

Abraham Lincoln, photographed by Alexander Hesler on June 3, 1860, six months after his visit to Kansas. "That looks better and expresses me better," Lincoln said of the photo, "than any I have ever seen; if it pleases the people I am satisfied."

THE KANSAS TOUR OF LINCOLN THE CANDIDATE

by Fred W. Brinkerhoff

Last November the Kansas State Historical Society held its 133rd annual meeting and, among other things, marked the forthcoming bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth and the 150th anniversary of his one and only visit to Kansas. The latter is something Kansans have celebrated many times over the years. For example, in 1902 the Kansas Historical Collections published "Lincoln in Kansas," a collection of contemporary newspaper accounts and reminiscences about the Great Emancipator's 1859 visit; in 1945 the Kansas Historical Quarterly published Fred W. Brinkerhoff's annual presidential address, "The Kansas Tour of Lincoln the Candidate"; and on the eve of the state's centennial in 1959, the Society helped reprise the Illinois politician in the person of newspaper editor Rolla Clymer, who "reconstructed the political scene of 1859 and gave the essence of what Lincoln . . . may have said in several long speeches."¹

The following essay, delivered on October 17, 1944, and printed in February 1945, is republished here because we believe its insights and observations remain relevant and will be of interest to readers of Kansas History. The editor added the notes, but the text is Brinkerhoff's and has been edited only for style.²

Presidential Address, Kansas State Historical Society, October 1944

American statesmen destined to achieve the presidency have had a habit of coming to Kansas to be seen and to be heard as their parties prepared to move toward convention halls. To put it another way, Kansas has established the custom of bringing future presidents to Kansas for a close-up appraisal. Four men who were approaching the nominations appeared in Kansas within the memory range of large numbers of living Kansans. In 1895 William McKinley came out from Ohio and addressed a great throng at the famous Ottawa Chautauqua. The next year he was elected president. In 1907 William H. Taft, also of Ohio, then secretary of war, came out from Washington to make an address at the Ottawa Chautauqua. The next

Fred W. Brinkerhoff, long-time Pittsburg, Kansas, newspaper editor and publisher, was a member of the board of directors of the Kansas State Historical Society from 1940 to 1966 and its president in 1944.

1. "Lincoln in Kansas," *Kansas Historical Collections, 1901-1902* 7 (1902): 536-52, also available at <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/214362>; Fred W. Brinkerhoff, "Address of the President: The Kansas Tour of Lincoln the Candidate," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 8 (February 1945): 294-307; "The Centennial of Lincoln's Visit to Kansas," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 25 (Winter 1959): 438, 439-43, also available at <http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/214365>.

2. Born in Franklin County, Kansas, on February 13, 1885, Frederick Walter Brinkerhoff attended Ottawa University and the University of Kansas and edited newspapers in Fort Scott and Chanute before moving to Pittsburg in 1911. He subsequently edited the *Pittsburg Headlight*, as well as the *Pittsburg Sun*, for many years and died in Pittsburg on August 13, 1966. *Pittsburg Sun*, August 14, 1966; *Topeka Capital-Journal*, August 14, 1966; *Pittsburg Headlight*, August 15, 1966.



In 1859 Abraham Lincoln set the example for American statesmen destined to achieve the presidency: he came to Kansas to be seen and heard as his party prepared to move toward the convention hall. Four others who were approaching nomination appeared in Kansas between 1895 and 1927. William McKinley and William H. Taft each addressed the Ottawa Chautauqua in 1895 and 1907 respectively; in 1912, Woodrow Wilson spoke in Topeka; and in 1927 Herbert Hoover visited Emporia. Kansas remained an important campaign stop even after one was elected president, as Taft demonstrates by parading through Leavenworth in September 1911.

year he was elected president.³ In 1912 Woodrow Wilson, governor of New Jersey, came to speak to a political gathering in Topeka. That year he was elected president. In 1927 Herbert Hoover, then secretary of commerce, came from Washington to meet a large group of Kansans at the home of William Allen White in Emporia. The next year he was elected president. The aspirant who used this technique of campaigning and set the example was Abraham Lincoln. In 1859 Lincoln came out from Illinois

and made a Kansas tour.⁴ The next year he was elected president.

In the autumn of 1940 one of the first of the historical markers on Kansas highways was unveiled at Elwood. That marker recites three historical facts concerning Elwood. Elwood was the first Kansas station of the Pony Express. It was one end of the first railroad in Kansas. It was there that Lincoln first set foot on Kansas soil and

3. Years later, Brinkerhoff published a fine article on the Chautauqua in the Society's quarterly. F. W. Brinkerhoff, "The Ottawa Chautauqua Assembly," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 27 (Winter 1961): 457-68.

4. The most recent and extensive work on Lincoln's Kansas connection and sojourn is Carol Dark Ayers, *Lincoln and Kansas* (Manhattan, Kans.: Sunflower University Press, 2001); see also Charles Arthur Hawley, "Lincoln in Kansas," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 42 (June 1949): 179-92; Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 3, 1858-1860 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 495-504.



Daniel Webster Wilder (1832–1911)—the compiler of the *Annals of Kansas*, which chronicles the area’s history from 1542 to 1885—had seen Lincoln in Springfield during the summer of 1859 and invited him to Kansas. When Lincoln accepted in the fall, Wilder met the Illinois politician at the railroad station in St. Joseph, Missouri, and escorted him across the river to Elwood.

made the opening speech of his Kansas tour. Speaking at the unveiling, I endeavored to sketch the events connected with Lincoln’s visit and speech, and his tour.⁵ After the ceremonies a Kansan very active in Kansas affairs, then and now in high station, expressed surprise at what he had heard. He said that he never knew that Lincoln had been in Kansas. That seemed rather strange. But after reaching home, I took up the textbook of Kansas history which was used in the public schools at the beginning

5. Brinkerhoff chaired the state committee on highway historical markers, which, in cooperation with the Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS) and the Kansas State Highway Commission, located and erected fifty-six such markers from 1938 to 1941. “Kansas Historical Markers,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 10 (November 1941): 339–68. The text of the Elwood marker is on page 354.

of the century and examined it carefully. There was not a line in it concerning Lincoln’s visit. Yet the author was a famous journalist who spent several years of his distinguished career in newspaper work in one of the cities in which Lincoln spoke.⁶ An examination of the Kansas newspapers of the time of the tour reveals no mention of the Lincoln visit and speeches with some notable exceptions. These exceptions are the rather full accounts in the Leavenworth and Elwood newspapers, a single belated but valuable paragraph in the *Kansas Chief*, then published at White Cloud, a paragraph in the *Emporia News*, and a reprint from a Leavenworth newspaper in a Manhattan publication. In the *Annals of Kansas* are only two brief paragraphs, although D. W. Wilder, the compiler, was one of the former publishers of the Elwood newspaper, had something to do with inviting Lincoln to Kansas, and had met Lincoln at the railroad station in St. Joseph, Missouri, and escorted him across the river to Elwood.⁷ The biographers of Lincoln have paid little attention to his Kansas tour. Most of them have made some mention of the fact that he came to Kansas and delivered some speeches. In one of the monumental works, the authors have attempted to set forth an outline of the themes of his Kansas speeches as gathered from some notes found in his papers.⁸ An occasional newspaper article or an interview with someone who remembered incidents

6. The journalist referred to here was almost certainly Noble L. Prentis and the textbook his *A History of Kansas* (Winfield, Kans.: E. P. Greer, 1899). Prentis, who came to Kansas in 1869, edited several different Kansas newspapers including the *Atchison Champion*. The revised edition of this textbook, which was published in 1909, nine years after Prentis’s death, included a paragraph on the Lincoln visit. Noble L. Prentis, *A History of Kansas* (Topeka: Caroline Prentis, 1909), 125; *Annals of Kansas, 1886–1925* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1954), 1:313. Subsequent textbooks made at least passing reference to the Lincoln visit: William Frank Zornow, *Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 87; Robert W. Richmond, *Kansas: A Land of Contrasts*, 4th ed. (Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1999), 81; Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854–2000* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 79–80.

7. D. W. Wilder, *Annals of Kansas, 1541–1885*, rev. ed. (Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1886), 285, also available at <http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/cgiwrap/imlskto/index.php?SCREEN=annals>. See also, (White Cloud) *Kansas Chief*, December 1, 1859; *Elwood Free Press*, December 3, 1859; (Leavenworth) *Daily Times*, November 28, December 2, 3, and 6, 1859.

8. The biographical works to which Brinkerhoff most likely referred include Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon’s Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Belford, Clarke, 1889); Carl Sandburg’s multi-volume biography *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1926) and *The War Years*, 4 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1939); and Philip Van Dorn Stern, ed., *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: The Modern Library, 1940). Lincoln’s more recent biographers include, but are certainly not limited to, James G. Randall, *Lincoln the President: Springfield to Gettysburg*, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1945); Benjamin P. Thomas, *Abraham Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1952); Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977); Phillip Shaw Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); David

of the tour, published many years later, and one or two articles from correspondents published in Eastern newspapers, finish up the available literature devoted to the visit of candidate Lincoln to Kansas in 1859.

The bypassing of this notable chapter in Kansas history and in Lincoln's life by the biographers and the historians may be easily explained. Only a year before, Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas had engaged in the great debates in Illinois. In less than three months Lincoln delivered his memorable political speech at Cooper Institute [or Cooper Union] in New York. Both events—the stump duel in Illinois and the New York speech—attracted national attention of the highest degree. The debates and the New York speech were reported fully in the newspapers. The scenes were laid in an important and well-settled state and in the nation's principal center. The debates were thrilling because two great orators, running for the Illinois senatorship and the presidency at the same time, were clashing. The Cooper Institute speech was made close to the pre-convention contest.⁹ The Kansas tour, overshadowed fore and aft, was overlooked or ignored as a trivial incident of the day as the historians settled to their work.

But some of the biographers and historians have pointed out an important truth. The Kansas speeches showed up later at the Cooper Institute. Lincoln in Kansas tested out that speech. In October and November he had received the invitation to New York and accepted it. He was already preparing the address. Obviously, he knew that his chance for the Republican nomination could be advanced tremendously or retarded, perhaps lost, by that speech. Lincoln had no doubt about that. So Lincoln accepted the invitation to speak in Kansas for three reasons. First, he wanted to try out his ideas on Kansans. He wanted to see how the things he planned to say would sound. He wanted to see what the reaction of

the Kansas audiences would be. He wanted to practice his New York speech. He had reason to believe that his Kansas speeches would not receive attention in the East. He did not desire that they be reported there. Made in Illinois or some other state, such speeches would command attention and get into the newspapers. And that would spoil his plans for the New York speech. He was a candidate for the presidency. He was skilled in politics. He was a careful candidate. He was glad to have the opportunity the trip offered.

Then, there was a sentimental reason. Bleeding Kansas was the big issue. He had battled with Douglas about Kansas. The country was worked up about Kansas. The slavery question was linked to the struggles in Kansas. Lincoln was deeply interested in the free-state cause. He was distressed by the strife in the territory. He had been unable to visit Kansas earlier. Here was his opportunity.

Finally, Kansas would have six delegates in the coming Republican national convention and they would be helpful to Lincoln.

And so Lincoln came to Kansas.

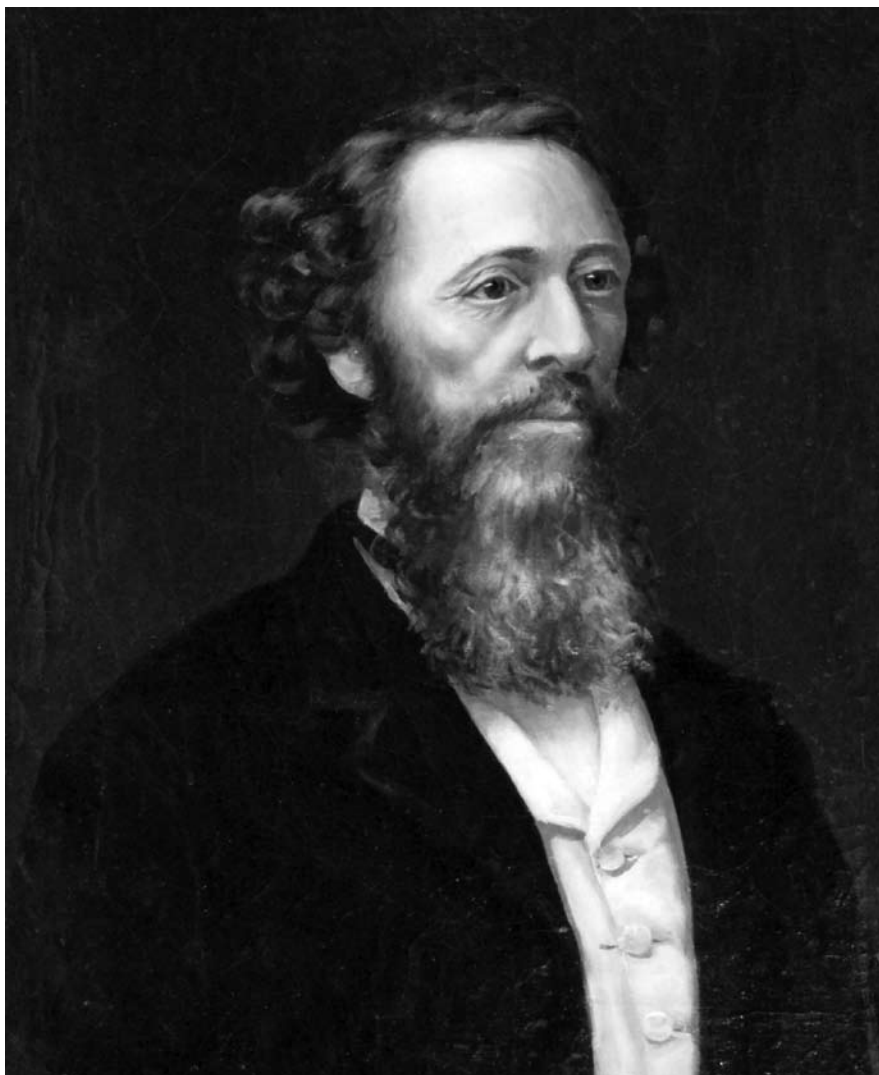
The question whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free state or a slave state had been decided when Lincoln came to Kansas. On March 7, 1859, an election to decide whether to hold a constitutional convention or not was called for March 28. Nearly 7,000 votes were cast and the result was nearly four to one in favor of holding the convention. The heaviest vote against holding the convention was cast in Leavenworth County, although the convention won nearly four to one. Doniphan County opponents cast the third largest vote among the counties, the convention winning by less than two to one. On the other hand Atchison was one of the strongest convention counties, the vote being nearly ten to one. In mid-April Governor [Samuel] Medary called the constitutional convention for Wyandotte, to assemble on July 5, and an election for delegates to be held June 7. Before the election of delegates two important political meetings were held in the territory. A Democratic territorial convention was held May 11 at Tecumseh where a platform full of demands upon the constitutional convention was adopted. At a convention at Osawatimie the Republican Party in Kansas was organized May 18. This convention was featured by the presence of Horace Greeley who addressed the convention. Lincoln had been asked to attend the convention but could not make the trip. Greeley in his address referred to "the able and gallant Lincoln of

Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (London: Cape, 1995). In addition *Kansas History* recently published a previously unknown first-person account of Lincoln's Leavenworth speeches: M. H. Hoeflich and Virgil W. Dean, eds., "'Went At Night to Hear Hon. Abe Lincoln Make a Speech': Daniel Mulford Valentine's 1859 Diary," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 29 (Summer 2006): 100–15, also available at www.kshs.org/publicat/history/2006summer.htm.

9. As Brinkerhoff observed, the Cooper Union speech, delivered on February 27, 1860, and the earlier Lincoln-Douglas debates, held August through October 1858, had and have received a great deal of attention. See, for example, Harry V. Jaffa, ed., *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issue in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Harold Holzer, ed., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Complete, Unexpurgated Text* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993); Harold Holzer, *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech That Made Abraham Lincoln President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006); Stern, ed., *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, 568–91.

Illinois, whom we had hoped to meet and hear to-day." On June 7 the election of delegates to the Wyandotte Convention was held. The Republicans elected thirty-five delegates and the Democrats seventeen. Ten of the seventeen Democratic delegates were from Leavenworth County, a solid delegation. Four were from Doniphan, which had five delegates. Jefferson and Jackson, neighboring counties, furnished one Democrat each, the other coming from Johnson County. The convention adopted a constitution on July 29. An election as specified by the constitution was held on October 4 and the constitution was adopted by a vote of nearly two to one. Both parties immediately proceeded to nominate candidates for state officers. The constitution provided that the election be held on the first Tuesday in December, which was December 6.¹⁰

Whether it was merely an accident or Lincoln had planned his visit that way, just ahead of the state election, is one of the many things about the Lincoln visit to Kansas which must be left to speculation. But logic supports the view that he considered the election in making his plans. There is some evidence to sustain that idea. It seems quite clear that the actual invitation to speak in Kansas came from Mark W. Delahay, a Leavenworth lawyer whose wife was a distant relative of Lincoln. Delahay had practiced law in Illinois. D. W. Wilder was said to have talked with Lincoln in Springfield during the summer. Just how long a notice the Kansans had of Lincoln's coming is not plain. It could not have been very long. But the [Daily] Times



Mark W. Delahay (ca. 1820–1879), a Leavenworth lawyer whose wife was a distant relative of Lincoln, urged the prospective presidential candidate to come to Kansas. Delahay was a Maryland native, who had practiced law in Illinois—where he had known Lincoln—and Alabama before moving to Kansas Territory in 1855. In Leavenworth he worked as a lawyer and antislavery newspaperman, and was elected a member of the Topeka Constitutional Convention. In 1863 Lincoln appointed Delahay U.S. district judge of Kansas, though accusations of alcoholism, corruption, and incompetence were soon leveled and by 1868 there were calls for impeachment. Delahay was forced to resign in 1873, the year his son-in-law, Thomas A. Osborn, became governor. Scandal had not yet marred Delahay's reputation during Lincoln's visit to Kansas, however, and the would-be president spent three nights as a guest in his relatives' home.

10. The most detailed account of these important 1859–1860 developments remains G. Raymond Gaeddert, *The Birth of Kansas* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications, 1940); see also Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 203–18; Gary L. Cheatham, "Slavery All the Time, Or Not At All: The Wyandotte Constitution Debate, 1859–1861," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 21 (Autumn 1998): 168–87.

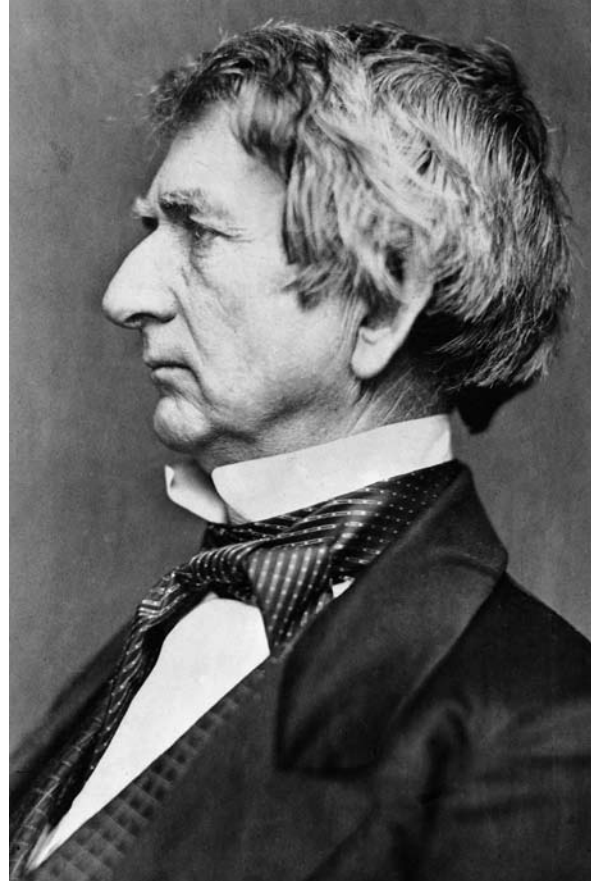
on Monday, November 28, said that Lincoln “will arrive in Leavenworth Wednesday” and said that the Turners had been asked to make arrangements for the reception of the guest. On the next morning the *Times* carried the notice of a meeting that night to make “preparations for the reception of the Hon. Abe Lincoln who will arrive in Leavenworth to-morrow or the day after.” The *Times* of November 30 told of the planning meeting. A committee of seven was named to handle the matter.¹¹

What Lincoln actually did in the way of making a speaking tour in Kansas would do credit to a modern campaigner in the state where such campaigning long ago became common. It was not, however, a novelty to Lincoln. He had been making similar trips in Illinois. He had ridden the circuit as a lawyer. He was not accustomed to comfort in traveling. He did not require or demand luxuries. In the Illinois debates, Douglas had the benefit of a private railroad car, certainly a refined luxury in that day. But Lincoln used any accommodations available. It was almost the pre-horse-and-buggy era in Kansas. But such a rig was provided for his Kansas tour.

The slavery question had been decided in Kansas after years of bloodshed. But the Kansas decision had intensified it as a national issue. Greeley, on the bank of the Marais des Cygnes at Osawatomie, referred to the Trading Post massacre and sounded a call to battle for universal freedom.¹² It was everywhere believed that the crisis was near. The election of 1860 would bring the showdown. Kansas had given a preview of the great drama, many believed, and with fine accuracy of reasoning. When Lincoln was preparing to come to Kansas, John Brown of Kansas had stirred both the North and the South with his Harpers Ferry project. Interest in the course of the young Republican Party was acute. [U.S. Senator] William H. Seward [of New York] was the outstanding candidate for the presidential nomination. But there was a deep interest in Lincoln over the North. Easterners wanted to know more about him. They desired to see and hear the prairie lawyer who had met the mighty Douglas on the stump and bested him in the arguments.

11. *Daily Times*, November 28, 29, and 30, 1859. The “Turners” were, of course, the German fraternal society, often referred to as the Turnverein. On Tuesday evening, November 29, “a number of Republicans met at the Turner’s Hall . . . to make arrangements for the reception of the distinguished Illinoisan.”

12. The infamous Marais des Cygnes Massacre occurred on May 19, 1858, one year before the famed New York *Tribune* editor, Horace Greeley, attended the Republican organizing convention at Osawatomie, Miami County, located just a couple dozen miles from the bloody ravine near Trading Post, Linn County. Harvey R. Hougen, “The Marais des Cygnes Massacre and the Execution of William Griffith,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 8 (Summer 1985): 74–94; Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas*, 192–96.



Interest in the course of the young Republican Party was acute in the months before Lincoln’s visit to Kansas. The Illinois lawyer had yet to establish himself as a powerful figure in national politics and it was U.S. Senator William H. Seward of New York, pictured above, who was initially the outstanding candidate for the 1860 Republican presidential nomination. But there was a deep interest in Lincoln over the North. Some easterners thought it possible that he could be a better candidate than Seward. There were others, including some Kansans, who hoped for a combined ticket. D. W. Wilder, for one, raised the banner in the Elwood Free Press of a national ticket with Seward as president and Lincoln as vice president. Portrait courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

He could be a better candidate than Seward. The North-western states were needed in the election. Seward might not carry them. But Lincoln could carry the aroused East. Lincoln, the most profound student of practical politics of the day, knew all these things. So he was glad to have the opportunity to face the Easterners from the rostrum of Cooper Institute. And Lincoln undoubtedly was glad to have the chance to use a Kansas audience—or, as it developed, several Kansas audiences—as a proving ground for the arguments he proposed to display in New York.

Lincoln had seen Kansas before he came for his tour. He made a business visit to Council Bluffs, Iowa,

in August. He used the new railroad, the Hannibal & St. Joseph, finished earlier in the year. He took a steamboat up the river. Returning, he came down the river to St. Joseph and went east on the train. From the decks of the steamers he had a chance to look at Kansas.¹³

It is very probable that this trip of Lincoln's to western Iowa influenced him to make the visit to Kansas in December. The railroad made the journey to Kansas very easy—in comparison with accommodations available until that year. The traveling westward through Missouri had been on steamers on the Missouri River, or by wagon. There is reason for the belief that Lincoln wanted to come to Kansas for the Osawatomie Convention. He had explained to those who invited him that he desired to attend the convention but that he had been out of his law office so much during the year just past that he had to stay at home and make a living for his family.¹⁴

Apparently, Lincoln's acceptance of the invitation to Kansas has not been preserved. But Leavenworth correspondence in the *New York Tribune* of August 30, 1860, gives an account of the visit. The correspondent, who must have been a competent observer, said that a message came from Lincoln early in November in which he said that he had been advised by "old acquaintances" that by coming to Kansas, then, he might render a slight service to the country and the common cause.

In October and November, Lincoln's mind was on his engagement to speak in New York. He was already preparing his address, although the speaking date was three or four months away. As he went about his business in Springfield he was developing the idea of testing out his line of thought for the New Yorkers, he was thinking of meeting Kansans on their own blood-stained soil, and he was thinking of half a dozen votes in the second national convention of his party. Late in June the *Elwood Free Press*, of which D. W. Wilder was then one of the publishers, had raised the banner of a national ticket—William H. Seward for president and Abraham Lincoln for vice president.¹⁵ This undoubtedly interested Lincoln. He knew that he had attracted attention in Kansas. And

so, at the very end of November he set out from Springfield for Leavenworth.

Lincoln's departure from home was not much of an event. He was always leaving Springfield and this departure appears to have attracted no attention at all. Paul M. Angle, noted Illinois historian, whose valuable book gives Lincoln's whereabouts day by day, fixes the date as November 30.¹⁶ But this was done by going backward from the date, generally accepted, of his arrival in Kansas. Lincoln went by train west to the Mississippi, crossed that river to Hannibal and boarded a train for St. Joseph. As the historians and biographers in their meager accounts have given the record, he arrived at St. Joseph in the afternoon of December 1. He was met there by Delahay and Wilder. Delahay had sent his distant, in-law relative the invitation and urged him to come. Wilder had seen Lincoln in Springfield in the summer and is said to have urged him to visit Kansas. The Kansans took Lincoln up town in an omnibus from the railroad station. There was a visit to a barbershop and the Kansans obtained for him *New York* and *Chicago* newspapers at the post office newsstand. Then they started to Elwood. They crossed the river on the ferry. Elwood then was a prosperous and promising Kansas town. In it was what was said to be the finest hotel in Kansas, the Great Western, with seventy-five rooms. There was no speech scheduled there. But Elwood men asked Lincoln to talk that night. He agreed and a man went through the streets, according to Wilder, pounding a gong and announcing that Lincoln would speak in the dining room of the hotel that night. And so Lincoln's first address, a brief one, was delivered at Elwood. There is little information as to the size of the crowd but it could not have been large. A report said that following the speech Lincoln and members of his audience enjoyed a good meal in the hotel.¹⁷

The night was spent at Elwood. The next day Lincoln started to Troy [Doniphan County] in an open buggy, drawn by one horse. The weather had turned very cold. Three or four men have been reported as Lincoln's traveling companions. Either the buggy was of large capacity or a second vehicle or riding horses were used. Delahay

13. Paul M. Angle, *Lincoln in the Year 1859: Being the Day-by-Day Activities of Abraham Lincoln During That Year* (Springfield, Ill.: Lincoln Centennial Association, 1927), 36–37; "Abraham Lincoln and Iowa," Abraham Lincoln's Classroom, Lincoln Institute, www.abrahamlincolnclassroom.org/Library/newsletter.asp?ID=45&CRLI=125.

14. Abraham Lincoln to Mark W. Delahay, May 14, 1859, Delahay Family Collection, collection 326, Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, also available at http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/cgiwrap/imlsto/index.php?SCREEN=view_image&document_id=100455&file_name=h001795; Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 378–79.

15. *Elwood Free Press*, June 25, 1859. This was the very first issue (volume 1, number 1) of the newspaper. It continued to regularly run the Seward-Lincoln banner well into 1860.

16. Angle, *Lincoln in the Year 1859*, 52–53.

17. *Elwood Free Press*, December 3, 1859. The opening paragraph of the paper's one column coverage of Lincoln's visit and speech read, "Hon. Abraham Lincoln arrived in Elwood on Thursday. Although fatigued with the journey, and somewhat 'under the weather,' he kindly consented to make a short speech here. A large number of our citizens assembled at the Great Western Hotel to hear him." See also Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 495–97; D. W. Wilder to George W. Martin, KSHS secretary, April 22, 1902, quoted in "Lincoln in Kansas," 536–37.

is not named as one of the men. The probability is that Delahay went directly from Elwood to Leavenworth to prepare for the big days ahead. Lincoln was “blue with cold” when he reached Troy. On the trip the party met a bewhiskered man in a wagon. The man recognized Lincoln. He was Henry Villard, newspaper correspondent. He had been to Colorado on an assignment for a New York newspaper. He had buffalo robes and he lent Lincoln one, which Lincoln returned to Villard at Leavenworth.¹⁸

At Troy Lincoln made an address in the courthouse, speaking for one hour and three-quarters. Not more than forty persons were in his audience. Free speech was maintained in Kansas by the pioneers. They believed in hearing both sides. A former Kentuckian, the largest slaveholder in the territory, was called on. He made a reply to Lincoln.¹⁹

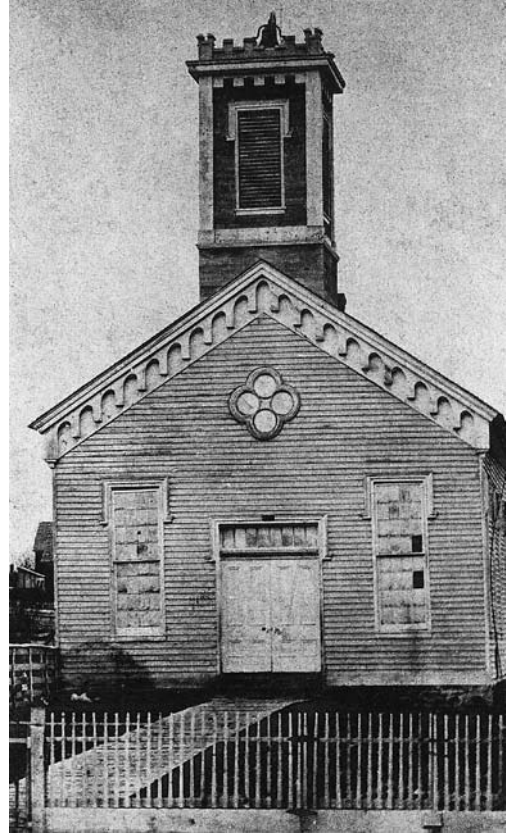
From Troy, which had only the courthouse and a tavern and a few business places, Lincoln was driven down to Doniphan, on the Missouri River. It, like Elwood, gave promise of a great future. It had developed into an important river port. Jim Lane was interested in the town. It was a sort of headquarters for him. There, in A. Low’s hotel, Lincoln made his third Kansas speech. The record is vague as to this meeting but the presumption is that the crowd was small and the speech short.

Here at Doniphan we get into confusion as to time and the historians run out on us. They make the record show that Lincoln was driven from Doniphan to Atchison where he spoke the night of December 2. The weather had continued cold. Judge Nathan Price, for the quarter of a century following a noted lawyer, judge, and political figure in Kansas, was either the driver or a companion on the trip and he provided a lighted lantern that was placed under the robe to make the distinguished campaigner a little more comfortable.

At Atchison Lincoln spoke in the Methodist church. The edifice was crowded. Lincoln was introduced by the

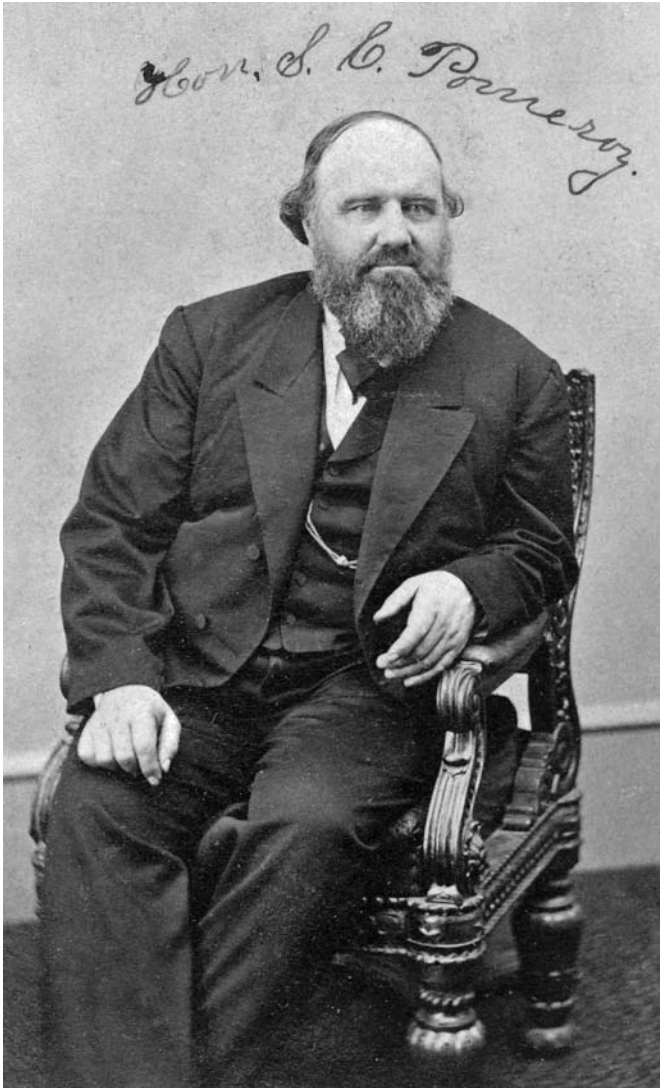
18. In his memoirs, Henry Villard wrote about his surprising encounter with Lincoln in Kansas: “He was on a lecturing tour through Kansas. It was a cold morning, and the wind blew cuttingly from the northwest. He was shivering in the open buggy, without even a roof over it, in a short overcoat, and without any covering for his legs. I offered him one of my buffalo robes, which he gratefully accepted. He undertook, of course, to return it to me, but I never saw it again. After ten minutes’ chat, we separated. The next time I saw him he was the Republican candidate for the Presidency.” Henry Villard, *Memoirs of Henry Villard, Journalist and Financier, 1835–1900* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), 1:134–35; see also Ayers, *Lincoln and Kansas*, 83–84.

19. Account of Albert D. Richardson in “Lincoln in Kansas,” 538–39; Richardson mentions “an aged ex-Kentuckian, who was the heaviest slaveholder in the territory.” On page 287 below Brinkerhoff identifies the slave owner as Col. Andrew J. Agey.



At Atchison Lincoln spoke in the Methodist church, pictured above, for two hours and twenty minutes. When he indicated his intention to conclude after an hour and a half, the crowd insisted he continue. Many prominent citizens were present, including Benjamin F. Stringfellow, a foremost proslavery leader, John J. Ingalls, who would be elected to the state legislature and U.S. Senate, and Franklin G. Adams and Frank A. Root, two early Kansas historians.

mayor, Samuel C. Pomeroy, who was destined to become one of the first United States senators from Kansas and to be one of the most persistent enemies of Lincoln in the Senate. In the audience was a foremost proslavery leader of Kansas, Gen. Benjamin F. Stringfellow. Another man in the audience was a young fellow named John J. Ingalls. Another was Franklin G. Adams, first secretary of the State Historical Society, who served for twenty-three years. Another was Frank A. Root, then an Atchison printer, who made many important contributions to Kansas historical literature. Ingalls, Adams, and Root all left important but meager accounts of the meeting. Lincoln spoke for two hours and twenty minutes. When he indicated his intention to conclude after an hour and a half, the crowd insisted he continue. Here Lincoln had the opportunity and the inspiration he had sought in coming to Kansas. The speech was a tryout for the Cooper Institute address. Lincoln stayed at the Massasoit



Lincoln was introduced in Atchison by the mayor, Samuel C. Pomeroy, who came to Kansas as an agent of the New England Emigrant Aid Company and became an important free-state leader. He later served as one of the first U.S. senators from Kansas and became one of Lincoln's most persistent congressional enemies.

House, a pretentious new hotel and was escorted to the church by a band.²⁰

On the morning of Saturday, December 3, a delegation or committee from Leavenworth took Lincoln in charge for the journey to Leavenworth. Leavenworth had prepared a welcome for him. A crowd with a band and many vehicles met Lincoln and his party just outside

20. "Reminiscences of Franklin G. Adams" in "Lincoln in Kansas," 539–40; for a brief biographical sketch of John J. Ingalls, who had just played an instrumental role as a delegate from Atchison County at the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention and would represent Kansas in the U.S. Senate from 1873 to 1891, see "John James Ingalls, 1833–1900," http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/cgiwrap/imlskto/index.php?SCREEN=bio_sketches/ingalls_john.

the town. There was a parade into town and the streets were filled with people. Lincoln was taken to the Mansion House. There he was welcomed to Leavenworth by Col. John C. Vaughan. He responded briefly, explaining that he would speak at length at night. He registered at the Planters House [Hotel]. At Stockton[s] Hall, packed with Kansans anxious to hear him, Lincoln that night discussed popular sovereignty. Sunday he went to the Delahay home where he was a guest for the rest of his stay in Leavenworth. There had been enthusiastic reports on his address Saturday night. There were insistent demands for another speech Monday. Lincoln consented, probably without protesting. Stockton[s] Hall again was packed at 2:30 in the afternoon, Monday, December 5. The *Times* on December 6 reported: "The day was fearfully unpleasant but the hall was filled to overflowing—even ladies being present." Thus Lincoln made three speeches in Leavenworth—one the short one outdoors when he arrived, and the other two in Stockton[s] Hall. There has been a little confusion concerning the place of the third address. But the *Times's* account very definitely settles any question as to the time and the place.²¹

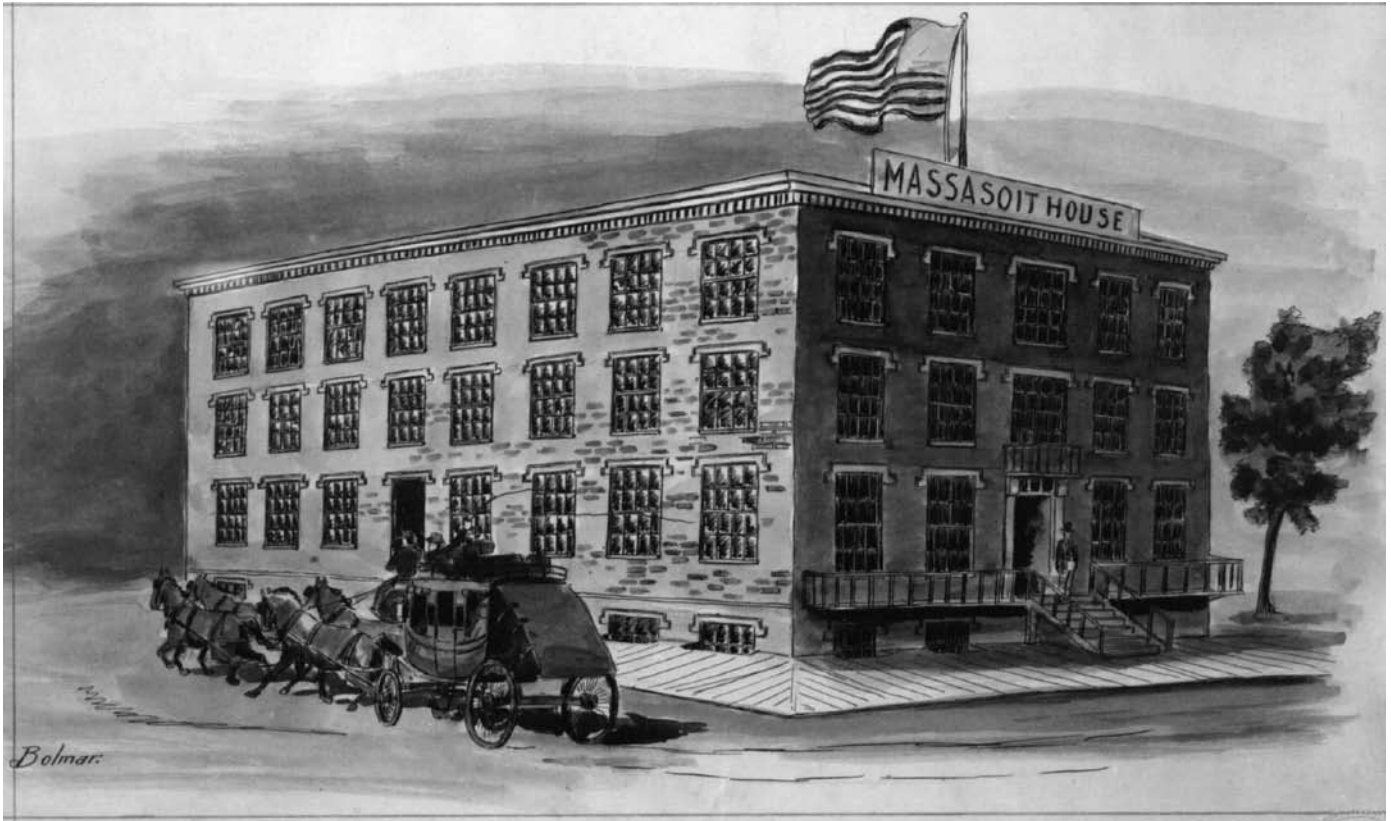
The next day, Tuesday, December 6, was Election Day. State officers were chosen. Lincoln stayed to witness the voting. Undoubtedly Lincoln was deeply interested in the outcome of the election—especially in Leavenworth and Atchison and Doniphan counties. On Wednesday, December 7, he left for home. Marcus J. Parrott, delegate in Congress, accompanied him eastward. The historians have avoided the details of his departure. An account, generally accepted, was that he went up the river to St. Joseph by steamer. But a single little paragraph found in the *Times*, issue of Wednesday, December 7, the day Lincoln left, says: "The River opposite this city has been frozen over since Sunday morning. The ice on an average is six inches thick, and many persons and horses crossed with safety yesterday."²² Lincoln went back to St. Joseph by horse and buggy or carriage.

And so the first visit to Kansas of a presidential candidate on the way to victory and the first real political campaigning tour in Kansas came to an end.

As the record presented by the historians and biographers in their limited treatment of Lincoln's tour stands, this is the story: Lincoln came into Kansas at Elwood from St. Joseph late on Thursday, December 1, 1859. He spoke in the hotel at Elwood that night and

21. *Daily Times*, December 5, and 6, 1859; See also Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 497–504.

22. *Daily Times*, December 7, 1859. For results of the election for state officials under the newly adopted Wyandotte Constitution, see Wilder, *Annals of Kansas*, 286–91.



After checking into the new Massasoit House, wehre he stayed the night before departing for Leavenworth, a band escorted Lincoln to the Methodist church where he spoke to an enthusiastic crowd for almost two and one half hours.

spent the night there. The next day, Friday, December 2, he was driven to Troy, twelve miles from Elwood, where he spoke for an hour and three-quarters. Then he was driven to Doniphan, fourteen miles from Troy, where he spoke. Then he was driven to Atchison, six miles from Doniphan, where he spoke that night and spent the night. The next morning, Saturday, December 3, he was driven to Leavenworth where he remained until Wednesday.²³

There can be no doubt that Lincoln arrived in Leavenworth on Saturday, December 3. Nor can there be any doubt that he was in Atchison the night of December 2. So in the interest of accuracy, we may pick up the Lincoln trail there and go back. If we take the accounts of the tour that have been accepted generally, this is what Lincoln did on December 2, 1859: He traveled thirty-two miles by horse and buggy over trails that some of the pioneers had started to call roads. He made two speeches on the way, one of which required a stop of at least two hours, and the other a stop of at least an hour. And he ended the day with his Atchison speech.

23. Angle, *Lincoln in the Year 1859*, 52–53.

Considering the condition of the roads and the weather in December 1859, the rate at which Lincoln traveled could not have exceeded five miles an hour and it is more likely not more than four miles an hour. At that rate, it would have taken him eight hours on the road to Atchison. Add to this the two hours, minimum, at Troy, and the hour at Doniphan, and Lincoln took eleven hours to go from Elwood to Atchison. Disregarding for the moment the time of his arrival at Atchison, he was there for a night meeting at eight o'clock. It would have been necessary for Lincoln to leave Elwood at nine o'clock. It would have been possible for Lincoln to have kept this schedule. It is also possible that the start was made from Elwood before nine. In fact, it is quite probable, in which event there could have been more time for a noon meal somewhere along the line.

But there are some other things that interfere with acceptance of this picture of Lincoln's movements and activities on December 2. Such references as there are put the meeting in the Troy courthouse in the afternoon. This was most



A crowd, accompanied by a band, met Lincoln just outside Leavenworth on the morning of December 3, 1859. They paraded into town, where the streets were filled with people. After his official welcome at the Mansion House by John C. Vaughan, editor and publisher of the Leavenworth Daily Times, Lincoln made a few remarks and promised to speak at length that evening. He then registered for a room at the Planters Hotel, pictured above, where he stayed the night.

likely. It is improbable that a meeting was held in the morning and not very probable that it was held even at noon. Almost certainly, Lincoln spoke in the afternoon. That would have made it impossible for him to reach Atchison, twenty miles away, in time for his night meeting, with a stop at Doniphan because he certainly could not have left Troy before three o'clock. At least one historian has set forth that Lincoln spoke at Troy in the afternoon and spoke again that night at Doniphan. The testimony and evidence at Atchison sustain the statement that Lincoln spoke at Doniphan on the night of the day he spoke at Troy and that he spent the night in Doniphan. There is ample reason to believe that Lincoln arrived in Atchison during the day. Frank A. Root, then foreman of John A. Martin's newspaper, the [*Freedom's*] *Champion*, says that Lincoln arrived in Atchison about

ten o'clock in the morning.²⁴ Since Doniphan was only six miles away, this seems a logical time for his arrival. Root got out a handbill announcing that Lincoln would speak at eight o'clock that night in the Methodist church, the use of which Franklin G. Adams and others obtained

24. John A. Martin, only twenty years old in 1859, moved to Kansas Territory early in 1858 and took over as editor of the *Atchison Squatter Sovereign*, which was immediately renamed *Freedom's Champion* to reflect its new free-state politics. Martin served as secretary for the Wyandotte Constitutional Convention, and subsequently accomplished much in the military (during the Civil War), journalism, and politics. He ended a distinguished career as governor of Kansas (1885–1889). As Brinkerhoff pointed out and Franklin Adams recalled, "the people of Kansas were for Wm. H. Seward" and as a result editor Martin attended Lincoln's Atchison speech but made no mention of it in his newspaper. "Martin was wrapped up in Seward," wrote Adams some years later, "and could not brook the thought of any encouragement or countenance given by the people of Atchison to a rival candidate." "Reminiscences of Franklin G. Adams" in "Lincoln in Kansas," 539–40; for more on Martin see "John A. Martin, 1839–1889,"

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Stockton's Hall in Leavenworth, a venue that boasted armchair seating for eight hundred, was packed with Kansans anxious to hear Lincoln speak on the night of Saturday, December 3, 1859. The crowd was so pleased with Lincoln's discussion of popular sovereignty that there were insistent demands that he speak again on Monday. Lincoln consented, probably without protesting. Stockton's Hall was again packed at 2:30 in the afternoon, Monday, December 5, despite the "fearfully unpleasant" weather that day. Advertisement from the Leavenworth City Directory and Business Mirror for 1859–60.

from reluctant church officials. There is evidence that arrangements were not made for Lincoln's Atchison speech until after Lincoln arrived in Atchison. The negotiations with the church officials and the printing of the handbills after his arrival are sufficient proof of that fact. Therefore, it becomes clear that Lincoln could not have traveled thirty-two miles by horse and buggy, visited Troy and spoken there, stopped at Doniphan and spoken there, and reached Atchison during the day—and it is just as certain that he reached Atchison during a day.²⁵

Geography and time, reinforced by the Atchison evidence, force the conclusion that on December 2, Lincoln rose after a night in Doniphan, undoubtedly in the Low Hotel, and drove to Atchison. There he spent the rest of December 2 and the night following. This necessarily means that Lincoln arrived at St. Joseph and Elwood on Wednesday, November 30, and that he was at Troy and at Doniphan on Thursday, December 1. There are some bits of evidence to support this conclusion, too.

[http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/cgiwrap/imlskto/index.php?SCREEN=bio_sketches/martin_john;Homer E. Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors* \(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990\), 113–15.](http://www.territorialkansasonline.org/cgiwrap/imlskto/index.php?SCREEN=bio_sketches/martin_john;Homer_E.Socolofsky,Kansas_Governors(Lawrence:University_Press_of_Kansas,1990),113-15.)

25. Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 497, found Brinkerhoff's analysis quite convincing, despite the fact that the *Elwood Free Press*, December 3, 1859, clearly stated that Lincoln arrived late on Thursday, December 1, and spent the night at the Great Western Hotel.

The belated article published in the *New York Tribune* on August 30, 1860, which has been used by some of the historians as a basis for their references to the Lincoln visit, says that Lincoln arrived in St. Joseph "on the afternoon of Nov. 31st." Although November has only thirty days, it must be assumed that the writer at least meant the last day of November. The *Tribune* article's author went on to say that "the next day" Lincoln went to Troy where he spoke "in the afternoon" for nearly two hours. The writer continued that "the same afternoon Mr. Lincoln went to Doniphan, and spoke in the evening."

Better evidence was published in the *St. Joseph Gazette* on December 1. The *Gazette* said: "The Hon. Abe Lincoln, of Illinois, passed through this city yesterday, on his way to Kansas, where he is advertised to make Republican speeches."

The *St. Joseph Weekly Free Democrat*, date of December 3, had this clear statement: "The Hon. Abe Lincoln, who beat Douglas on the popular vote for U.S. Senator at the last election in Ill.—addressed the citizens of Elwood on Wednesday evening last, upon National politics." That Wednesday was November 30.

More evidence is in this statement in the *Kansas Chief*, published at White Cloud, date of December 1: "Hon. Abe Lincoln, of Illinois, who stirred up Douglas with a sharp stick until he squealed, is now stumping it in the Territory. He speaks at Troy to-day, at Atchison tomorrow, and at Leavenworth on Saturday."²⁶

The evidence seems to be conclusive. Lincoln arrived in Kansas on November 30, spoke at Elwood that night, at Troy the afternoon of December 1, and at Doniphan that night. The next morning he went on to Atchison.

The historians who have dealt with the Lincoln visit ignored geography and transportation facilities. A statement by one writer that it was thirty miles [rather than twelve] from Elwood to Troy has been accepted and used by later writers.

That section of Kansas in which Lincoln spoke had the greatest Democratic strength in the territory. Leavenworth was the party's stronghold. In the election on December 6, which Lincoln stayed over to see, Leavenworth County cast 1,404 votes for [Samuel] Medary, the Democratic candidate for governor, and 997 votes for [Charles] Robinson, the Republican candidate. Doniphan gave the Republican 476 and the Democrat 371. Atchison voted 644 for the Republican and 585 for the Democrat.²⁷

26. The *Kansas Chief*, Thursday, December 1, 1859, was edited and published by Sol Miller, who already was one of the state's leading and most colorful journalists.

27. Wilder, *Annals of Kansas*, 286–91.



On Wednesday, December 7, Lincoln left for home. He was accompanied eastward by the Kansas territorial congressional delegate Marcus Junius Parrott, pictured here. Little is known of their travels, though a single paragraph found in the *Leavenworth Daily Times* on December 7 states that the river that could have taken them to St. Joseph by steamer had “been frozen over since Sunday morning,” suggesting that Lincoln and Parrott traveled to St. Joseph by horse and buggy or carriage.

Doniphan and Atchison counties had been settled by Missourians. They were named for famous proslavery leaders in Missouri. Many of their most substantial citizens were proslavery men. Lincoln had plenty of men of opposite views to work on with his speeches. He was equal to the occasions. He was trying out for Cooper Institute. The reception his Kansas speeches received must have impressed the veteran stump orator. At Troy, Col. Andrew J. Agey, a former Kentuckian and the heaviest slave owner in the territory, called by the crowd to answer Lincoln, said: “I have heard, during my life, all the ablest public speakers, all the eminent statesmen of the past and the present generation, and while I dissent utterly from the doctrines of this address, and shall endeavor to refute some of them, candor compels me to say that it is the most able—the most logical—speech I ever listened to.” The demand of the Atchison audience that he continue after he had spoken for an hour and a half and the insistent request for a second speech at Leavenworth surely must have indicated to Lincoln that his line of argument would do for the Cooper Institute audience—and for the country which would read it carefully later. The friendly Leavenworth newspapers gave

Lincoln’s speeches their complete praise, which must have been very satisfactory to Lincoln.²⁸

The Kansas speeches dealt with the organization and purpose of the Republican Party as Lincoln viewed them. The purpose, he said, was to prevent the extension of slavery. He devoted major attention to the “Douglas popular sovereignty” as opposed to “real popular sovereignty”—a subject of acute interest in Kansas. He argued that Republicans must follow their own leaders and fight under their own banner. He referred to the great battle the year before in Illinois and said that the Illinois Republicans had been advised by “numerous and respectable outsiders” to reelect Douglas to the Senate. He asserted that he did not believe that “we can ever advance our principles by supporting men who oppose our principles” and that if the advice had been taken “there would now be no Republican party in Illinois and none to speak of anywhere else.” In this way he sought to appeal to the Kansas Republicans to perfect and extend their organization and to battle for their principles, regardless of the opposition. This argument, of course, was intended for the Kansans and he threw in many observations that were intended to localize his utterances and intensify the interest of his hearers—a device always effectively used by the skilled stump speakers. But the lines of his discussion of issues of vital importance in 1860 were those of the great speech that was in the making. When he rose to speak at Atchison, John Brown of Kansas had been dead a few hours—hanged that day at Charlestown, Virginia. Many an orator on the antislavery side, speaking in Kansas that night, would have denounced the hanging of Brown. But Lincoln did not. He said that Brown was guilty of treason and had paid the proper penalty. [Senator] Ingalls reported thirty years later that Lincoln, alluding to the threats of secession, said that secession would be treason, and declared: “If they attempt to put their threats into execution we will hang them as they have hanged old John Brown to-day.”²⁹

28. *Daily Times*, December 5, 1859. Not surprisingly, Leavenworth’s Democratic newspaper, the *Weekly Leavenworth Herald*, which did not mention Lincoln’s visit until December 10, seemed to grudgingly credit “old Abe” for his oratorical skills but was not so complementary as to content: “It is a wonder to many how such a man as Abram Lincoln can so prostitute himself. Is there no other issue in this wide country, but that of ‘nigger?’ Has he forever and firmly wedded his talents and ability in the fanatical crusade of Abalitionism [sic], and sees nothing upon the political horizon but the African.” *Weekly Leavenworth Herald*, December 10, 1859.

29. For a very useful, recent account of Brown, Kansas, and Harpers Ferry, see Jonathan Earle, *John Brown’s Raid on Harpers Ferry: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008); and Jonathan Earle, “John Brown of Osawatimie,” in *John Brown to Bob Dole*:

When Lincoln visited Atchison, there was no mention of his visit in the *Freedom's Champion*, the local Republican newspaper. Not one line in the paper concerned Lincoln's stay or his speech, though his presence in Atchison was big news. The *Champion* was edited by John A. Martin, pictured here, a supporter of Seward. He believed that publishing an account of Lincoln's appearance in Atchison would be treason to his candidate. Martin's intense loyalty to Seward carried through to the Republican Party's national convention in Chicago, where he joined his fellow Kansas delegates in declaring Seward the state's choice. Despite this, of course, Lincoln won the nomination and the presidency.

Lincoln must have had pleasant thoughts of his Kansas tour as he traveled back to Springfield from Leavenworth.

The first objective of the Kansas tour had been achieved. He had tested out his speech ideas and obtained a favorable decision. He also accomplished his second objective. He had seen Bleeding Kansas and had met Kansans who had bled. But as to the third objective, the six delegates from Kansas to the national convention, that had to await the developments of the next year—and the wishes of the Republican leaders of Kansas.

Seward was strong in Kansas. He had been the strong and eloquent friend of the free-state cause. He had been in a position to render great service. He had opportunities to dramatize his friendship. While Lincoln met Douglas on the stump in Illinois, Seward met Douglas in the United States Senate. The Kansas Republican leaders were for Seward. The rank and file Republicans were for Seward. The Kansas newspapers were favorable to Seward.

When Lincoln visited Atchison, there was no mention of his visit in the *Atchison Champion*, a foremost free-state newspaper. Not a line concerning his stay or his speech appeared in the *Champion*. His presence in Atchison was big news. By all the standards of news evaluation, it was a major news item. But the *Champion* ignored it. John A. Martin was the editor. Martin was for Seward. He believed that publishing an account of Lincoln's appearance in Atchison would be treason to Seward. There is no more interesting episode in the history of Kansas journalism than Martin's suppression of this big news story. Martin demonstrated the intense loyalty of the Kansas Republican leaders to Seward.³⁰

On April 11, 1860, the Kansas Republicans met in convention at Lawrence to select the six delegates to the

Movers and Shakers in Kansas History, ed. Virgil W. Dean (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 19–32.

30. See *Freedom's Champion*, November 26 and December 3, 1859, where one finds no mention of Lincoln.



national convention in Chicago. Martin was one of the delegates chosen. Col. William A. Phillips was another. Phillips, called to the platform, made a Seward speech and closed by offering a resolution, which declared Seward to be the "first representative man of the Republican party and the first choice of the Republicans of Kansas for the Presidency in 1860." The resolution was adopted, only one or two delegates voting against it.³¹

In the Wigwam at Chicago a month later [May 16], the six Kansas delegates voted for Seward and never flopped to Lincoln. Lincoln learned that the third objective of his Kansas tour had failed. The horse and buggy had been a bandwagon but Kansas missed it.³²

31. Wilder, *Annals of Kansas*, 298–99; *Lawrence Republican*, April 12, 1860.

32. Lincoln may not have convinced members of Kansas's infant Republican Party to climb aboard his "bandwagon" in December 1859, but he made an excellent impression. For example, Leavenworth's *Daily Times* claimed he had "met a reception that would be accorded to but few in the nation. . . . Abe Lincoln came to us no stranger but his presence and his words have drawn him closer to our hearts." Attorney Daniel M. Valentine, who would be a justice on the Kansas Supreme Court in less than ten years, heard both Leavenworth speeches; although he was a bit critical of Lincoln's appearance and delivery, Valentine wrote on December 3, 1859, that "the points he touched on were as ably handled as I have ever heard or seen them handled. I think it as able a speech as I ever heard." And, according to the (Springfield) *Illinois State Journal*, December 12, 1859 (quoted in "Lincoln in Kansas," 552), the Leavenworth press characterized Lincoln's initial speech as "the ablest ever delivered upon the soil of Kansas." For the Valentine assessment, see Hoeflich and Dean, "Went At Night to Hear Hon. Abe Lincoln Make a Speech" 115.

Abraham Lincoln Speaks at Stockton's Hall: Leavenworth, December 3, 1859

The following synopsis, which contains quoted portions and paraphrases of Abraham Lincoln's December 3, 1859, speech, was first published in Leavenworth's *Kansas Daily State Register*, most likely on December 4. Unfortunately, only one issue of this territorial newspaper is extant (November 5, 1859), but the speech was reprinted in the *Illinois State Journal*, December 12, 1859, and subsequently in the *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1901–1902 and in *Roy Basler's Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (1955). Introduced by Mark W. Delahay of Leavenworth, Lincoln addressed "one of the largest political assemblies that ever met in Kansas" as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen: You are, as yet, the people of a territory; but you probably soon will be the people of a state of the Union. Then you will be in possession of new privileges, and new ideas will be upon you. You will have to bear a part in all that pertains to the administration of the national government. That government from the beginning has had, has now, and must continue to have a policy in relation to domestic slavery. It cannot, if it would, be without a policy upon that subject; and must, of necessity, take one of two directions. It must deal with the institution as being wrong, or as not being wrong."

Mr. Lincoln then stated, somewhat in detail, the early action of the general [federal] government upon the question—in relation to the foreign slave trade, the basis of federal representation, and the prohibition of slavery in the federal territories; the fugitive-slave clause in the constitution—and insisted that, plainly, early policy was based on the idea of slavery being wrong; and tolerating it so far, and only so far, as the necessity of its actual presence required.¹

1. Drawing on both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution for his authority, Lincoln insisted that even though the Constitution tolerated the existence of slavery, the Declaration made it clear that the founding fathers thought it wrong and thus placed it on

He then took up the policy of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which he argued was based on opposite ideas—that is, the idea that slavery is not wrong. He said: "You, the people of Kansas, furnish the example of the first application of this new policy. At the end of about five years, after having almost continual struggles, fire, and bloodshed, over this very question, and after having framed several state constitutions, you have, at last, secured a free-state constitution under which you will probably be admitted into the Union. You have at last, at the end of all this difficulty, attained what we, in the Old Northwest Territory, attained without any difficulty at all. Compare, or rather contrast, the actual working of this new policy with that of the old, and say whether, after all, the old way—the way adopted by [George] Washington and his compeers—was not the better."²

Mr. Lincoln argued that the new policy had proven false to all its promises—that its promise to the nation

the road to "ultimate extinction." The Constitution, drafted in 1787 and ratified in 1789, allowed the slave trade to continue until 1808 (Art. I, Sec. 9 of the Constitution; the importation of slaves was prohibited by act of Congress, effective January 1, 1808) and provided that three-fifths of the enslaved population be counted for purposes of representation in Congress (Art. I, Sec. 2). The Constitution also contained a fugitive slave clause (Art. IV, Sec. 2) and the U.S. Congress passed a Fugitive Slave Act in 1793, but it retained the 1787 prohibition on slavery in the Northwest Territory. The latter was part of the Northwest Ordinance, which was passed by the national Congress that existed under the Articles of Confederation. See, among many others, Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 263–66; Richard B. Morris, *Encyclopedia of American History* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 117, 213, 451–61, 512–16.

2. The "new policy" to which Lincoln referred was popular sovereignty, which provided that the territory of Kansas "shall be received into the union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission." Thus, according to Lincoln, if the majority of the people or their representatives could decide to enslave a certain class or race of people, the new policy was based on the idea "that slavery is not wrong." The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which governed the "Old Northwest Territory" of which Illinois was a part, had prohibited slavery and thus "was based on the idea of slavery being wrong." See "Organic Act. An Act to Organize the Territory of

While in Leavenworth Lincoln spoke twice at Stockton's Hall, located at Fourth and Delaware Streets. The hall, pictured here in 1869, later housed the Leavenworth National Bank.



was to speedily end the slavery agitation, which it had not done, but directly the contrary—that its promises to the people of the territories was to give them greater control of their own affairs than the people of former territories had had; while, by the actual experiment, they had had less control of their own affairs and had been more bedeviled by outside interference than the people of any other territory ever had been. He insisted that it was deceitful in its expressed wish to confer additional privileges upon the people; else it would have conferred upon them the privilege of choosing their own officers; that if there be any just reason why all the privileges of a state should not be conferred on the people of a territory at once, it only could be the smallness of numbers [population]; and that if, while their number was small, they were fit to do some things, and unfit to do others, it could only be because those they were unfit to do were the larger and more important things; that, in this case, allowing the people of Kansas to plant their soil with slavery, and not allowing them to choose their

own governor, could only be justified on the idea that the planting [of] a new state with slavery was a very small matter, and the election of governor a very much greater matter.

“Now,” said he, “compare these two matters and decide which is really the greater. You have already had, I think, five governors, and yet, although their doings, in their respective days, were of some little interest to you, it is doubtful whether you now even remember the names of half of them. They are gone (all but the last) without leaving a trace upon your soil, or having done a single act which can, in the least degree, help or hurt you, in all the indefinite future before you.³ This is the size of the governor question.

“Now, how is it with the slavery question? If your first settlers had so far decided in favor of slavery as to

Kansas,” Sec. 19 of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, May 30, 1854, in John C. Weeks, ed., *Kansas Statutes Annotated, Constitution Volume* (Topeka: State Printer, 1969), 71; see also Nicole Etcheson, “The Great Principle of Self-Government: Popular Sovereignty and Bleeding Kansas,” *Kansas History: A History of the Central Plains* 27 (Spring–Summer 2004): 14–29; and for a review of the literature in this area as it relates to issues of special relevance to Kansas, see Gunja SenGupta, “Bleeding Kansas. Review Essay,” *Kansas History: A History of the Central Plains* 24 (Winter 2001/2002): 318–41.

3. Compared to the slavery question, Lincoln insisted, Kansas Territory’s numerous governors had been inconsequential, yet they were appointed by the president, while the people of Kansas were allowed to decide the truly consequential issue before the territories and the nation—slavery. In this, Lincoln found a disconnect. His point, of course, is valid, but his characterization of the office of territorial governor as inconsequential was no doubt exaggerated for effect. Lincoln might have been right in practice, but according to historian Homer E. Socolofsky, “in the mid-nineteenth century territorial governors were only a little less important than cabinet members,” who of course were also appointed by the president. In December 1859 the incumbent territorial governor was Samuel Medary, who was officially (i.e., appointed and commissioned) the territory’s sixth, last, and longest-serving governor. (Actually, he was succeeded by George M. Beebe, who served

have got 5,000 slaves planted on your soil, you could, by no moral possibility, have adopted a free-state constitution. Their owners would be influential voters among you, as good men as the rest of you, and, by their greater wealth and consequent greater capacity to assist the more needy, perhaps the most influential among you. You could not wish to destroy or injuriously interfere with their property. You would not know what to do with the slaves after you had made them free. You would not wish to keep them as underlings; nor yet to elevate them to social and political equality. You could not send them away. The slave states would not let you send them there, and the free states would not let you send them there. All the rest of your property would not pay for sending them to Liberia. In one word, you could not make a free state if the first half of your own numbers had got 5,000 slaves fixed upon the soil. . . .⁴

He insisted that, little as was popular sovereignty at first, the Dred Scott decision, which is endorsed by the author of popular sovereignty [Senator Stephen A. Douglas], has reduced it to still smaller proportions, if it has not entirely crushed it out. . . . That the court has already said a territorial government cannot exclude slavery. . . . Mr. Lincoln argued that the doctrine of popular sovereignty, carried out, renews the African slave trade. Said he: "Who can show that one people have a better right to carry slaves to where they have never been than any

as acting governor until Kansas became a state at the end of January 1861; Beebe was the tenth man to fill the office—four of these were only acting governors; that is, they fulfilled the duties of the office in the absence of an appointed governor. Medary served only two years of the four-year term, resigning his appointment on December 17, 1860.) Near the end of Lincoln's short Kansas sojourn, on December 6, 1859, Medary stood for election as the Democratic Party's candidate for governor under the Wyandotte Constitution; he lost to Charles Robinson, the Republican nominee, by a vote of 7,848 to 5,401. Homer E. Socolofsky, *Kansas Governors* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 1–7, 33–78; Robert W. Johannsen, *The Frontier, the Union, and Stephen A. Douglas* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 19–29.

4. Lincoln here articulates the quandary of many antebellum Americans—they thought slavery morally wrong but were not willing to accept free people of color as political or social equals in the United States. The American Colonization Society, an early nineteenth-century manifestation of the desire to end slavery but avoid the issues raised by integration, established the country of Liberia in western Africa in the 1820s as a home for manumitted slaves and free blacks who might wish to leave America. The effort had many prominent backers, but by the late 1850s it was clear to Lincoln and most others of his political persuasion that colonization was not a practical solution—affordability was just one (albeit important) factor. A brief discussion of the Colonization Society in the context of the larger antislavery movement can be found in James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 29–31, 43, 55–66; see also, David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 165–67.

people have to buy slaves wherever they please, even in Africa?"⁵

He also argued that the advocates of popular sovereignty, by their efforts to brutalize the negro in the public mind—denying him any share in the declaration of independence, and comparing him to the crocodile—were beyond what avowed proslavery men ever do, and really did as much, or more than they, toward making the institution national and perpetual.

He said many of the popular sovereignty advocates were as much opposed to slavery as any one, but that they could never find any proper time or place to oppose it. In their view, it must not be opposed in politics, because that is agitation; nor in the pulpit, because it is not religion; nor in the free states, because it is not there; nor in the slave states, because it is there. These gentlemen are never offended by hearing slavery supported in any of these places. Still [said Lincoln, no doubt in a clearly sarcastic tone], they are "as much opposed to slavery as anybody."⁶

5. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857) held that Congress could not regulate slavery in the territories—the Missouri Compromise was therefore unconstitutional—and thus by implication, some speculated, no authority could interfere with the institution anywhere in the country, North or South, East or West. Lincoln spoke at length on these issues, the decision, and its possible implications, in many speeches during 1858 and 1859. See, for example, his "House Divided" speech, Springfield, Illinois, June 16, 1858, in Philip Van Doren Stern, ed., *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Modern Library, 1940), 428–38; David Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 111–19; Donald, *Lincoln*, 199–202, 206–9, 215–24.

6. Lincoln's primary target here was Senator Douglas, an Illinois Democrat, and his Northern Democratic, "doughface" colleagues, so-called because of their pro-Southern stance and malleability on the issue of slavery. Although Douglas had broken with many of his fellow Democrats during the Lecompton debate in 1857–1858, Lincoln and his Kansas friends still linked Douglas to President James Buchanan and his immediate predecessor Franklin Pierce, the quintessential doughface politicians of the era. With much sarcasm in word and tone (one must assume), Lincoln accused Douglas and other "advocates of popular sovereignty" of claiming to be "as much opposed to slavery as anybody" but of doing more to perpetuate the institution than openly proslavery men. Senator Douglas, for example, had dehumanized Negroes, according to Lincoln, by essentially equating them with the "crocodile." Lincoln repeatedly reported, both before and after his Kansas appearances, that Douglas had once said that "when the struggle is between the white man and the negro, I [Douglas] am for the white man; when it is between the negro and the crocodile, I am for the negro." Quoted in a "Speech at New Haven Connecticut," March 6, 1860, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. IV, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 18; see also "Notes for Speeches at Columbus and Cincinnati, Ohio," September 16–17, 1859, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. III, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 431–32. For analysis of a very spirited defense of slavery carried out in the pages of an Atchison newspaper, see Bill Cecil-Fronson, "Death to All Yankees and Traitors in Kansas': The Squatter Sovereign and the Defense of Slavery in Kansas," in *Territorial Kansas Reader*, ed. Virgil W. Dean (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 2005), 215–26; for more on the doughfaces, see Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The*

... Mr. Lincoln argued that those who thought slavery right ought to unite on a policy which should deal with it as being right; that they should go for a revival of the slave trade; for carrying the institution everywhere, into free states as well as territories; and for a surrender of fugitive slaves in Canada or war with Great Britain.⁷ Said he: "All shades of democracy [the Democratic Party], popular sovereign as well as the rest, are fully agreed that slaves are property and only property. If Canada now had as many horses as she has slaves belonging to Americans, I should think it just cause of war if she did not surrender them on demand. On the other hand, all those who believe slavery wrong should unite on a policy dealing with it as wrong. They should be deluded into no deceitful contrivances, pretending indifference, but really working for that to which they are opposed." He urged this at considerable length.

He then took up some of the objections to Republicans. They were accused of being sectional. He denied it. What was the proof? "Why, they have no existence, get no votes in the South. But that depends on the South, and not on us. It is their volition, not ours; and if there be fault in it, it is primarily theirs, and remains so unless they show that we repel them by some wrong principle. If they attempt this, they will find us holding no principle other than those held and acted upon by the men who gave us the government under which we live. They will find that the charge of sectionalism will not stop at us, but will extend to the very men who gave us the liberty we enjoy.

Free North and Southern Domination, 1780–1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), 85–88, 107–33, 184–208.

7. In essence, Lincoln's point here is that there is no legitimate middle ground on this vital, moral issue. Popular sovereignty's advocates sought a policy that treated slavery as neither right nor wrong, but the honest, principled approach, insisted Lincoln, was to go all one way or all the other—ultimately, as he had already stated, "a house divided against itself cannot stand." Lincoln believed slavery was wrong, of course, and thought his policy statements reflected that fundamental truth. Those on the other side should be consistent and honestly advocate for policies based on the belief that slavery was right—this would logically include a demand that the British colony of Canada cease providing safe haven for fugitive slaves; if British and/or Canadian officials refused to intervene to this effect and return American "property," war would be a legitimate course of action for the United States. Also, logically, if slavery was right, there was no reason its champions should not seek to reestablish the slave trade and to openly carry or establish the institution everywhere, throughout the entire country. See the previously cited "House Divided" speech, and Lincoln's "Address at the Cooper Institute, New York," February 27, 1860, in Stern, ed., *The Life and Writings of Abraham Lincoln*, 428–38, 568–91; see also, his March 1, 1859, Chicago speech and "Address at Cooper Institute" in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 3, 368–70, 522–50; Donald, *Lincoln*, 237–41; Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery*, 121–24, 171–75.

But if the mere fact that we get no votes in the slave states makes us sectional, whenever we shall get votes in those states we shall cease to be sectional; and we are sure to get votes, and, a good many of them, too, in these states next year. You claim that you are conservative, and we are not. We deny it. What is conservatism? Preserving the old against the new. And yet you are conservative in struggling for the new and we are destructive in trying to maintain the old. Possibly you mean that you are conservative in trying to maintain the existing institution of slavery. Very well; we are not trying to destroy it. The peace of society and the structure of our government both require that we should let it alone, and we insist on letting it alone.⁸

"If I might advise my Republican friends here, I would say to them, leave your Missouri neighbors alone. Have nothing whatever to do with their slaves. Have nothing whatever to do with the white people, save in a friendly way. Drop past differences, and so conduct yourselves that, if you cannot be at peace with them, the fault shall be wholly theirs."⁹

8. Although Republicans came in many different varieties, Lincoln's political party officially vowed not to interfere with slavery where it already existed. The Republican Party, which formed in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, was firmly opposed to the expansion of slavery into the territories, but it was not an abolitionist party. See, among many others, Phillip Shaw Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 3–20; Donald, *Lincoln*, 189–92.

9. Lincoln here alluded to the periodic hostilities along the border between Kansas and Missouri, which were too often characterized by jayhawking and bushwhacking. For Lincoln, a peaceful, political solution to the differences between the two sides—Kansas free-state Republicans and Missouri proslave Democrats—was the only legitimate course of action; and the freestaters had in fact won, as Kansas was poised to enter the Union as a free state. Lincoln firmly rejected the violent, incendiary tactics of partisans such as John Brown, who led his last raid from Kansas into Missouri just one year before, and Charles Hamilton, the Missourian who perpetrated the so-called Marais des Cygnes Massacre on May 6, 1858. Even then, in December 1859 as Kansans prepared to go to the polls and elect a government under their newly ratified free-state constitution, sporadic violence continued. Bands of men, lead on the Kansas side by the likes of James Montgomery and Charles R. Jennison, remained under arms and ready to right a perceived wrong with a rope or a Sharps rifle, instead of in a courthouse or through the ballot box. Dale E. Watts, afterword to *A West Wind Rises: Massacre at Marais des Cygnes*, by Bruce Cutler (Topeka, Kans.: The Woodley Press, Washburn University Center for Kansas Studies, 1999), 72–77; Harvey R. Hougen, "The Marais des Cygnes Massacre and the Execution of William Griffith," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 8 (Summer 1985): 74–94; Stephan B. Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography of John Brown*, 2nd ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 260–64; Stephen Z. Starr, *Jennison's Jayhawkers: A Civil War Cavalry Regiment and Its Commander* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 15–42; Brian R. Dirck, "By the Hand of God: James Montgomery and Redemptive Violence," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 27 (Spring–Summer 2004): 100–15; Jeremy Neely, *The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007).

“You say that we have made the question more prominent than heretofore. We deny it. It is more prominent; but we did not make it so. Despite of us, you would have a change of policy; we resist the change, and, in the struggle, the greater prominence is given to the question. Who is responsible for that, you or we? . . . Do the Republicans declare against the Union? Nothing like it. Your own statement of it is, that if the Black Republicans elect a president you won’t stand it. You will break up the Union. That will be your act, not ours.¹⁰ To justify it, you must show that our policy gives you just cause for such desperate action. Can you do that? When you attempt it, you will find that our policy is exactly the policy of the men who made the Union. Nothing more and nothing less. Do you really think you are justified to break up the government rather than have it administered by [George] Washington and other good and great men who made it, and first administered it? If you do, you are very unreasonable; and more reasonable men cannot and will not submit to you. While you elect the president, we submit, neither breaking nor attempting to break up the Union. If we shall constitutionally elect a president, it will be our duty to see that you submit. Old

10. This is exactly what happened, of course. Southerners—who characterized all Republicans, regardless of their actual attitude toward the institution of slavery and enslaved people, as “Black” Republicans—refused to abide by the outcome of the electoral process in 1860. Seven slave states “did not even wait for Lincoln’s inauguration to see if their fears were justified. Within the space of three months the Gulf Coast States had succeeded.” Secession had been threatened many times before, as it was throughout the election campaign of 1860, but the evidence suggests that even after it began for real this time, most Americans thought the crisis would pass, the laws should and would be enforced, and the process, in which they had placed their faith for some seventy years, would prevail once again. Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln*, 4–5; Donald, *Lincoln*, 267–70.

John Brown has just been executed for treason against a state.¹¹ We cannot object, even though he agreed with us in thinking slavery wrong. That cannot excuse violence, bloodshed, and treason. It could avail him nothing that he might think himself right. So, if constitutionally we elect a president, and therefore you undertake to destroy the Union, it will be our duty to deal with you as old John Brown has been dealt with. We shall try to do our duty. We hope and believe that in no section will a majority so act as to render such extreme measures necessary.”

Mr. Lincoln closed by an appeal to all, opponents as well as friends, to think soberly and maturely, and never fail to cast their vote, insisting that it was not a privilege only, but a duty to do so. Mr. Lincoln here concluded, amid loud and long cheers. The immense crowd remained motionless for a long time to look upon the old, war-worn veteran of free-state principles. Truly never did a man win the affections of an audience so completely as did Mr. Lincoln on Saturday night. [KH]

11. Brown survived the Harpers Ferry Raid of October 1859, but within a matter of just a few weeks he was tried, convicted of treason against the state of Virginia, and on December 2 executed at Charlestown. Lincoln raised this issue here because of its timeliness and relevancy to Kansans but also to underscore the importance of the rule of law. It was essential that both sides in the escalating debate about the future of slavery operate within the established parameters of the law and the Constitution, respecting its legitimacy even in opposition. The principle of the loyal opposition had to prevail for the Union and democracy to survive. Secession, when it finally came during the winter of 1860–1861, “threatened the orderly operations of self-government,” explained historian Phillip Paludan. “Here was a challenge that asserted that the process would not continue unless one side won, that votes peacefully registered could be trumped by men carrying guns who would not wait until the next election to have their way. They would demand it now, take it by force if necessary.” Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln*, 5–6; Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood*, 307–52.