected Works, 4:455.

[24]Browning Diary, 1:547.

[25]Ibid., 642-643; Quincy Daily Whig and Republican, September 21, 1863.

Unlike Williams and Jonas, Browning received no presidential appointment. For months after the inauguration of Lincoln, Browning continued his legal practice; although the number of times he corresponded with Lincoln indicates his interest was in the capitol. In April, there was a move on the part of his friends to secure for him an appointment to the United States Supreme Court. The assistance of Edward Bates, now Attorney General, was solicited by Henry Asbury, close friend and kinsman, without Browning's knowledge:

> "I know that he would like the office but I know that he will himself take no steps whatever to secure it. He thinks the office is...of such high character that it should seek the man and not the man the office." 26

Browning had a powerful competitor for the office, however, and one with an even stronger claim on Lincoln, David Davis, who had been Lincoln's chief manager at the Wigwam in 1860. Leonard Swett, another Lincoln backer, later related that he made a special trip to Washington to prevent the appointment of Browning, then a Senator, and secured the appointment for Davis after Swett withdrew any claim he himself might have on the presidential favor.[27]

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[26]Henry Asbury to Edward Bates, Quincy, April 8, 1861, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

[27]Leonard Swett to William Herndon, Chicago, August 29, 1887, in Hertz, Hidden Lincoln, 338-340.

In this period from the election of Lincoln to his own ascension to the Senate, Browning worked closely with his old opponent, Stephen A. Douglas. In Springfield on April 26, 1861, Browning talked with him on government policy in the crisis.[28] In June Browning was given an interim appointment by Governor Richard Yates to fill the vacancy in the United States Senate caused by Douglas's death.

From the beginning of his senatorial career, Browning could be considered Lincoln's closest Congressional consultant.[29] A day after Browning reached Washington he called at the White House to pay his respects. Lincoln heard the familiar voice, and sent his secretary to bring Browning to his study. When Browning entered, he found the president preparing his message for the congress which was shortly to convene. Lincoln read Browning what he had written, and then went on to explain the plan he had used to force the issue at Fort Sumter in April.[30] Browning's moderate attitude toward the south, his conception of the war as a means of saving the union, made him an ideal confidant and Senatorial voice for Lincoln.

Lincoln frequently consulted Browning during this period on the difficulties he had with his generals, and

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[28] Browning Diary, 1:466.

[29] Theodore Calvin Pease, "Introduction", Browning Diary, 1: xix.

[30] John Pope to Orville Browning, Springfield, June 23, 1861, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

some generals used Browning's intimacy with the President to present their claims and complaints. Pope, on June 23, wrote his senator to complain that junior officers and civilians had been appointed over his head; "I live to see what I never expected on this earth," complained the aggrieved soldier, "myself driven out of the Army by a President from Illinois....I am satisfied you will do what is right on this subject & I leave it in your hands."[31]

If, however, Lincoln thought Browning's actions on such cases foolish or conflicting with the presidential authority, he did not hesitate to rebuke his friend sternly, as in the Fremont case. General John C. Fremont, darling of the Radicals, had made some bad mistakes in Missouri: he had proved an ineffectual military leader; involved himself with corrupt contractors; and worst of all, set himself up as a maker of policy by issuing a proclamation August 30, 1861, which freed all the slaves of persons resisting the government. Lincoln revoked the order, but was patient with the "Pathfinder" in other matters, and sent military advisors to Missouri to extricate Fremont from his difficulties if it could be done.[32]

Apparently Browning, at home in Quincy between

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[31]John Pope to Orville Browning, Springfield, June 23, 1861, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

[32]T. Harry Williams, Lincoln and His Generals (New York, 1952), 36-40.

legislative sessions, had taken the liberty of intervening in a quarrel which seemed to him to cause unnecessary tension in the Republican Party. On his own authority, he made a trip to St. Louis to conduct a brief personal investigation of the charges against the general, and finding them "frivolous" and the proclamation "expedient", had seen fit to write Lincoln protesting the revocation. In the light of Browning's staunch opposition to confiscation and the Emancipation Proclamation, his stand on the Fremont order seems contradictory. The distinction Browning himself made between the issues was the authority from which the order was issued. Fremont's proclamation he saw as a legal act of war; the confiscation act and Emancipation Proclamation as a national policy, issued when the government could not enforce it and liable to dangerous interpretation by radicals.

Lincoln, in his reply of September 22, was surprised and angry at this apparent reversal in the position of one in whom he placed great trust:

> "That you should object to my adhering to a law, which you assisted in making, and presenting to me, less than a month before, is odd enough. But this is a very small part. Genl. Fremont's proclamation, as to confiscation of property, and the liberation of slaves, is purely political, and not within the range of military law, or necessity....You speak of it as being the only means of saving the government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the government." 33

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[33]Abraham Lincoln to Orville Browning, Washington, September 22, 1861, in Basler, Collected Works, 4:532.

Lincoln continued, explaining that he feared Fremont's policy, if carried out, would lose Kentucky and other border areas to the union; then he added a harsh judgement on the other's ambition: "...if you will give up your restlessness for new positions, and back me manfully...we shall go through triumphantly...."[34]

Browning replied with a respectful but proud defense of his first letter, explained in detail the legal background for Fremont's stand, and reasserted his belief in the legality if not the expediency of the Missouri proclamation: " I have at all times intended to be kind and respectful, and I regret it deeply if I have failed in either, as some passage in yours led me to suspect I have.", Browning wrote, then continued, in subdued anger, "I am not conscious of any 'restlessness for new positions.'"[35]

A mutual friend in St. Louis undertook to sooth the hurt caused by these angry words by writing in October that, "The President has great confidence in you, Browning, has probably retained Fremont in command in deference to your opinion...."; then tactfully requested Browning's presence at a meeting of the committee in-

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Orville Browning to Abraham Lincoln, Quincy, September 30, 1861, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

vestigating the charges against Fremont.[36]

Despite their difference over the Fremont order of emancipation, the personal relationship between Browning and Lincoln was very close during the months of Browning's senatorial term. The Brownings were often guests at the White House; and, on February 20, 1862, when Lincoln's son, Willie, died, the Lincoln carriage was sent for the Brownings immediately. The couple spent the night there, Browning listening to Lincoln's stories of the dead boy, Mrs. Browning remaining at the White House until the 26th, helping Mrs. Lincoln to care for little Tad, who was also ill. Browning himself returned three nights to sit up with the boy. In Willie's funeral procession the Quincy family rode in the Lincoln carriage.[37]

Several months later, Browning recorded in his diary the story of an evening he spent with the President that is reminiscent of Lincoln's correspondence with Andrew Johnston:

> "Our conversation turned upon poetry, and each of us quoted a few lines from Hood. He asked me if I remembered the Haunted House. I replied that I had never read it. He rang his bell--sent for Hood's poems and read the whole of it to me, pausing occasionally to comment on passages which struck him as particularly felicitous.

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[36]Samuel T. Glover to Orville Browning, St. Louis, October 23, 1861, in the Orville H. Browning Letters, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

[37]Browning Diary, 1:530-532.

> His reading was admirable and his criticisms evinced a high and just appreciation of the true spirit of poetry. He then sent for another volume of the same work, and read me 'the lost heir', and then the 'Spoilt Child' the humour of both of which he greatly enjoyed. I remained with him about an hour and a half, and left him in high spirits...." 38

Browning's regard for Lincoln expanded during this time to a realization of the genius of the man as a national leader. On a visit to the President one July morning in 1862, he was admitted to the library where he found Lincoln looking

> "weary, careworn and troubled. I shook hands with him, and asked how he was. He said 'tolerably well' I remarked that I felt concerned about him--regretted that troubles crowded so heavily upon him, and feared that his health was suffering. He held me by the hand, pressed it, and said in a very tender and touching tone--'Browning I must die sometime', I replied 'your fortunes Mr. President are bound up with those of the Country, and disaster to one would be disaster to the other, and I hope you will do all you can to preserve your health and life'. He looked very sad, and there was a cadence of deep sadness in his voice. We parted I believe both of us with tears in our eyes." 39

Outstanding in Browning's senatorial career were his stand on a confiscation bill and his defense of Seward. During the congressional session of 1861-1862, Browning's colleague from Illinois, Lyman Trumbull, introduced a bill for the confiscation of rebel property.

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[38] Ibid., 542.
[39] Ibid., 559-560.

After months of debate and amendment, a substitute bill passed both the House and the Senate in July, 1862. Almost the entire group voting for the bill were Republican congressmen from the Northern states.[40] Before the passage of the bill in the Senate, Browning had anxiously discussed the vindictive measure with Lincoln and found the president's views "coincided entirely with my own."; Browning voted against the bill much to the dissatisfaction of his constituents.[41]

Lincoln intended to veto the law, but after Congress hastily amended the law to make clear that its powers did not extend beyond the life of the rebel in question, allowed it to pass.[42]

In December of the same year, the Radicals in Congress were putting increasing pressure on Lincoln to remove Seward, now regarded as moderate, and others of the conservative stamp from the cabinet and replace them with representatives of a more extreme view such as Sumner. On the 16th, a caucus of Republican senators met in the reception room of the Senate between 1 and 2 p.m. One after another they rose to denounce the administration--Trumbull, Grimes, Wade, Wilkinson. Seward was the par-

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[40]Randall, Lincoln and President, 2:226-229.

[41]Browning Diary, 1:555; Quincy Daily Whig and Republican, November 10, 1862.

[42]Browning Diary, 1:562.

ticular object of their vituperation, Grimes offering a resolution of want of confidence in the Secretary of State. Alarmed at the attack,Browning and other moderates fought the resolution. Replying to the bitter attacks on Lincoln, Browning defended him as an "honest, upright, conscientious man...in favour of the most vigorous prosecution of the war...." The meeting was adjourned with the adoption of a resolution to send a delegation of senators to "represent to him the necessity of a change in men and measures." Browning voted for it, as he explained to the President, only because it was the "gentlest thing that could be done. We had to do that or worse."[43]

The next evening when Browning came to the White House Lincoln showed extreme distress at the actions of the Republican Senators:

> "'They wish to get rid of me, and I am sometimes half disposed to gratify them' I replied 'Some of them do wish to get rid of you, but the fortunes of the Country are bound up with your fortunes, and you stand firmly at your post and hold the helm with a steady hand--To relinquish it now would bring upon us certain and inevitable ruin.' Said he 'We are now on the brink of destruction. It appears to me the Almighty is against us....' I answered....'You ought to have crushed the ultra, impracticable men last summer. You could have done it...Mr. Seward appears now to be the especial object of their hostility. Still I believe he has managed our foreign affairs

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[43]Ibid., 597-600; Randall, Lincoln the President, 2:240-244.

> as well as any one could have done. Yet they are very bitter upon him, and some of them very bitter upon you.' He then said 'Why will men believe a lie, an absurd lie, that one could not impose upon a child ....' I understood this to refer to the charges against Mr. Seward." 44

Seward, hearing of the work of the secret caucus, offered his resignation; but Lincoln was determined to keep him. Browning, already wondering about the makeup of the new cabinet, expressed his doubts to Lincoln as to the wisdom of keeping Seward at the expense of party harmony and to others as to Lincoln's ability to maintain control of the Radicals.[45]

However, by forcing the senatorial committee to face the full cabinet excepting Seward, Lincoln forced both the senators and Chase, whom Browning believed the instigator of the plot,[46] to back down. Chase offered his resignation; but, when Lincoln appeared tempted to accept it, withdrew it. So Lincoln kept Seward.[47]

The eventual political break between Lincoln and Browning came on the issue of the Emancipation Proclamation. The two men had often discussed the question of what to do with the slaves that came into the Union lines. Both had agreed, in 1861, that the slaves could not be returned to their owners, but neither could they

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[44] Browning Diary, 1:601.
[45] Ibid., 602-604.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Randall, Lincoln the President, 2:247.

remain in the camps. The solution the two both saw then was, as Browning reported it, a combination of the old plans of gradual emancipation and colonization.[48] Lincoln's adoption of the more radical emancipation plan as a necessary war measure was to Browning a surrender to the

> "ultra, radical, unreasoning men who raised the insane cry of on to Richmond in July 1861, and have kept up a war on our generals ever since--who forced thro the confiscation bills, and extorted from the President the proclamations and lost him the confidence of the country...." [49]

The Illinois elections of 1862 brought in the "copperhead" legislature, largely Democratic, and later prorogued by Governor Yates; with it came Browning's replacement by Douglas's old ally, William A. Richardson, also of Quincy. Browning was bitterly disappointed, and believed that his defeat was due to the issuance of the preliminary proclamation in September. He expressed this bitterness to Lincoln vigorously, but the President made no reply. "I added," wrote Browning, "that the Republican party could not put down the rebellion--that no party would do it--that it required a union of all loyal men in the free states to give us success, and that without that union we must disastrously fail." Lincoln agreed, but did not comment on Browning's implied meaning that the procla-

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[48] Browning Diary, 1:478, 512.
[49] Ibid., 598.

mation prevented such union and final victory.[50]

Browning, long out of sympathy with the majority of his party and now with Lincoln as well, was lonely in Washington: "I rejoice to get away for I feel that I can do no good here--The counsels of myself and those who sympathize with me are no longer heeded."[51]

He returned home to Quincy February 5, 1863, turning again to his home and his legal practice for his solace in political failure. In December, however, having formed a law partnership with ex-Senators Ewing of Ohio and Cowan of Pennsylvania and one Britton Hill, he moved again to Washington with his family.[52]

Much of Browning's value to the firm rested on his acquaintance with the president. Many of the cases with which the firm dealt involved obtaining paroles or exchanges for Confederate prisoners of war such as William Dazey, nephew of a Quincian, or young William Symington, nephew of Andrew Johnston. The method used by Browning in the latter case is fairly typical of many such. Browning went to Lincoln, obtained the release, then escorted the soldier to the White House and secured a pass from the President to allow Symington to report to his uncle in Richmond, there to be exchanged for a Union

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[50] Ibid., 589.
[51] Ibid., 621.
[52] Ibid., 650.

prisoner. In 1865, Browning was to work for a pardon for Johnston's more famous nephew, General George Pickett.[53]

Some of the cases were a less savory nature, however, than the paroles. It is difficult to reconcile the high-minded senator, battling desperately for principles in 1862 with the lawyer who, without hesitation or question used a personal friendship to further the cause of such men as Reuben Hatch, a quartermaster of Captain's rank and brother to a well-known illinois politician. Hatch was accused by Grant of dumping his records into the Ohio River to escape prosecution. Other cases of equal dubiety were also handled by this illustrious firm; in one case, Browning aroused Lincoln by pressing the suit of a "loyal widow of Mississippi" who wanted the government to "allow her enough negroes out of those it had accumulated to work her land." Lincoln, deeply angered, and humiliated for his friend, retorted that "he would rather hang himself or throw up than do it,...." With an air of understatement, Browning reported, "I left in no very good humor."[55] Presumably Browning found justification for such activity in his legal profession--he was a lawyer, not a judge.

No such excuse can be given, however, for the cotton deal in which he joined with General James Singleton,

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[53]Basler, Collected Works, 8:185 and 185n; Browning Diary 2:32.

[54]"Notes on Reuben Hatch Case", Ozias M. Hatch Papers, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

[55]Browning Diary, 1:658-659

Quincy Democrat. The two, formerly bitter political rivals, found a common ground in the enormous profit they hoped to make by buying up cotton and tobacco in the South with greenbacks and bringing the produce through Union lines. On January 5, Browning secured passes for Singleton and James Hughes[56] to pass through Union lines with the purchased goods. Lincoln asked that Browning see Mrs. Lincoln's sister, the widow of Confederate General Ben H. Helm, about bringing out, at the same time, some 600 bales of cotton she owned. Mrs. Helm was staying at the White House, a fact Lincoln asked Browning to keep secret.[57]

On January 30, Browning reported that Singleton had returned with contracts for seven million dollars worth of cotton, tobacco, turpentine and resin "which will make us rich if we can only get it out."[58] Getting it out was to be quite a problem, however; for both Grant and Stanton objected strenuously, Stanton labelling the deal as "trading in the blood of our soldiers". Browning's feeble excuse for the activity was that possessing greenbacks would make the rebels interested in the Federal Government. Still Lincoln himself offered no objections to the plan.[59]

Lincoln persisted in helping the men, and sent Grant

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[56]Hughes was a former judge in the Court of Claims.
[57]Browning Diary, 2:1.
[58]Ibid.
[59]Ibid., 11-12.

a strong recommendation of Hughes, asking that Grant see him again, after the partners heard an alarming story of some large stores of tobacco being burnt by the Union army.[60] The collapse of the Confederacy in April burst the speculators' bubble too soon for the tremendous profits to be realized, however.

Despite the degeneration in the quality of their friendship by Browning's use of it as a commercial asset, much of the basis of the respect Browning still felt for the President is revealed in the shock implicit in Browning's account of the assassination:

> "I had no fear whatever that such an event would occur. I thought him the best friend they [the rebels] had among those in authority and...his life would be as dear to them as to us....We are now in God's hands."[61]

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[60]Abraham Lincoln to Lieut. General Ulysses S. Grant, Washington, March 13, 1865, in Basler, Collected Works, 8:353.

[61]Browning Diary. 2:20.

CONCLUSION

With Lincoln's death, this story of thirty years ends. The relationship which had developed between the Great Emancipator and the four Quincians over these three decades had not materially changed the pattern of Lincoln's life nor had any of the four attained a comparatively high place on the American scene. Still each, in his own way, had contributed something to the Lincoln story, had assisted in the steps Lincoln took to reach the peaks of immortality.

The contributions of these four Quincians to Lincoln's career varied with their talent, character, and the place each occupied in life. Andrew Johnston, the cultured Southern gentleman and lover of the arts, had served as a sympathetic ear for the poetic melancholy in which Lincoln found relief from his brooding and expression of a need which his political and legal activities could not satisfy. In contrast, Archibald Williams and Lincoln were brought together by their political affiliations and their mutual support of each other's political ambitions. Jonas, as well as Williams, is linked to Lincoln by a political relationship. Abraham Jonas served Lincoln in the campaigns of 1858 and 1860 primarily because Lincoln was the choice of the party and the state, and Jonas's most out-

standing political virtue was his party regularity. Still, the Quincian's knowledge of the small details of political life fitted him well to be one of the loyal, if obscure, workers on whom all political leaders must rely.

The most significant figure of the group is, of course, Orville Browning. A man of high intellect and considerable polish, Lincoln's interest in him illustrates an admiration of and desire for these qualities. Too, their common borderstate background, to which Browning was the more closely linked, was a bond which helped to shape their common conservatism toward the slavery issue. The failure of Browning to offer full and wholehearted support to Lincoln in 1860 and on the Emancipation Proclamation is easily understood in the light of Browning's own frustrated political ambitions and in his tendency to tie hispolitical actions to party and principle, not to individuals.

The four Quincians' common profession was law; and their relationship with Lincoln is an illustration of one of the means by which he climbed to power, drawing into his orbit friends and associates with whom he had come into contact during his legal career, associates whose manner of thought colored his thinking and shaped his inclinations as he rose in political and intellectual stature.

Too, the fortuitous element in Lincoln's life is evidenced herein by the chance way in which these four Quincians came into his life. Abraham Lincoln never lived in Quincy. We know by his own words that, before 1858, he had spent a total of two days and one night there, and there is no evidence to show that he visited the town after 1858. Yet from Quincy came four men who exerted a not inconsiderable influence on his career.

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Approved

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Chairman

August 10, 1955.