

PREFACE

Archibald Williams was one of the leading lawyers in the frontier state of Illinois during the early and middle years of the 19th Century. His historical significance, however, stems from his lengthy friendship with Abraham Lincoln, a fellow Illinoisan and a close political ally. The two men met when both were serving in the Illinois state legislature in 1834. They were compatriots for 29 years.

Their lengthy relationship ended in 1863 when Archibald Williams passed away. By that time, Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States and guiding the northern United States toward victory in the American Civil War.

There was more to Archibald Williams than his friendship with Abraham Lincoln. As a lawyer, he was particularly skilled at arguing cases on appeal, and he argued one case before the Supreme Court of the United States in Washington, D.C. Archibald Williams was twice a candidate for election to the United States Senate from Illinois, although he lost both times. He was a delegate to the Illinois Constitutional Convention of 1847. He was directly involved with trying to arrange a peaceful removal of the Mormons from Illinois to Utah.

Many of the high points in Archibald Williams's political life, however, were associated with Abraham Lincoln. President Zachary Taylor, at the behest of Lincoln, appointed Archibald Williams the United States Attorney for Illinois from 1849 to 1853. In 1854, Abraham Lincoln gave a major speech in behalf of Archibald Williams when Williams ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Archibald Williams was one of a small group of Whig Party members who joined with Lincoln in switching from the Whig Party to the Republican Party in Illinois in 1856.

Archibald Williams campaigned hard for his friend Lincoln in 1858, when Lincoln undertook a series of challenging debates with his Democratic opponent, Stephen Douglas. In 1861, when Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States, he appointed his longtime friend, Archibald Williams, to be the first United States District Judge in Kansas, a state that had just been admitted to the Union. Archibald Williams died holding that office.

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The story of Archibald Williams began with his ancestors, who came to the United States from Europe, mainly from Wales in Great Britain.

CHAPTER 1

ANCESTRY

Rodger Williams – Great-Grandfather:

The earliest known ancestor of Archibald Williams was his great-great-grandfather, Rodger Williams, of Brunswick County, Virginia. Rodger was of Welsh descent and probably immigrated from Wales or Scotland to the American colonies prior to the American Revolution. Brunswick County is located on the southern border of Virginia adjacent to North Carolina.

Rodger Williams was credited with having seven wives and rearing a large family of children. It was said that Rodger was murdered, supposedly by his own African-American slaves, although that was never definitely known. Sometime after his death, his body was found concealed in the trunk of a hollow tree.¹

Hukey Williams and Sarah Jones Williams – Grandparents:

Hukey Williams was one of the numerous sons of Rodger Williams. Hukey married Miss Sarah Jones, who also was of Welsh extraction. The Jones family lived in Granville County, North Carolina. Granville County is located on the northern border of North Carolina adjacent to Virginia and only slightly to the west of Brunswick County, Virginia. The marriage was in the year 1762 or 1763.

In 1764, shortly after his marriage but before the birth of his only son, Hukey Williams was murdered by two desperate ruffians and robbed. Earlier, Hukey had driven the two men away when they attempted to rob and assault a woman on horseback. The ruffians later ambushed Hukey Williams

¹ This account of Archibald Williams's ancestors is from "The Story of the Williams Family in America," a handwritten note by Martha Williams Franklin. She was the granddaughter of Archibald Williams and the daughter of his son, John Hamilton Williams.

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and killed him. The two men were indicted, tried, convicted, and executed in Petersburg, Virginia.

After the death of her husband, Hukey Williams's wife, Sarah Jones Williams, returned to her relatives in Granville County, North Carolina. She took her infant son, John Williams, with her. Subsequently she married Mr. John Bobbitt, by whom she had two sons – Archibald Bobbitt and Claiborne Bobbitt.

Sarah Jones Williams oldest son, John Williams, named one of his sons Archibald Williams. Archibald Williams thus was named for his father's half-brother, Archibald Bobbitt, who died while young.

John Williams and Amelia Gill Williams – Parents:

John Williams was the son of Hukey and Sarah Jones Williams. The posthumous son of Hukey Williams, he was born September 19, 1764, in Brunswick County, Virginia. While still an infant, he was taken by his mother back to her family home in Granville County, North Carolina. He was reared by his uncle, Roger Jones, with whom he lived, and he clerked in Roger Jones's store until his [John Williams's] marriage.

John Williams was married to Amelia Gill on November 15, 1787, at her father's residence in Franklin County, North Carolina. Franklin County, North Carolina, is located in north central North Carolina just to the southeast of Granville County, North Carolina.

Amelia Gill was born in Franklin County, North Carolina, on May 28, 1772. She lived there until her marriage to John Williams. Her father, Joseph Gill, was also born in Franklin County, North Carolina. Her mother's maiden name was Owens. The Owens and Gills were all of pure Welsh descent.

In the fall after their marriage, John Williams and Amelia Gill immigrated to and settled in Lincoln County, Kentucky, where they resided until their three oldest children were born. They then removed to Montgomery County, Kentucky, where their nine other children were born. Among those nine children was Archibald Williams.

In the spring of 1831, John Williams moved to Adams County, Illinois, where three of his sons, John A. Williams, Robert R. Williams, and Archibald Williams had previously located. The county seat of Adams

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County is the city of Quincy, Illinois. John Williams remained in Adams County until his death on October 11, 1833, at the residence of his son, John A. Williams.

John Williams was not a robust man but was quite active. He had wavy black hair. He never had a grey hair and never lost a tooth. A person of great order and religious zeal, he was extremely honest and fair-minded in his dealings with mankind. It was an unsubstantiated family legend that, while an itinerant preacher, John Williams performed a funeral service for Abraham Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, when she passed away.

Part of the Great Westward Movement of the American People:

Archibald Williams's ancestors led the typical lives of late 18th Century and early 19th Century Americans. Starting in Virginia and North Carolina and other East Coast states, they moved progressively westward as one generation passed to another. The final move came when Archibald Williams, along with his two brothers, left Montgomery County, Kentucky, and moved further west to Quincy, Illinois, and the surrounding area.

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CHAPTER 2

EARLY LIFE

Archibald Williams was born in Montgomery County, Kentucky, on June 10, 1801. Montgomery County, Kentucky, is located about 30 miles east of Lexington, Kentucky, in the northeastern part of the state. The county seat of Montgomery County is Mount Sterling.

Archibald Williams was the seventh of twelve children of John Williams and Amelia Gill Williams. His father and mother had moved to Kentucky immediately following their marriage on November 15, 1787, at her home in Franklin County, North Carolina.

Archibald Williams grew up in Kentucky and was self-educated. He was described as being born with “moderate advantages but natural fondness for study.”² He tried manual labor and taught school for a time in his youth. Although a Kentuckian, in 1828 he was admitted to the bar in the neighboring state of Tennessee.

One account described Archibald Williams’s childhood and youth this way:

“Having received from his parents the first rudiments of an education, he was thrown upon his own resources early in life. He first engaged in manual labor, but being of a studious disposition, improved all his opportunities for self-cultivation, and finally turned his attention to teaching. His fondness for study caused him to select the law as his profession, and his position as a lawyer in after years showed the correctness of his selection.”³

In 1829, Archibald Williams moved from Kentucky to Quincy, Illinois, a small town in western Illinois on the east bank of the Mississippi River. Many years later, in 1890, the *Quincy (Illinois) Whig* reported that Archibald Williams had traveled from Kentucky to Quincy by riverboat,

² Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois* (Chicago, IL: 1901), p. 590. William H. Collins and Cicero F. Perry, *Past and Present of the City of Quincy and Adams County, Illinois* (Chicago, 1905), p. 272.

³ *History of Adams County*, p. 415.

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traveling down the Ohio River to its juncture with the Mississippi River, and then up the Mississippi River to Quincy.

As a result of bad weather, Archibald Williams had to interrupt his journey from Kentucky to Illinois and spend the winter months in Saint Genevieve, Missouri, south of Saint Louis, Missouri. It also was reported that Archibald Williams traveled with a group of people, which included Henry Kemp and possibly his sister, Nancy Kemp. Archibald Williams and Nancy Kemp married on July 28, 1831, in Quincy.⁴

Archibald Williams set up a law practice in Quincy, Illinois. For more than three decades he was one of Illinois's leading attorneys and politicians.

QUINCY, ILLINOIS:

At the time Archibald Williams arrived in Quincy, the town was only four years old, having been staked and platted by the Adams County commissioners in 1825. The commissioners had designated Quincy as the Adams County seat, so the Adams County Court House was located there.

Adams County was named for John Quincy Adams, the president of the United States from 1825 to 1829. The hometown of President John Quincy Adams was Quincy, Massachusetts.

By the middle 1830s, Quincy, Illinois, had become the largest town in the general area between the Illinois River and the Mississippi River. Quincy's major asset was its fine steamboat harbor, and it thrived on the steamboat trade on the Mississippi River. It became a small industrial center.

In 1829 and the early 1830s, Quincy was the perfect spot for a young lawyer, Archibald Williams, to ply his trade in newly developing western Illinois.

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE:

Archibald Williams did not move from Kentucky to Illinois by himself. A number of his brothers and sisters made the move at the same

⁴ "The Passing of a Pioneer," *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, October 21, 1900, p. 5. Also see "The Kemp Descent," in James R. Williams, "Williams Family History and Genealogy," unpublished family history, March 1, 1964, no page numbers.

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time or close to the same time he did. An older brother, John A. Williams, moved to Quincy, Illinois, and lived there until his death in 1845. A younger brother, Robert Rial Williams, moved to Quincy, was licensed to practice law, and was Archibald Williams's law partner until Robert died in 1841. Another older brother, Wesley Williams, settled in the Illinois county just to the north of Adams County – Hancock County – where he held a number of local political offices.

Two of Archibald Williams's older sisters, both married, also appear to have moved from Kentucky and settled, at least for part of their adult lives, in Quincy or Adams County Illinois. One was Sarah Jones Williams Steel, who married a second time and became Sarah Jones Williams Honey. The other was Amelia Williams Thompson.

A third sister, also married, was Ann G. Williams Manier. She lived for a while in Hancock County, Illinois, where Wesley Williams had settled. Archibald Williams thus had plenty of family members living in the immediate vicinity when he began his new life and legal career in Quincy, Illinois.

On July 28, 1831, Archibald Williams married Nancy Kemp in Quincy, Illinois. She was born April 8, 1815, and was living on the Kemp farm near Quincy. Her family was said to have originated from near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She was the daughter of Charles Kemp and Martha Hamilton Kemp, who were living in Kentucky when Nancy Kemp was born. Her father having died, Nancy Kemp possibly emigrated from Kentucky to the Quincy area of Illinois with her mother and brother in the same traveling party in which Archibald Williams made his move to Quincy.

Archibald Williams and Nancy Kemp Williams were the parents of nine children, but only five lived to maturity. They were John Hamilton Williams, Almira Jane Williams, Archibald Llewellyn Williams, Henry Clay Williams, and Nancy Williams.

THE BLACK HAWK WAR:

Archibald Williams was a volunteer in the Black Hawk War in 1832. The war started one year after Archibald Williams's marriage to Nancy Kemp.

Chief Black Hawk, the war leader of the Sauk and Fox tribes, crossed the Mississippi River from Iowa into northern Illinois and began raiding

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farms and villages, killing and scalping men and, at times, capturing and imprisoning young women. Male volunteers were sought in Illinois to form a militia to support regular U.S. Army troops in their efforts to stop Black Hawk and his raiding bands.

If Archibald Williams's experiences in the Black Hawk War were anything like those of most of the volunteer soldiers, he spent his time tramping around northern Illinois in a fruitless attempt to find Black Hawk and bring him to justice. Typical of Native American warriors, Black Hawk and his braves were elusive, choosing to ambush pursuers and disappear rather than fight in open battle.⁵

Archibald Williams's lifelong friend, Orville Hickman Browning, served with Williams in the Black Hawk War. Browning's account of his experiences in the war gave a pretty good picture of what Archibald Williams probably encountered in that conflict. A biography of Browning noted:

“On April 22 [1832] the militia commander of Adams County [the county seat is Quincy, Illinois] received an order from Governor John Reynolds to raise a company of 50 mounted men... The mounted volunteers, among who were John Wood [first settler of Quincy, Illinois], Archibald Williams and Browning, elected William G. Flood their company captain. Each man furnished his own arms, equipment, and horse... Leaving Quincy on April 25, the Adams County contingent encamped the next day on the bank of Crooked Creek eleven miles from Rushville, [Illinois].”

That would have been a horseback ride due east from Quincy of about 50 miles. U.S. Highway 24 later followed the same route.

In a record he kept of his Black Hawk War experience, Orville Browning described the campsite at Crooked Creek this way:

“Warm and sultry. Encampment much infested with rattlesnakes. Killed several. At 8 o'clock commenced raining and continued raining without intermission during the night. Had no tents. Could not sleep. Stood in mud ankle-deep till day.”

⁵ The typical experiences of volunteer soldiers in the Black Hawk War were described in Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years - One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 29-32.

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By May 1, 1832, the Quincy contingent had been joined by other Illinois volunteers. They mounted up and rode northwest 75 miles to a point near Oquawka, Illinois, where the Henderson River flows into the Mississippi River. The Henderson was swollen by the spring runoff, so the troops had to fell trees to make bridges across the raging waters. Their horses had to swim across the river. Once again Orville Browning's diary gave a very negative account of the situation:

“Provisions scarce. Hogs shot by the soldiers. Supplies brought up Mississippi River by steamboat William Wallace. No guard placed out at night.”

The final result of these challenging military experiences was that Orville Browning, after a little more than a month of service, mustered out of the Adams County militia on May 28, 1832, and returned to his Quincy home. By that time his military endeavors had taken him 250 miles away from Quincy.⁶

It is not known whether Archibald Williams ended his military service in the Black Hawk War at the same time Orville H. Browning did.

As the war progressed, the regular Army took over most of the fighting and many of the volunteer militiamen, including Archibald Williams, were mustered out of service. The Army and the remaining militiamen eventually figured out how to outmaneuver Black Hawk and captured him, thereby ending the war.

It should be noted that Colonel Zachary Taylor was one of the major U.S. Army field commanders in the Black Hawk War. His political fortunes and those of Archibald Williams would intersect at a future date.

A FRONTIER LAWYER:

The land area between the Illinois River and the Mississippi River, which included Quincy, Illinois, was known as the Military Tract. It was called that because 17,000 tracts of land within it were awarded to U.S. Army veterans who had served voluntarily in the War of 1812.

⁶ Orville H. Browning's experiences in the Black Hawk War, and the quotes from Browning, are found in Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 6-8.

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Few of the veterans ever actually occupied the land. The tracts were sold, and often resold, to eastern land speculators. In the meantime, the state of Illinois gave “tax titles” to any of the tracts on which third parties paid overdue back taxes. To further complicate the situation, many residents on the tracts were squatters who could argue for title through simple possession.

The result was a fertile field for lawyers in large numbers of court cases involving conflicting land claims. Most of these cases were tried by judges and lawyers who “rode circuit” from one county seat to another in the Military Tract. The lawyers would go looking for new clients the minute they rode into the county seat in the course of riding the circuit.

Archibald Williams and Orville H. Browning often rode circuit together. More frequently than not, they would be on opposite sides of various land-claim cases. Archibald Williams was likely to represent the claims of the War of 1812 veterans or the land speculators to whom they had sold their claims. Browning often opposed Williams, making the case for those who had gained title by paying back taxes or squatting. In 1839, an Illinois law strengthened the case for the taxpayers, but there remained plenty of opportunity for disputed land claims and the resulting lawyers’ fees.

Browning’s biographer described Archibald Williams and Orville Browning “riding circuit” this way:

“Williams and Browning traveled the circuit together and enjoyed that comradeship which was characteristic of western lawyers. They carried [one or two law books] in their saddlebags, and this was generally their [law] library. Since they had little opportunity for preparation or investigation of the facts beforehand, they relied upon their ingenuity. A case was entered without preliminary study, and principles of law, remembered from reading fragments of Coke or Blackstone, were applied on the spot. Shrewdness, common sense, and eloquence were more useful than scholarly brilliance.”⁷

Riding circuit around northwestern Illinois as a young lawyer was an important step in Archibald Williams’s development as a local politician. The week the judges and the lawyers were in the county seat was known as “court week.” People from all over the county would come to the county seat for court week to hear the latest news and listen to the lawyers arguing

⁷ Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln’s Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Bloomington University Press, 1957), p. 8-9.

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in court. Because of their ability to speak well, the attorneys were called “tongue fellows.” In the course of effectively presenting a case, the lawyers were also gaining future clients or earning future votes for election to the state legislature.

EARLY MEMBER OF THE QUINCY, ILLINOIS, BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

The city of Quincy became an incorporated municipality in 1834. In 1835, Archibald Williams was elected one of four Trustees of the city. In the same election, Archibald Williams’s brother, Robert R. Williams, was elected city Treasurer.⁸

By 1835, Archibald Williams and his family were living in a frame house on the side of a hill “about the corner of Second and Kentucky.” In the early years of his law practice in Quincy, he was described as achieving “the highest honors as an attorney” and being accepted as “a splendid citizen of spotless character.”⁹

POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY IN THE EARLY 1830s:

Political parties in the United States in the early 1830s were in a state of transition. The Democratic Party was led by President Andrew Jackson, who had won the White House in the election of 1828. He emphasized the idea that the Democrats were the party of “the common man,” particularly the farmer and the workingman. The Democrats were also the party of the many immigrants coming into the United States at the time, particularly from Ireland.

Opposed to Jackson and the Democrats was a mixed bag that included: 1. Eastern financial and mercantile interests; 2. Mid-western farmers who supported public works projects (called internal improvements at the time) such as roads and canals; and 3. Slave-holding Southern plantation owners. This loosely allied group was known as National Republicans in the early 1830s.

⁸ Collins and Perry, *Past and Present of the City of Quincy*.

⁹ Carl Landrum, “From Quincy’s Past: Archibald Williams, Early Lawyer,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, December 5, 1971.

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What really brought them together was their strong support for Henry Clay, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Kentucky. It was not until the end of the 1830s that these disparate forces united and became known as the Whig Party. Henry Clay, who became the political spokesman for all the states of the Ohio River valley, was the glue that bound together both the National Republicans and the Whigs. “Henry Clay,” a historian of United States political parties noted, was a man for whom “the National Republicans and the Whigs were, at times, literally a personal following

...¹⁰

By 1835, Quincy boasted a Democratic newspaper, the *Quincy Herald*. In 1838, the town gained a Whig newspaper, the *Quincy Whig*. Neither political party gained political dominance in the region. The result, by the late 1830s and early 1840s, was relentless political warfare between the Democrats and their Whig opponents.¹¹

SUPPORTING HENRY CLAY FOR PRESIDENT:

In this tumultuous and competitive political atmosphere, Archibald Williams cast his political fortunes in the early 1830s with Henry Clay and, subsequently, with the Whig Party. One of Archibald Williams’s first actions was to attend a meeting at which the Quincy, Illinois, Bar Association endorsed Henry Clay for the U.S. presidency. The Quincy bar gave three reasons for supporting Clay: 1. Continuation of the Second Bank of the United States. 2. Vigorous prosecution of internal improvements. 3. A suitable tariff to protect domestic industry. These three political programs, known as the American System, were closely associated with Henry Clay.

Archibald Williams was named by the Quincy bar to a committee of ten attorneys who were to correspond with other politically active persons throughout Illinois to promote Henry Clay’s candidacy for U.S. President in 1832.¹²

¹⁰ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2nd edition, p. 153-154.

¹¹ John Tillson, *Quincy Past and Present*, p. 74, 78-79.

¹² *Sangamo Journal*, September 3, 1832, quoted in Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln’s Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 10.

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It was the sort of mundane but necessary political task that Archibald Williams would take on in behalf of Henry Clay, and then the Whig Party, and later on the Republican Party, for the remainder of his life. Archibald Williams might best be described as a “political party leader.” That would be someone who willingly and effectively played many roles in keeping a political party going and helping it win elections.

Whether it was serving on party committees, chairing various party conventions, supporting and speaking in behalf of party candidates for elected office, or even running for and, if elected, holding political office himself – Archibald Williams did it all. He did it for Henry Clay, and then the Whig Party, and then the Republican Party.

CHAPTER 3

TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE – AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Beginning in 1832, Archibald Williams was elected three times to the Illinois state legislature from the Quincy area. He was elected to the state Senate in 1832 and served a four-year term from 1832 to 1836. After a brief period out of the legislature, Archibald Williams was elected to the state House of Representatives in 1837 to complete the term of a member who had departed the state legislature. Then, in 1838, Archibald Williams was elected to a full two-year term in the state House of Representatives and served from 1838 to 1840.¹³

Archibald Williams entered the state legislature in 1832 as a Democrat, but by the time he left the legislature in 1840 he was a Whig.

For most of the years that Archibald Williams was serving in the Illinois state legislature, the Illinois state capital was the city of Vandalia in southern Illinois. One historian described Vandalia and the state it governed this way:

“Vandalia was a raw, frontier community, located near the limit of navigation on the Kaskaskia River. Broad stretches of prairie, particularly in the center and northern part of the state, remained unbroken, and the modest state population of perhaps 375,000 was largely concentrated in the southern counties... [Vandalia was] the log-cabin capital of the state.”¹⁴

From 1832 to 1836, while Williams was a state Senator, the state legislature met in a small building, which cost \$15,000 to build, in downtown Vandalia.

From 1837 to 1839, when Williams was in the state House of Representatives, the state legislature met in a new and larger building that

¹³ “County Officers,” *Past and Present of Adams County*, pp. 314-315. See also “Members of the General Assembly – 1818-1869,” *Illinois Fact Book and Historical Almanac – 1673-1968*.

¹⁴ Robert M. Sutton, “Illinois’ Year of Decision, 1837,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Spring 1965, p. 35, 49.

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became known in later years as the “Old State House.” In 1839, however, during Archibald Williams’s final year as a state Representative, the state capital was moved to Springfield, Illinois, largely as a result of the efforts of Abraham Lincoln.

At the time Archibald Williams was serving in the state legislature, legislators received a per diem of \$4 per day plus free ink, quill pens, and stationery.¹⁵

A REPORT TO THE ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATURE:

On February 13, 1833, early in his first term as an Illinois state Senator, Archibald Williams presented a report to the Illinois state legislature on behalf of the Committee on Seminary, School Lands and Education. The report was in response to a resolution requesting the committee to comment on “the expediency of a uniform system of schools in this State, and also into the expediency of distributing the School Fund, equitably among the several counties of this State.”¹⁶

The report began by noting that the state of Illinois was too new and unsettled to adopt anything as sophisticated as a statewide uniform system of schools. The report said: “The newness of the country, so recently redeemed from the wilderness, the sparseness of the population, and the wide extent of prairies, would render any attempt at a perfect [statewide] system ... entirely visionary and impractical.”

The report argued that the establishment of schools should best be left mainly to the local population. Schools develop “in proportion to the advancement of population,” the report explained. Illinois would be best off if the State would “adapt our system to such schools as may be put in operation by the people themselves.”

¹⁵ Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 38.

¹⁶ “General Assembly of the State of Illinois, In Senate – February 13, 1833, Mr. Archibald Williams, from the Committee on Seminary, School Lands and Education, Report,” Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois, document 117429. For the complete report, see Appendix B.

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The report then took up the question of the equitable distribution of the Illinois state School Fund. One method proposed was to distribute the state money to counties on the basis of population. A second method presented was to distribute equal amounts of money to each county.

Both proposals were discarded by Archibald Williams's committee report. As for the first proposal, by "adopting the principle of population," the report said, "the present densely settled counties of the State, would receive a very large dividend, whilst the new and thinly inhabited counties, would be entitled to a very small share."

The report then made short shrift of the second proposal. "Adhering to the division according to counties," it argued, "Sangamon and Morgan [counties], containing about four thousand three hundred children, would be allowed no more than the county of Hancock, containing only about three hundred."

In conclusion, the report recommended that the state School Fund be deposited in the State Treasury, and that only the interest earned by the fund, and not the principal, be distributed annually directly to the schools and not to the counties. Each school was to receive money apportioned according to the number of students in the school and the number of days taught each school year.

Archibald Williams presented this report to the Illinois state legislature when he was only a novice legislator, serving in his first session as a newly-elected state Senator. The report's minimalist approach, turning away from a uniform statewide system of schools and distributing funds to existing schools on the basis of students in class and days taught, was appropriate for a newly developing frontier state.

State legislators in 2016 still were familiar with the two problems that Archibald Williams, in his committee report, was trying to deal with. State governments in 2016 continued to argue over whether school systems should be uniform, which means mainly under state control, or should be left mainly to local governments such as counties, cities, or special school districts. In the same way, state governments in 2016 struggled with the proper distribution of state school funds, customarily adopting a complex formula to find the proper balance between the equal distribution of funds to school systems or the handing out of funds according to population.

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SERVED WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

It was while serving in the state legislature in Vandalia that Archibald Williams made the acquaintance of and became close friends with Abraham Lincoln, who was representing the Springfield area. Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams served together in the Illinois state legislature from 1834 to 1836 and, after a brief period that Archibald Williams was absent, from 1837 to 1840.¹⁷

The two men had much in common. Neither had been to college or university. They were both lawyers, and both had qualified to practice law without going to law school. They each had nourished their legal careers by “riding circuit” from one county seat to another with fellow lawyers and judges. And both Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln had served as volunteers in the Black Hawk War, although not together in the same unit.

A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln once were described as “sitting next to each other in the southeast corner of the statehouse in Vandalia.” It was further stated: “Lincoln did not hesitate to consult Williams at all times, and the two men were often associated in legal work.”¹⁸

Williams was the senior of the two men. Archibald Williams left the legislature before Lincoln did, but Williams often returned to the legislative halls and was seen conferring with Lincoln.

There is good historical record that Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams were close friends and that Lincoln admired Archibald Williams:

Lincoln once remarked that listening to Archibald Williams would “be a gratification to any man to hear him tear in tatters the new democracy.”¹⁹

¹⁷ For a full description of Archibald Williams’s and Abraham Lincoln’s service together in the Illinois state legislature, and the state capitol buildings involved, see Appendix A.

¹⁸ Carl Landrum, “From Quincy’s past: Archibald Williams, early lawyer,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, December 5, 1971.

¹⁹ Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, Volume I, p. 111.

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Another time Lincoln said that Archibald Williams was “the strongest minded and clearest-headed man he ever saw.”²⁰

Henry C. Whitney, an early Illinois lawyer, wrote that Archibald Williams was “one of Lincoln’s most cherished friends, and a man of no possible humor himself when I knew him.”

Whitney also noted: “Lincoln pronounced [Archibald Williams] to be the most natural and most learned lawyer he ever knew.”²¹

And, Whitney claimed, “Archie Williams” was one of the “men that [Lincoln] believed in strongly.”²²

A 20th Century historian wrote: “Lincoln was fond of his [Illinois] House [of Representatives] colleague Archibald Williams of Adams County.”²³

Others endorsed Abraham Lincoln’s high opinion of Archibald Williams. For instance, John McAuley Palmer recollected that Williams “became known as profoundly skilled in the peculiar litigation of what was then known as the ‘Military Tract’ in western Illinois.”²⁴

It is clear from a number of historical quotes that Archibald Williams’s close friends and colleagues, including Abraham Lincoln, called him affectionately by the nickname “Archie.”

²⁰ Usher F. Linder, *Reminiscences of the Early Bench and Bar of Illinois*, p. 239. John McAuley Palmer, *Bench and Bar of Illinois* (Chicago, 1899), Volume 1, p. 183.

²¹ Henry Clay Whitney, *Life on the Circuit with Lincoln*, p. 197.

²² Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editors, *Herndon’s Informant*, p. 643 (letter from Henry C. Whitney to William H. Herndon, September 17, 1887).

²³ Paul Simon, *Lincoln’s Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 313.

²⁴ John McAuley Palmer, *The Bench and Bar of Illinois* (Chicago, 1899), p. 2 (no volume number cited).

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APPEARANCE AND MANNER SIMILAR TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

Williams shared with Abraham Lincoln a rumpled manner of dress and a biting wit. Carl Sandburg, Lincoln's best-known biographer, described Archibald Williams this way:

“Of Archibald Williams, Lincoln was to see more. They were tall and angular, alike in homely looks and humor. Williams clothes were so careless that once a hotel clerk, seeing him loaf in a chair, begged pardon and asked, ‘Are you a guest of this hotel?’ and Williams in a cool snarl, ‘Hell, no! I am one of its victims, paying five dollars a day!’”²⁵

Archibald Williams was reputed to be as unattractive in appearance as Abraham Lincoln. A fellow Illinois attorney, Usher Linder, was acquainted with both men and described them this way:

“[Williams was] as angular and ungainly in his form as Mr. Lincoln himself and for homeliness of face and feature surpassed Mr. Lincoln. I think I never saw but one man uglier than Archie, and that was Patrick H. Darbey, of Kentucky, also a very great lawyer.”²⁶

Observers who saw Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams conferring at the state legislature would often say: “Who in the hell are those two ugly men?”²⁷

In 1837 an Illinois newspaper linked Archibald Williams to Abraham Lincoln in this manner:

“[Archibald] Williams of Adams [County] presents no very beautiful frontispiece – but is man of fine talents and sound judgment. He is one of the main stays of the liberal party in the House... There are also many of excellent sense in this body but awkward and ungraceful in debate. Among this number [is Abraham] Lincoln of Sangamon [County].”²⁸

²⁵ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years – One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 51-52.

²⁶ Usher F. Linder, *Reminiscences of the Early Bench and Bar of Illinois*, p. 239.

²⁷ Jim Barry, Internet – LincolnDouglasQuincyDebate.com

²⁸ *North Western Gazette and Galena Advertiser*, August 5, 1837.

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Archibald Williams's bizarre appearance was overcome by his speaking skills. One historian, writing in the 1950s, noted:

“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 court and on the [political] stump, was reasoned and logical – not the spread-eagle oratory of so many of his contemporaries.”²⁹

Another historian, writing in the 1920s, added the word “emaciated” to the general description of Archibald Williams. He wrote:

“Archibald Williams ... [was] a good reasoner rather than a brilliant orator, eccentric in manner and dress, of a striking and emaciated figure.”³⁰

Although viewed as highly moral in his personal behavior, Archibald Williams did not participate in organized religion. According to the *United States Biographical Dictionary*, Illinois Volume, 1876, Archibald Williams was “a member of no church, his religion was a religion of humanity.”³¹ Another account reported: “...nor was he even the member of any church.”³²

CANDIDATE FOR U.S. SENATOR IN 1836:

In 1836, Archibald Williams became one of five candidates for U.S. Senator from Illinois. At that time, members of the U.S. Senate were selected by a vote of both houses of the state legislature rather than a vote of

²⁹ Norma Lorene Johnston, “Lincoln’s Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans,” Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 3.

³⁰ Theodore C. Pease, “Introduction,” Theodore Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. xii.

³¹ “Hon. Archibald Williams, Quincy,” in *United States Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery* (Chicago, American Biographical Publishing Company, 1876), Illinois Volume, p. 152.

³² George C. Bates, “The Bench and Bar of the Northwest: The Hon. Archibald Williams,” *The Chicagoan*, November 15, 1868, typewritten copy in Archibald Williams File, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, hand-numbered page 84.

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the people. The personal characteristics of the candidates were considered more important than their party affiliation.

“[Abraham] Lincoln voted on all three ballots for Archibald Williams of Quincy, tall and homely. Some thought he looked like Lincoln. A former member of the state Senate, he and Lincoln had become close friends. At this time he was a Democrat, but not a ‘whole hog’ Democrat; he showed some ‘Whiggish’ leanings. Williams lost to Richard Young...”³³

Richard Young, the newly elected U.S. Senator from Illinois, celebrated his victory over Archibald Williams with a supper at which “fine wines and liquors flowed” and “dishes and goblets went flying.” Stephen A. Douglas, who would later gain fame in the Lincoln-Douglas debates, “danced on a table to the length of it amid cigar smoke, ribald songs and the laughter and follies of drinking men. [The victor] was pleased next day to pay \$600 for the supper, cigars, drinks and damages.”³⁴

INCORPORATOR OF A TURNPIKE:

In a frontier state such as Illinois in the late 1830s, there were many proposals for incorporating private companies to build canals, railroads, and highway turnpikes. Archibald Williams joined this rush for internal improvements by becoming one of the incorporators of the Quincy, Griggsville, Jacksonville, and Springfield Turnpike Company. When completed, the turnpike would have connected Quincy, Illinois, with Springfield, Illinois, the city that would soon become the new Illinois state capital.³⁵

The route of the proposed highway turnpike turned out to be an important one. The Wabash Railroad built a railroad along most of the route, a line that was operating in the early 2000s as part of the Norfolk Southern railroad. For years U.S. Highway 36 followed the majority of the route. By

³³ Paul Simon, *Lincoln’s Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 54.

³⁴ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years – One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 51.

³⁵ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, July 7, 1838.

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2016 motorists could drive from Quincy to Springfield, via Griggsville and Jacksonville, on Interstate Highways 172 and 72.

OPPOSED ELECTION OF STATE LEGISLATORS TO STATE OFFICES:

In 1838, Archibald Williams was serving his final term in the Illinois state House of Representatives and had been selected chairman of the Finance Committee. On December 18, 1838, Chairman Williams reported for the Whig majority on the committee an evaluation of the Governor's finance message. It is believed that Abraham Lincoln wrote the report.³⁶

On December 20, 1838, Archibald Williams, again in his role as Finance Committee chairman, offered a resolution strongly opposing "the practice of the General Assembly [state legislature] of electing members of their own body to fill State offices." As one would expect, Williams's resolution met with strong opposition, but with Abraham Lincoln's support the resolution was adopted with some changes.³⁷

WHIG POLITICS IN THE STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

At the end of the 1830s, Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln worked together in behalf of the Whig Party in the Illinois state House of Representatives. In February of 1839, Williams and Lincoln were appointed by a caucus of Whig members of the House to a committee of nine Whigs. Their assigned task was to draft an address to the people of Illinois "setting forth our opposition to the present administration."³⁸

³⁶ Earl Schenck Myers, Ed., *Lincoln Day by Day – A Chronology, 1809-1865* (Dayton, OH: Morningside, 1991), Volume 1, p. 99.

³⁷ Quoted from the *Alton Telegraph*, December 29, 1838, as found in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume 1, p. 124-125.

³⁸ Quoted from the *Alton Telegraph*, December 29, 1838, as found in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume 1, p. 146.

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It is assumed the word “administration” referred to the then Democratic Party administration in Washington, D.C., led by U.S. President Martin Van Buren, who had been elected to succeed Andrew Jackson as President in 1836. However, it could have referred to the “administration” of the current governor of Illinois.

WITNESSED ABRAHAM LINCOLN’S ADMISSION TO PRACTICE IN THE U.S. COURTS:

On December 3, 1839, Abraham Lincoln was admitted to practice law before the United States Circuit Court. Presiding over the ceremony was Judge Nathaniel Pope, the United State District Court Judge for Illinois. A local newspaper in Quincy, Illinois, noted that Archibald Williams, a resident of Quincy, was present at the ceremony.³⁹

REFERRED CONTESTED ELECTION IN PIKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS, TO A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:

The Illinois state legislature, mainly at the urging of Abraham Lincoln, a resident of Springfield, Illinois, voted to move the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. It was argued that Springfield was closer to the geographical center of the state of Illinois than Vandalia, which was in southern Illinois.

When the state legislature first met in Springfield, in December of 1839, the new state capitol building had not been built yet. The House of Representatives met at the Second Presbyterian Church. The church was newly constructed and was one of the largest church buildings in central and northern Illinois. It had not yet been utilized as a church.

At the meeting of December 9, 1839, Archibald Williams referred a contested election in Pike County, Illinois, to be reviewed by an election committee. The review turned out beneficially for Archibald Williams and

³⁹ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, December 14, 1839, quoted in Earl Schenck Myers, Ed., *Lincoln Day by Day – A Chronology, 1809-1865* (Dayton, OH: Morningside, 1991).

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the Whig Party. The legislature eventually voted to seat the Whig candidate from Pike County.⁴⁰

INTRODUCED A RESOLUTION ON PUBLIC LANDS:

Also at the 1839-1840 session of the Illinois House of Representatives, Archibald Williams introduced a resolution that urged the United States Government to turn over money gained from the sale of public lands to the states. Abraham Lincoln had been a strong supporter of that general idea. The resolution was forwarded to the House Finance Committee, of which Lincoln was a member.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Earl Schenck Myers, Ed., *Lincoln Day by Day – A Chronology, 1809-1865* (Dayton, OH: Morningside, 1991), Volume 1, p. 124.

⁴¹ Paul Simon, *Lincoln's Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 181.

CHAPTER 4

AN ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS LETTER TO HENRY ASBURY

On December 27, 1839, Archibald Williams wrote a letter to Henry Asbury, a close friend and fellow lawyer in Quincy, Illinois. Archibald Williams was writing from Springfield, Illinois, where he was attending a session of the Illinois state legislature. The capital of Illinois had been moved from Vandalia to Springfield earlier in 1839. The cancellation date on the letter was December 31, 1839.⁴²

In the letter, Archibald Williams gave Henry Asbury a very upbeat report on Illinois politics and government from a Whig Party point of view.

Williams began by noting: “The Whigs are in good cheer here and the Locos in great dismay.” The comment spoke to the fact that there were a number of political parties contesting for control of the Illinois legislature at that time. One was the Locos, or Locofocos. Originally called the Equal Rights Party in New York City, the Locofocos mainly represented the working classes and strongly opposed money manipulations by major banks.⁴³ The Locos were the political opposite of the Whigs, who favored propertied interests, emerging business and industry, and slave-holding Southern plantation owners. Interestingly, the letter does not mention the Jacksonian Democrats, who were the Whig Party’s major political opponents at that time.

Harrison for President:

The best development for the Whig Party, Archibald Williams explained to Henry Asbury, was the news that William Henry Harrison, a

⁴² Letter, Archibald Williams to Henry Asbury, December 27, 1839, Henry Asbury File, Quincy Historical Society, Quincy, Illinois. See Appendix C for the complete text of the letter.

⁴³ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 141-145.

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military hero in the War of 1812, had been designated the 1840 Whig nominee for President of the United States at a convention in “Harrisburgh.” Williams wrote:

“Then the nomination of the Harrisburgh convention was received here, and the flag of the old Hero has been proudly floating ever since. The nomination is received here with great enthusiasm by the Whigs from all parts of the state. Many prefer Mr. [Henry] Clay, but all concur in the opinion that [William Henry] Harrison is the stronger man of the two.”

Henry Clay was the grand old leader of the Whig Party. Archibald Williams clearly regretted abandoning Clay for General Harrison, but the desire to win the presidency overwhelmed sentiment. Williams concluded by stating that many Whig’s felt sorry for Clay “and think he has been badly treated.”

Archibald Williams next produced two further tidbits of good news for the Whig Party. The first was that the legislature had just voted, after a contested election, to “seat the Whig member from Pike [County].” Then, “as if to drive them [the Whigs’ political opponents] into despair, the mail brought us the glorious news that the Whigs had elected Mr. Hunter of Virginia (a Whig) speaker ... in Congress.”

No Judgeship for Henry Asbury:

Archibald Williams then moved on to a subject that was probably the main purpose of his letter. Henry Asbury had applied for a judgeship. Williams informed Asbury that a different person had received the judicial appointment. In fact, Henry Asbury’s friends in the Whig Party had not even placed his name in nomination. Archibald Williams explained:

“Your letter was submitted to Messrs. Browning and Johnston [prominent Whig friends of Archibald Williams]. We all concurred in the opinion that it would not be prudent to put you in nomination. Organized as the parties then were, it was out of the question to elect a Whig.”

Archibald Williams then tried to sooth Henry Asbury’s feelings about being rejected for the judgeship:

“What is inevitable must be submitted to, and so far as concerns you personally, we think there is no cause of regret, although we would not do you the injustice to compare you to the loafers that have heretofore and more – held that office. Yet I must be frank enough to own that in my opinion it is

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better for you to have a little more experience in your profession before you put on the judicial exercise.”

Internal Improvements:

The letter to Henry Asbury then moved to internal improvements, a subject which longtime received the avid support of Henry Clay, Archibald Williams, and the Whig Party.

In the mid-1830s, the largely undeveloped state of Illinois embarked on an ambitious program of building state-owned and financed canals, roads, and railroads. The state borrowed huge sums of money to pay for this bold experiment in government-owned transportation, with the unpleasant result that the credit worthiness of the state was being pushed to the breaking point.

At the time of Archibald Williams’s letter to Henry Asbury, it was becoming obvious that this great Illinois program for internal improvements was going to be a financial failure. Archibald Williams hinted to Henry Asbury that the program was running into opposition and possibly facing some delay. Williams wrote:

“It is now near the end of the third week of the session, and there has been no definite action upon the subject of internal (or more properly infernal) improvement. All admit and seem anxious that something should be done. Several propositions have been submitted in the form of resolutions, some to repeal the law, some to classify, some to suspend for the present. My opinion is that the whole will be suspended until March 1841.”

Archibald Williams’s prediction proved to be correct, and then some. Due to the colossal debt problems, the Illinois program of socialized transportation improvements was abandoned. Most of the proposed canals, roads, and railroad lines were built eventually, but by private enterprise rather than the State of Illinois.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ For a full discussion of the Illinois program of internal improvements, see Robert M. Sutton, “Illinois’ Year of Decision,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Spring 1965, p. 36-40.

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Impeaching a Judge:

The next subject in the Archibald Williams letter to Henry Asbury concerned a proposal to impeach a sitting judge for behavioral problems:

“We have a memorial before us to ... impeach Judge Pearsons. It will probably occupy some three weeks of our time. The charges preferred by the memorialists [those bringing the charges] if true ought to send him to a mad house for the balance of his life.”

The Bank of Illinois:

Archibald Williams concluded with a description of the financial failure of the Bank of Illinois, an event which appeared to be a political disaster for the Governor of Illinois:

“His excellency the governor has favored us with a supplement to his message, the object and purpose of which was to inform us that he was mistaken when he informed us that the Bank of Illinois had not suspended specie payment. The State Bank has forfeited its charter and is preparing to close their business. It has thrown the Govies [governor’s supporters] into great consternation, and their great desire now is to have the Bank resuscitated. The only difficulty is they don’t like by their actions to contradict all their hypocritical cant about soulless corporations ... But they will have to do it. They dare not adjourn without doing so.”

The letter closed with “your friend” and was signed “Archibald Williams.”

The Asbury Letter and Archibald Williams:

The December 27, 1839, letter from Archibald Williams to Henry Asbury told much about its author. Although he attended neither college nor law school, Archibald Williams demonstrated in the letter his more than adequate skills in writing the English language. His writing flowed along easily, was clear and understandable, and included complex words such as “enthusiasm,” “infernal,” “forfeited,” and “hypocritical.”

There was even a touch of sarcasm in Archibald Williams’s writing. He referred to internal improvements as “infernal improvements.” He noted an impeached judge needed to be sent “to a mad house for the balance of his

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life.” He wrote that saving the Bank of Illinois would contradict his political opponents’ “hypocritical cant about soulless corporations.”

Archibald Williams wrote the letter near the end of an eight-year career in the Illinois state legislature. He clearly had become an active and committed member of the Whig Party. He was politically sophisticated enough to abandon his old political idol, Henry Clay, and support General William Henry Harrison, who had the best chance of winning the presidency for the Whigs. That proved to be a wise decision for Archibald Williams, because General Harrison won the 1840 presidential election and the Whig Party occupied the White House for the following four years.

The letter also showed that Archibald Williams had become thoroughly engrossed in the work of the state legislature. A variety of subjects, from contested elections to internal improvements to judicial impeachments to a failing state bank, received his full attention and informed commentary.

One of Archibald Williams’s colleagues in the state legislature, in a letter to his wife, noted: “We have ten lawyers who take up more time than all the other members.” Included on the list were the names of Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Paul Simon, *Lincoln’s Preparation for Greatness: The Illinois Legislative Years* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 208.

CHAPTER 5

ACTIVE IN THE WHIG PARTY

Archibald Williams had a number of well-known law partners over the years. One was Andrew Johnston, a native of Richmond, Virginia. Johnston arrived in Quincy in 1837. Similar to Archibald Williams, Johnston knew Abraham Lincoln. Johnston and Lincoln shared a deep interest in poetry and often traded poems by mail.

Johnston was Williams's law partner from 1841 to 1847. They were both members of and active participants in the Whig Party. The partnership ended in December of 1847 when Johnston returned to his hometown of Richmond. It was said that the partnership of Williams and Johnston "ranked with the best lawyers in the state."⁴⁶

Through Andrew Johnston, Archibald Williams may have met George Pickett, who some two decades later would lead the famous Pickett's Charge for the Confederate cause at the Battle of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. George Pickett was the nephew of Andrew Johnston. Pickett lived with Johnston for two years in Quincy, in 1841 and 1842, while seeking admission to the United States Military Academy at West Point.

A man elected on the Whig ticket, John Tyler, was President of the United States at the time. It is likely that George Pickett received his appointment to West Point because of Andrew Johnston's loyal service to the Whig cause.⁴⁷

Because Andrew Johnston and Archibald Williams were law partners when George Pickett was residing in Quincy, it is reasonable to assume that Archibald Williams met young George Pickett on a number of occasions.

⁴⁶ Lorenzo Bull, Quincy (Illinois) banker, quoted in Collins and Perry, *Past and Present of the City of Quincy*, p. 222-223.

⁴⁷ Norma Lorene Johnston, "Lincoln's Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans," Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 15, Footnote 14.

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CANDIDATE FOR U.S. SENATOR IN 1842:

Archibald Williams became a candidate for the U.S. Senate from Illinois a second time in 1842. As in 1836, the winner was determined by a vote of the two houses of the Illinois state legislature. Also as in 1836, there were two Democratic candidates in the race, and one of them was the same Stephen A. Douglas who had so enthusiastically celebrated Archibald Williams's defeat in the U.S. Senate race in 1836.

Stephen A. Douglas lost out in 1842, however, when the Democratic Party caucus in the Illinois state legislature designated Democrat Sidney Breese as the official Democratic Party candidate. Breese then defeated Archibald Williams, the Whig candidate, to win the U.S. Senate seat for the Democrats. This second time around, Abraham Lincoln could not cast his vote for Archibald Williams because Lincoln was no longer in the state legislature.

Although Archibald Williams was not elected to the U.S. Senate from Illinois in either 1836 or 1842, the fact that he was twice a candidate for such a major office shows the high prestige and esteem he had earned in Illinois at those times.

WHIG PARTY POLITICAL CONVENTIONS IN ILLINOIS

In recognition of his high standing in the Whig Party in Illinois, Archibald Williams was frequently chosen by his fellow delegates to be chairman of the Whig Party state convention.

In 1843, Archibald Williams presided over the Whig Party state convention meeting in Springfield, Illinois. At that convention, Abraham Lincoln was elected a Whig Party presidential elector for the 1844 presidential election. In the 1844 election, the Whig Party candidate for President of the United States was defeated by Democrat James K. Polk of Tennessee.

On or about June 19, 1844, Archibald Williams was elected President of a statewide Whig Party political convention in Peoria, Illinois. Abraham Lincoln came to that convention and, in line with the Whig Party view on

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the subject, gave a speech in support of the United States charging higher tariffs on imported goods.⁴⁸

AFRICAN COLONIZATION OF FREED SLAVES:

In the early 1840s and through the early 1850s, Archibald Williams and his fellow Whigs in Illinois – including Abraham Lincoln and Orville Browning – supported solving the slavery issue by offering freed slaves the opportunity to return to Africa. The program was to be completely voluntary. Slaveholders would not be forced to free their slaves, and the emancipated slaves would not be compelled to leave the United States for Africa. Those who supported this idea formed what were called “colonization societies.”

On January 3, 1845, Archibald Williams’s close friend, Orville Browning, was selected a vice-president of the Illinois Colonization Society. The major goal was to settle the race issue amicably and without coercion of either slaveholders or freedmen. If the slave owners could be prevailed upon to free their slaves, and if the freedmen would voluntarily go back to Africa, the slavery problem would be solved and the union of North and South would be preserved.⁴⁹

One historian described colonization societies this way:

“The method that these men used was an appeal to reason, not emotion. Unlike the Abolitionists, who exhorted their listeners to exterminate a moral wrong, [the members of colonization societies] had faith in the ability of the people in all sections [of the country] to see that justice must ultimately come out of tedious effort and unforced cooperation.”⁵⁰

The fact that Archibald Williams was a member of a colonization society revealed his views on slavery at the time. He considered human

⁴⁸ “Today in Illinois History,” undated article in an unnamed newspaper, Internet – MrLincolnAndFriends.org (Historical Society of Quincy, Illinois, website).

⁴⁹ *Sangamo Journal*, January 23, 1845, quoted in Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln’s Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 66-67.

⁵⁰ Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln’s Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 67.

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slavery to be wrong, but he acknowledged the reality of Southern slavery and recognized the right of Southern plantation owners to keep their slaves if they wished to. The injustice of holding men and women in bondage in the South would have to be tolerated to prevent the Southern states from withdrawing from the United States.

To the members of colonization societies, only an un-coerced solution, such as voluntary African colonization of slaves who had been freed willingly by their owners, could solve the slavery problem in an acceptable way that would preserve the Union.

THE FIRST LINCOLN LETTER TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

On March 1, 1845, Abraham Lincoln wrote to Archibald Williams, who was in Quincy, Illinois, to update him on how a number of Williams's cases were faring before the Illinois Supreme Court. The court met in Springfield, Illinois, where Lincoln made his home.

The letter is very businesslike and lawyerly. It should be noted that Abraham Lincoln addressed Archibald Williams as "Friend Williams."⁵¹

Springfield
March 1, 1845

Friend Williams:

The supreme court adjourned this morning for the term. Your cases of Reinhardt vs. Schuyler, [Bruen] vs. Schuyler, Dickhut vs. Dunell, and Sullivan vs. Andrews are continued. Hinman vs. Pope I wrote you concerning some time ago. McNutt et al. vs. Bean and Thompson is reversed and remanded.

Fitzpatrick vs. Brady et al. is reversed and remanded with leave to complainant to amend his bill so as to show the real consideration given for the land.

⁵¹ Abraham Lincoln to Archibald Williams, Springfield, Illinois, March 1, 1845, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume I, p. 368.

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[Graves vs. Bruen], the court confirmed, wherefore, in accordance with your directions, I moved to have the case remanded to enable you to take a new trial in the court below. The court allowed the motion; of which I am glad, and I guess you are.

This, I believe, is all as to court business. The canal men have got their measure through the legislature pretty much or quite in the shape they desired. Nothing else now.

Yours, as ever,
A. LINCOLN

The canal mentioned in the last paragraph of Lincoln's letter was the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which was intended to connect the Mississippi River to Lake Michigan at Chicago via the Illinois River.

AN ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE COUNTY SEAT OF ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS:

In the early 1840s, Archibald Williams was hired by the neighboring city of Columbus, Illinois, to argue the case for moving the Adams County seat from Quincy, Illinois, to Columbus. The major reason for moving the county seat to Columbus was that Columbus was located in the geographical center of Adams County, whereas Quincy was located on the far western edge of Adams County on the banks of the Mississippi River.

In 1840, a close friend and political ally of Archibald Williams, Abraham Jonas, moved from Quincy to Columbus in order to better pursue the designation of Columbus as the Adams County seat. The fight turned out to be futile, however, and Jonas moved back to Quincy in 1845. The Adams County seat remained firmly fixed in Quincy, Illinois.⁵²

In 2011, it was estimated that Columbus, Illinois, had a population of 99 persons.

⁵² Bertram Wallace Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1951), p. 222-228. John Tillson, *Quincy Past and Present*, p. 147. *Masonic Trowel*, April 16, 1862, located in Illinois Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. Jim Barry, Internet – LincolnDouglasQuincyDebate.com

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A PUBLISHED ATTORNEY:

Following the December 1845 session of the Illinois Supreme Court, the legal argument of Archibald Williams in a case adjudicated by the Illinois Supreme Court was published. The cover of the legal pamphlet read:

THE ARGUMENT
Of
ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Prepared By Himself
THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS
DECEMBER TERM, 1845

*Lewis Rhinehart, vs.
Robert Schuyler, et al.*

The case concerned an area of law that had become a specialty of Archibald Williams – disputed land claims in the general area of western Illinois.⁵³

MENTIONED IN A LINCOLN LETTER:

On February 24, 1846, Abraham Lincoln wrote a letter to his friend Andrew Johnston in Quincy, Illinois. The letter mainly concerned an ongoing exchange of poetry between the two men. The letter concluded, however, with a favorable reference to Archibald Williams, who was Andrew Johnston’s law partner in Quincy at that time.⁵⁴

⁵³ “The Argument Of Archibald Williams, Esq., in the case of *Lewis Rhinehart vs. Robert Schuyler, et al.*,” found in a bound collection of legal pamphlets, “Arguments in the Supreme Court of Illinois,” Volume I, 1845 to 1870, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵⁴ Abraham Lincoln to Andrew Johnston, Springfield, Illinois, February 24, 1846, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume I, p. 365-367.

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Springfield, Ills.
Feb. 24, 1846

Dear Johnston:

(main body of letter)

Give my respects to Mr. Williams, and have him, together with yourself, to understand, that if there is any thing I can do, in connection with your business in the courts, I shall take pleasure in doing it, upon notice.

Yours forever,
A. LINCOLN

CHAPTER 6

THE MORMON PROBLEM IN ILLINOIS

The Mormon religion, officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith. The bible of the new religion, the Book of Mormon, was written by Smith and published in Palmyra, New York. Although the Mormon religion grew quickly in numbers, it was unpopular with the general public because it argued the Book of Mormon had equal status with both the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Judeo-Christian Bible. The religion also allowed men to have multiple wives.

Because of strong popular opposition, Joseph Smith and his band of Mormon followers were forced to move from place to place. After being driven out of Kirtland, Ohio, they settled in central Missouri. In the winter of 1839, however, Smith and 12,000 Latter-Day Saints were driven out of Missouri and took refuge in Illinois. Many of the Mormons were destitute when they arrived in Illinois, and the citizens of Quincy, Illinois, raised money to buy food and clothing for the Mormons and somewhat relieve their suffering.

Smith gathered the Mormons on the banks of the Mississippi River in Hancock County, Illinois. Hancock County is located just to the north of Adams County, Illinois, and the city of Quincy, Illinois. It was in Hancock County that Joseph Smith founded the city of Nauvoo, and Nauvoo quickly became the new home and headquarters of the Mormon religion.

The Mormons at Nauvoo represented a political problem as well as a religious problem to their Hancock County, Illinois, neighbors. Because the Mormons all tended to cluster together in one place, they threatened to become the electoral majority in any county in which they located. It was the fear that the Mormons would come to dominate Hancock County politically that drove the county's non-Mormon residents to strongly oppose the

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Mormons and try to drive them out of Illinois. “They [the original residents of Hancock County] all shared a fear of Mormon political potential.”⁵⁵

Resentment against Joseph Smith greatly increased in late 1843 when he announced he would run as an independent candidate for President of the United States in the 1844 presidential election. This inflamed both the Democratic Party and the Whig Party against him. It left the Mormons “without political allies of any kind in Illinois.”⁵⁶

On June 27, 1844, anti-Mormon sentiment in western Illinois was at a fever pitch. Both Joseph Smith and his brother, Hyrum Smith, were incarcerated in the jail in the town of Carthage, the county seat of Hancock County. While held at the jail, both Joseph Smith and his brother were shot to death when a group of local militiamen attacked the jail.

The murderers of Joseph and Hyrum Smith were not a gang of rowdies and ruffians. They were armed militia urged on by Hancock County political leaders. It was unknown exactly which men had fired the bullets that killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith, but the names of the men who organized and led the attack on the Carthage jail were known to just about everyone in Hancock County.

THE TRIAL OF THE MURDERERS OF JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH:

Five men were apprehended by authorities and brought to trial in connection with the murder of Joseph Smith. Since the actual killers were unknown, the five were charged with *conspiracy* to commit murder.

Archibald Williams was one of six leading attorneys in western Illinois hired to defend the five men accused of conspiring to murder Joseph Smith. Writing in the 1970s, historian Dallin H. Oaks and attorney Marvin S. Hill described Archibald Williams as one of “the great men of the Illinois

⁵⁵ Marvin S. Hill, “Carthage Conspiracy Reconsidered: A Second Look at the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (summer, 2004), p. 118.

⁵⁶ Marvin S. Hill, “Carthage Conspiracy Reconsidered: A Second Look at the Murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 97, No. 2 (summer, 2004), p. 115.

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bar” and ranked him as such with “Stephen A. Douglas, O. H. Browning, ... and Abraham Lincoln.”⁵⁷

The trial was held in late May of 1845 in the courthouse in Carthage, Illinois. It made sense for Archibald Williams to be hired in the case, because Adams County and Quincy were in the same judicial district with Hancock County and Carthage.

It appears, however, that Archibald Williams was hired mainly for the prestige his name would bring to the defense. Most of the work in the courtroom – questioning and cross-examining witnesses, making the final summation, etc. – was carried out by Orville H. Browning, Archibald Williams’s close friend from Quincy, Illinois.

But Archibald Williams was in Carthage, Illinois, for the trial. It was noted that he was one of the “masters” at “story-telling” and “other merriment” in the evenings and on weekends when the court was not in session.⁵⁸

Orville Browning was an interesting choice for lead defense counsel. Four years earlier Browning had vigorously defended Joseph Smith from being extradited from Illinois to Missouri to face old charges. In his successful defense of Smith, Browning was said to have moved the courtroom to tears with his description of the Mormons wading “through seas of oppression and floods of injustice” as they made their trek from Missouri to Illinois.⁵⁹

The official history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints noted that Archibald Williams joined Orville Browning in 1841 in the successful court defense that prevented Joseph Smith from being extradited from Illinois back to Missouri.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 2.

⁵⁸ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 142.

⁵⁹ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 82.

⁶⁰ B. H. Roberts, *History of the Church* (Latter-day Saints), V. 4, p. 367.

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None of the five men accused of conspiring to murder Joseph Smith was convicted. No Mormons were allowed on the jury, and the courthouse was packed with anti-Mormons ready to free the accused should any of them be convicted. Orville Browning, in his summation to the jury, actually stated that convicting the five men would lead to an armed insurrection. Browning pleaded to the court:

“But let a sentence of conviction be attempted to be carried into execution and the gallows will be a beacon around which to rally a more terrible armed force than you or I have ever seen. It would be the commencement of a more bloody and terrible war than you and I would want to see.”⁶¹

A second trial was scheduled for the same five men for conspiracy to murder Hyrum Smith, Joseph Smith’s brother. That trial was cancelled and the defendants freed when the State of Illinois prosecuting attorney failed to appear in Carthage, Illinois, for the trial.

A PLEA FROM QUINCY, ILLINOIS, TO BRIGHAM YOUNG AND THE MORMONS:

Over the summer of 1845, the anti-Mormon minority in Hancock County, Illinois, continued to harass the Mormon majority. There were many instances of anti-Mormons driving Mormon families off of their farms and then burning their farmhouses and barns. This occurred despite the fact that Mormons had won and continued to occupy important electoral offices, such as county commissioner and county sheriff, in Hancock County.

On September 22, 1845, a meeting was publicized and held in Quincy, Illinois, to attempt to deal with the Mormon problem. Archibald Williams was “called to the chair” and presided over the meeting. “On motion, a committee of six were appointed by the chair to draft and support suitable resolutions for the action of the meeting.”⁶² Archibald Williams did not

⁶¹ Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 182.

⁶² The conduct of this September 22, 1845, meeting was reported in a newspaper article entitled “Public Meeting.” Neither the newspaper nor the year of the meeting were identified. Found in Special Collections, Brigham

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appoint himself to the drafting committee but continued to chair the general meeting.

While the drafting committee was doing its work, notable citizens of Quincy, Illinois, addressed the meeting. Among them were two of Archibald Williams's close friends and political allies – Orville Browning and Abraham Jonas.

When the drafting committee finished its work, the public meeting unanimously adopted resolutions to the following effect:

- Whereas, the presence of the Mormons has created a state of unrest both in Hancock County, Illinois, and in adjoining communities, such as Quincy, Illinois, in Adams County, Illinois. These disturbances have given “just ground of apprehension to the people of the adjacent counties, keeping them in a high state of excitement, and not infrequently requiring their interposition.”
- Whereas, the Mormons “have in some measure signified their willingness to leave the state [of Illinois]...and seek a location elsewhere.”
- Therefore, resolved, that the welfare of the Mormons will be best served “by their removal to some country in which their peculiar organization will not endanger the public peace.”
- If the Mormons do not depart, “they ought, at least, to break up their present organization as a distinct community and amalgamate with the general population of the state [of Illinois].”
- Resolved, that this meeting does not “approve or condemn” the conduct of the Mormons or the anti-Mormons in Hancock County, Illinois.
- Resolved, that “a committee of five [persons] be appointed by the chairman of this meeting” [Archibald Williams] that will travel to Nauvoo, Illinois, and communicate these resolutions to the Mormon leaders there and get their response.
- Resolved, if the Mormons agree to leave Hancock County, Illinois, “within a reasonable time,” the anti-Mormons “will cease all hasty and illegal means to expel them.”

Young University Library. For the complete text of the newspaper report, see Appendix D.

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In his capacity as chairman of the public meeting, Archibald Williams appointed a friend and fellow Quincy, Illinois, lawyer, Henry Asbury, to lead the five person committee that went to Nauvoo, Illinois, to meet with the Mormons and learn their intentions.

The meeting proved to be significant. Brigham Young, who had become the leader of the Mormons following the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, told Henry Asbury and the committee from Quincy that “his people could not promise to leave immediately, but when ‘grass grows and water runs.’”

That statement implied the Mormons would leave Hancock County, Illinois, by the spring or early summer of 1846, some six to ten months in the future. Brigham Young made an important concession to the men from Quincy. The Mormons would be the ones to sell their farms and leave, rather than trying to buy out the “old residents” of Hancock County. The Mormons, Brigham Young said, “would plant no more crops in Nauvoo.”⁶³

Brigham Young’s exact words were:

“It is a mistaken idea that we ‘have proposed to remove in six months’; for that would be so early in the spring that grass might not grow or water run, both of which would be necessary for our removal; but we propose to use our influence to have no more seed-time nor harvest among our people in this county after gathering our present crops.”⁶⁴

Brigham Young kept his promise to the committee from Quincy, Illinois. By August of 1846, the vast majority of the Mormons had departed Hancock County for a new home in the Great Salt Lake Valley in the Rocky Mountains in what would be the future state of Utah.

The stronger and healthier Mormons in good shape to travel, including the leaders, were quick to depart Nauvoo. They left behind many of the poorer and weaker members of their community. When these last

⁶³ “Journal History,” September 23 and 24, 1845, quoted in Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 198.

⁶⁴ David F. Wilcox and Lyman McCarl, *Quincy and Adams County; History and Representative Men* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), p. 206.

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Mormons were driven out of Nauvoo and forced to cross the Mississippi River into Iowa, the people of Quincy, Illinois, immediately sent money, clothes, and food to help ease their plight. “The citizens of Quincy then made large contributions and did, as when the Mormons first came [to Illinois], all they could for their relief.” One of the men from Quincy helping to smooth the way for the departing Mormons was Archibald Williams’s law partner at the time, Andrew Johnston.⁶⁵

Shortly thereafter, the anti-Mormons regained complete electoral and political control of Hancock County, Illinois.

The public meeting on September 22, 1845, in Quincy, Illinois, which was chaired by Archibald Williams, represented a real attempt to treat the Mormons in an even-handed way. It placed blame for the unrest in Hancock County, Illinois, on neither the Mormons nor the anti-Mormons. It promised peace and protection for the Mormons once they would agree to leave. It did not criticize or condemn the Mormons for their religious beliefs.

Most interesting, however, was the resolution calling on the Mormons, if they stayed in Hancock County, to stop organizing themselves politically as a bloc vote and “amalgamate with the general population of the state [of Illinois].” Here was clear recognition that the main opposition to the Mormons in Hancock County, Illinois, was based principally on their big electoral majorities rather than their religious beliefs.

Also of note was the resolution stating that citizens in adjoining counties were as disturbed as those in Hancock County by the presence of the Mormons. That implied that, even if the Mormons bought out the anti-Mormons in Hancock County and thus had the county all to themselves, there would still be a “Mormon problem” for the surrounding counties. This point is thought to have convinced Brigham Young to lead the Mormons out of Hancock County rather than to try to buy out the original non-Mormon residents.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ David F. Wilcox and Lyman McCarl, *Quincy and Adams County; History and Representative Men* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), p. 208-209.

⁶⁶ “Journal History,” September 25, 1845, quoted in Dallin H. Oaks and Marvin S. Hill, *Carthage Conspiracy: The Trial of the Accused Assassins of Joseph Smith* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1975), p. 198.

CHAPTER 7

THE ILLINOIS CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1847

Archibald Williams was elected a Whig delegate to the Illinois state Constitutional Convention of 1847. It is important to note “he was elected in a Democratic district against a Democratic candidate.”⁶⁷ The delegates assembled in the state capital in Springfield, Illinois, on June 7, 1847, and set about writing an improved state constitution. Archibald Williams’s law partner, Jackson Grimshaw, joined him as a delegate to the convention.

The Democratic Party elected a majority of the delegates to the constitutional convention, but there were enough Whigs present to have a major impact. In fact, the Whigs, by breaking away Democratic votes when they needed them, carried every point that mattered to them at the convention and on which the party’s delegates took a unified stand.⁶⁸

Archibald Williams was described as one of three delegates from the Whig Party who led the charge against the majority Democrats. Given that the Whigs had been described as dominating the convention when they wanted to do so, Archibald Williams’s role and leadership must have been very important. Historian Arthur Charles Cole wrote:

“James W. Singleton of Mount Sterling, Archibald Williams of Quincy, and David M. Woodson of Carrollton aggressively upheld the Whig cause against the attacks of various capable Democratic opponents...”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ “Hon. Archibald Williams, Quincy,” in *United States Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery* (Chicago, American Biographical Publishing Company, 1876), Illinois Volume, p. 152.

⁶⁸ Arthur Charles Cole, “Introduction,” in Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. xxix. This description of events at the Illinois state Constitutional Convention of 1847 is taken from Cole’s account.

⁶⁹ Arthur Charles Cole, “Introduction,” in Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. xviii.

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Political party lines were strong at the constitutional convention. Sticking to the fundamental beliefs of their political party, the Whigs championed the rights of property. The Whigs feared the egalitarian ideas of the more radical delegates to the convention – the Locofocos. The Whigs put in strict voting requirements in an effort to limit participation by recent immigrants in Illinois elections. The Whigs also gave the legislature the power to override the governor’s veto by a majority vote rather than a two-thirds vote.

On two major issues, the constitutional convention ducked making a decision and sent the issues to the voters. One issue was whether or not there should be an Illinois state bank. The voters opted for private corporations to operate the banks. The other issue was limiting the immigration of freed slaves from the slave states of the South into the free state of Illinois. The voters supported restrictions on freed former slaves entering the state.

On June 14, 1847, one week after the convention convened, Archibald Williams was appointed to the Committee on the Legislative Department. This appointment made sense, because Archibald Williams had served eight years in the state legislature, both as a state senator and a state representative.⁷⁰

On Friday, July 23, 1847, Archibald Williams gave a major address on the convention floor opposing a requirement that the Illinois Supreme Court hold court at various locations throughout the state.⁷¹ On that same day, Archibald Williams was appointed to a Select Committee of the convention to review the number of judicial circuits that would be created for Illinois.⁷²

Archibald Williams introduced seven amendments for consideration by the constitutional convention and one resolution. An important amendment prohibited banks from circulating their own banknotes in Illinois. The amendment, introduced on Wednesday, August 4, 1847, read:

⁷⁰ Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 65.

⁷¹ Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 501-505.

⁷² Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 513-514.

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“The legislature shall prohibit, under adequate penalties, the circulation of all banknotes in this state; and all contracts founded upon, and payment made in, such notes shall be void.”⁷³

Apparently introducing that amendment impressed Archibald Williams’s fellow delegates to the convention, because twelve days later, on August 16, 1847, Archibald Williams was appointed to a Select Committee to review a prohibiting clause on banks and banking.⁷⁴

As the constitutional convention was drawing to a close, on August 25, 1847, Archibald Williams gave a major speech on how the state legislative districts should be drawn for Adams, Brown, and Highland counties.⁷⁵

The constitutional convention adjourned on Tuesday, August 31, 1847. The convention apparently had done its work well, because the newly rewritten state constitution was overwhelmingly adopted by the voters – 60,585 For to 15,903 Against – on March 6, 1848. A property tax of two mills was passed by the voters at the same time to try to reduce the state debt and avoid a possible state bankruptcy.⁷⁶

The Illinois state Constitutional Convention of 1847 was a major event in the legal and political career of Archibald Williams. An Illinois historian, Arthur Charles Cole, has credited Williams with being one of three Whig Party leaders at the convention who succeeded in tailoring the output of the convention – a new state constitution – to the goals and ideals of the Whig Party. For three summer months, Archibald Williams was in Springfield, the state capital, working and socializing with many of the leading politicians and government officials from all over the state. Archibald Williams’s hard work and productive output at the 1847

⁷³ Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 660.

⁷⁴ Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 777.

⁷⁵ Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 882-883.

⁷⁶ Arthur Charles Cole, “Introduction,” in Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *The Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. xxix-xxx.

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constitutional convention clearly designated him a significant figure in Illinois political and governmental history.

CHAPTER 8

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1848

At the time that the 1847 Illinois state Constitutional Convention was meeting, Abraham Lincoln was representing central Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. Lincoln was a member of a group in Congress known as “the seven young Indians.” They had banded together for the purpose of strongly supporting General Zachary Taylor, the hero of the Battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican War, for the Whig nomination for President of the United States in the 1848 presidential election.

It was the contention of the “young Indians” that Zachary Taylor’s main competitor for the Whig nomination, longtime Whig Party leader Henry Clay, had no chance to be elected against a Democrat in the general election in November.

Lincoln set out to win support for Zachary Taylor in Illinois. To that end, he recruited the services of his old friend in Quincy, Archibald Williams, who agreed with Lincoln that Taylor was the best choice.

At the 1847 Constitutional Convention in Springfield, Illinois, Archibald Williams went into caucus with 55 other Whig Party delegates to the convention. This meeting had nothing to do with the state constitution but was directed instead at the upcoming presidential election of 1848. Archibald Williams moved that the Whig convention delegates, as individuals, publicly endorse Zachary Taylor for the Whig nomination for U.S. President.⁷⁷

A problem developed, however, when Orville H. Browning, a Whig and a resident of Quincy, Illinois, held out for the nomination of the old Whig Party favorite – Henry Clay. This caused concern because Orville

⁷⁷ Carl Landrum, “From Quincy’s Past: Archibald Williams, Early Lawyer,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, December 5, 1971.

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Browning was a close friend and political ally of both Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln.⁷⁸

THE SECOND LINCOLN LETTER TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

In April of 1848, Abraham Lincoln wrote a second personal letter to his old friend in Quincy, Archibald Williams, urging him to support Taylor and gain the support of other prominent western Illinois Whigs for Taylor as well. Abraham Lincoln particularly wanted Williams to renew efforts to gain the support of Orville H. Browning, who was known to be “a leader in thought and action in the [Quincy] area.”⁷⁹

Washington, April 30, 1848

Dear Williams:

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 all important that a delegate should be sent – Mr. Clay’s chance for 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 now at the least, have Tennessee, which he had then and, in addition, the fifteen new votes of Florida, Texas, Iowa, and Wisconsin. I know that 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.

⁷⁸ Norma Lorene Johnston, “Lincoln’s Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans,” Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 22.

⁷⁹ “Valuable Lincoln Letter Treasured by Quincy; Was Written to Judge Archibald Williams in 1848; Mrs. Walter D. Franklin Prizes Highly Note Written by Emancipator,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, February 20, 1947.

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In my judgment, we can elect nobody but Gen.
Taylor; and we cannot elect him without a nomi-
nation – Therefore don't fail to send a delegation –
Your friend as ever
A. Lincoln

This letter is significant because it makes clear the easy familiarity between and close friendship of Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams. It gains further importance in that Lincoln is entrusting Williams with an important political task that Lincoln definitely wants successfully carried out. In addition, the letter shows that, twelve years prior to his own campaign for President of the United States, Lincoln was gaining valuable experience by participating in a major presidential election campaign.

It is unknown the extent to which Archibald Williams may or may not have convinced Orville Browning of the merits of Zachary Taylor over Henry Clay.⁸⁰ Abraham Lincoln's and Archibald Williams's efforts in behalf of Zachary Taylor paid off, however. Taylor won the 1848 Whig Party nomination for President.

There is irony in Archibald Williams joining with Abraham Lincoln in 1848 to advance the presidential candidacy of Zachary Taylor at the expense of Henry Clay. Four years earlier, in 1844, Archibald Williams and Nancy Kemp Williams had named their newborn son "Henry Clay" Williams.

In his letter to Archibald Williams, Lincoln asked Williams to convince Orville Browning to "discard feeling," reject Henry Clay (who Browning greatly admired), and back Zachary Taylor. Clearly, Archibald Williams had to do the same thing himself where Henry Clay was concerned.

ASSISTANT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTOR FOR THE WHIG PARTY IN 1848:

In Illinois in 1848, presidential electors were chosen from each U.S. House of Representatives district for each political party. If a political party won the state in the presidential election, the elector for that party would cast

⁸⁰ Norma Lorene Johnston, "Lincoln's Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans," Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 23.

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the electoral vote for President for that party for the congressional district. The position was largely honorary, but the person chosen as elector was expected to seek votes vigorously for that political party's candidate for the White House.

In 1848, Orville H. Browning of Quincy, Illinois, was chosen to be the presidential elector for the Whig Party in the local U.S. House district. However, Browning exerted very little effort in behalf of Zachary Taylor, the Whig Party candidate for President. Browning "made very few speeches during the canvass, and most of the campaigning was undertaken by the assistant electors, John C. Cox and Archibald Williams."⁸¹

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN 1848:

In 1820, Henry Clay of Kentucky authored the Missouri Compromise, an attempt to settle the issue of African-American slavery in the United States. The Missouri Compromise admitted Missouri as a free (non-slave) state, but then drew a firm line west of the southern boundary of Missouri that separated slave territory to the south from free territory to the north. The line was called by its latitude of 36° 30'.

The Missouri Compromise was successful at first. By 1845, there were 15 slave states and 15 free states. This equal balance between free and slave states guaranteed to the slave-holding South that slavery would never be abolished.

The Mexican War, launched in 1846, dramatically changed the situation. The United States defeated Mexico and won ownership and control of vast new territories in what is now the southwestern United States. The "slave" South and the "free" North argued over whether these new lands would be slave or free.

In the 1848 presidential election, the Democratic Party argued for popular sovereignty. This was the idea that voters in the newly acquired lands would decide by ballot whether an incoming territory, later to be a state, would be slave or free. The Democratic Party candidate for President in 1848 was Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan.

⁸¹ Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 50.

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A new political party had emerged out of this controversy over the Mexican War lands. Called the Free Soil Party, its major position was that the newly acquired territory should be free. The Southerners could keep their slaves, the Free Soil Party argued, but slavery would not be allowed in any of the new territories. The candidate of the Free Soil Party in the 1848 presidential election was former President Martin Van Buren, who was a Democrat when serving as President.

The Whig Party and its presidential nominee, Zachary Taylor, mainly stood for preserving the Union. Democratic Party voters split between the Democratic candidate, Lewis Cass, and the Free Soil candidate, Martin Van Buren, thus enabling Whig candidate Zachary Taylor to win the election in a three-way race.

It thus is clear that, by 1848, Abraham Lincoln and his close friend and ally, Archibald Williams, were being forced to deal with the slavery issue. As Whigs, their early position was that the Union should be preserved at all costs, even if that meant allowing human slavery to continue to exist in the American South.

Despite Archibald Williams's and Abraham Lincoln's strenuous efforts to carry the state of Illinois for Zachary Taylor in the 1848 presidential election, Taylor lost Illinois by a very close margin of slightly more than 3,000 votes.

CHAPTER 9

UNITED STATES DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR ILLINOIS

Zachary Taylor was elected President in 1848. Archibald Williams deserved a reward for his efforts to get Taylor in the White House, and he received it. The new President appointed Williams the U.S. District Attorney for Illinois.

Abraham Lincoln played a key role in Archibald Williams receiving the appointment. He sent the following letter to John M. Clayton:⁸²

Washington, March 8, 1849

Hon: John M. Clayton
Secretary of State

Dear Sir:

We recommend that Archibald Williams, of Quincy, Illinois, be appointed U.S. District Attorney for the District of Illinois, when that office shall become vacant.

Your Obt. Servts.
A. Lincoln

On the bottom of the letter was this endorsement:

I beg leave to urge this particularly.
E D Baker

Archibald Williams served as the United States District Attorney for Illinois from 1849 to 1853. In that role, it was Archibald Williams's job to prosecute people in Illinois who were accused of disobeying U.S.

⁸² Abraham Lincoln to John M. Clayton, March 8, 1849, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume 2, p. 39.

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Government laws and were being tried for their crimes in United States courts.

**UPON THE DEATH OF UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT JUDGE NATHANIEL POPE:**

While serving as the United States Attorney for Illinois, Archibald Williams was given the responsibility of presenting to the U.S. Circuit Court the records of a meeting held to memorialize the life of U.S. District Court Judge Nathaniel Pope.

Judge Pope was born in Kentucky, attended Transylvania College in that state, and became a lawyer. He moved to the Territory of Illinois and was instrumental in the organization of the territorial government. He was the major figure in the drive to gain statehood for Illinois, which was granted by Congress in 1818. Nathaniel Pope was appointed the United States district judge for Illinois in 1819 by President James Monroe.

Nathaniel Pope served as U.S. district court judge for Illinois for 31 years. During the latter part of that period, Archibald Williams argued many cases before Judge Pope, as did Abraham Lincoln and many other leading Illinois attorneys of the time. When Judge Pope died in January of 1850, Archibald Williams was serving as the United States attorney prosecuting cases in Judge Pope's courtroom.

Following Judge Pope's death, the lawyers who practiced before him gathered to honor him with a series of memorial speeches. The resolution instructing Archibald Williams to transmit the record of the memorial meeting to the United States Circuit Court read:

Resolution on the Death of Nathaniel Pope,
U.S. District Judge

June 3, 1850

... that the Hon: A. Williams District Attorney of this court be requested in behalf of this meeting to present these proceedings to the Circuit Court and respectfully to ask that they may be entered on the records.

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Abraham Lincoln's name was listed among the lawyers who had participated in and contributed to the memorial proceedings.⁸³

AN ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS LETTER TO JOSEPH GILLESPIE:

On February 17, 1850, Archibald Williams wrote a letter in Quincy, Illinois, which he subsequently mailed to a friend and political ally named Joseph Gillespie. Although Archibald Williams was the United States Attorney for Illinois at the time, the letter had to do with filling a judicial vacancy rather than a case or cases before the U.S. Court in Illinois.

Joseph Gillespie and Archibald Williams were among Abraham Lincoln's circle of close friends. All three men had served together as members of the Whig Party at the 1839-1840 session of the Illinois state legislature, the first session to be held in the new state capital of Springfield, Illinois. At the time Archibald Williams wrote the letter, Joseph Gillespie was serving as a Whig member of the Illinois state Senate.

Archibald Williams appeared in the letter to be subtly apologizing to Joseph Gillespie for not supporting Gillespie's effort to gain a judgeship for himself. Williams argued that, but for extenuating circumstances, Williams and another lawyer named Lawrence would have been in solid support of Joseph Gillespie. Archibald Williams wrote:

“By the by perhaps you are not aware that Lawrence is enraptured wonderfully with you. About the first thing he said after hearing of the death of Judge Pope was that you ought to be his successor, and but for the application of our friend and neighbor Bushnell we would have been down upon you with a joint letter urging you to accept what I suppose from the result you could not have obtained.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume 2, p. 78-79.

⁸⁴ Letter, Archibald Williams to Joseph Gillespie, February 17, 1850, original copy in Joseph Gillespie folder, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois. See Appendix E for the complete text of the letter.

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The letter indicated that Archibald Williams was very diplomatic and knew to work hard to “unruffle the feathers” of a friend and ally whose advancement to the judicial bench Williams had failed to support.

A TYPICAL CASE IN UNITED STATES COURT:

On Tuesday, December 10, 1850, Archibald Williams, the U.S. Attorney for Illinois, began the prosecution in the U.S. Court in Springfield of a man named Barnes, who was accused of robbing the U.S. Mail. As so often happened, the lawyer defending Barnes was Archibald Williams’s friend from Quincy, Illinois – Orville H. Browning.

The case appeared to have been an important one, because Archibald Williams was backed up by two other prosecutors. They were Robert S. Blackwell and Ninian W. Edwards. Orville Browning was aided by an attorney whose last name was Ferguson.

The case lasted five full days. As the lead attorney for the United States, Archibald Williams summed up the case for the prosecution. The end result was a hung jury, with eight jurors voting for acquittal and four for conviction. The case against Barnes was scheduled to be tried a second time in the next term of the U.S. Court for Illinois.

Being the United States Attorney for Illinois did not prevent Archibald Williams from taking on clients and arguing their cases in courts other than the U.S. Court. On December 30, 1850, Archibald Williams, this time allied with Orville H. Browning rather than opposing him, represented the defendant side in the case of *Stout v. Whitney* being argued before the Supreme Court of Illinois.⁸⁵

A “HUNGARIAN FREEDOM” RESOLUTION:

On January 9, 1852, while serving as U.S. District Attorney for Illinois, Archibald Williams joined with a group of Illinois political leaders, including Abraham Lincoln, in issuing a “Resolution in Behalf of Hungarian Freedom.” The resolution made clear the group’s “sympathy” for Hungarian

⁸⁵ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 30-31, 32.

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revolutionaries but carefully called for the United States to follow a policy of “non-intervention” where military support was concerned.⁸⁶

A TRAVELING U.S. ATTORNEY:

It appeared that the United States court in Springfield, the Illinois state capital, was in session only periodically. As a result, Archibald Williams was able to maintain his permanent residence in Quincy, Illinois, and only travel to Springfield at those times when the United States court was in session. For instance, on December 20, 1852, Archibald Williams was reported to be in Springfield getting ready to try some cases before the U.S. Court, but the opening of court was delayed because Judge Drummond of the U.S. Court had not yet arrived in Springfield.⁸⁷

During the general period that Archibald Williams was United States Attorney for Illinois, from January 1849 to January 1853, he traveled about Illinois practicing law rather than spending all his time in Springfield. On February 29, 1852, he was on board the steamboat *Kate Kearney* along with a group of other lawyers heading north up the Mississippi River to Warsaw, Illinois. The river was filled with ice, making the steamboat ride a treacherous one. From Warsaw, Archibald Williams proceeded inland by a horse-drawn vehicle to Carthage, Illinois, to attend the Hancock County court.⁸⁸

In July of 1852, Archibald Williams was in Springfield trying cases before the United States Court. Apparently there were some social or family events going on in Springfield at that time, because Archibald Williams’s wife, Nancy Kemp Williams, joined him in Springfield. She arrived by train

⁸⁶ “Resolution in Behalf of Hungarian Freedom,” in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume II, p. 115-116.

⁸⁷ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 86.

⁸⁸ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 40.

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and was traveling in the company of Orville H. Browning's wife, Eliza Caldwell Browning.⁸⁹

Archibald Williams was using a variety of modes of transport during this portion of his life characterized by extensive travel around Illinois. He could take a steamboat up or down the Mississippi River if that would speed him on his way. The steamboats had colorful names such as the Di Vernon, the Louisiana, and the Lucy Bertram.⁹⁰

If a steamboat would not do the job, Archibald Williams would have to ride on lumber wagons or stagecoaches to get around Illinois, and this could be a very cold and uncomfortable form of transportation as a horse-drawn vehicle bounced and shook its way over heavily rutted roads. A favored form of transit was the passenger train, but railroads were just being constructed in Illinois and did not serve every city where Archibald Williams wanted to go.

There was a railroad from Naples, Illinois, to the state capital at Springfield. It was possible by the early 1850s to ride a stagecoach from Quincy, Illinois, to Naples and then enjoy the greater speed and comfort of a passenger train ride into Springfield. By 1853, a traveler could take a passenger train from Springfield to Alton, Illinois, on the Mississippi River near St. Louis, Missouri, and then take a steamboat up the river to Quincy, Illinois.

So, on any given day while Archibald Williams was serving as United States Attorney for Illinois, he could be found anywhere in the state. For instance, on Monday, November 29, 1852, he was enjoying dinner in Quincy at the home of his close friend Orville Browning. Other leading Quincy lawyers at the dinner included James W. Singleton, Nehemiah Bushnell, Abraham Jonas, and W. S. Lee.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 58.

⁹⁰ "The Old Reporter Lights His Pipe," *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, July 30, 1921.

⁹¹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 83.

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Only three-weeks later, however, on December 20, 1852, Archibald Williams was in Springfield, Illinois, preparing for a new session of the U.S. Court. He was still the United States Attorney for Illinois, but it was getting close to the end of his four-year term in that office. As usual, he was in the company of fellow lawyers from Quincy, Illinois, such as Orville Browning and Charles B. Lawrence. They were all three staying at a boarding house in Springfield operated by Mrs. Enos.⁹²

On Friday, February 11, 1853, Archibald Williams was back in his home in Quincy, Illinois. He hosted Orville Browning and his wife Eliza at afternoon tea.⁹³

Then, on Saturday, June 11, 1853, Archibald Williams was in Carthage, Illinois, plying his lawyer's trade at a session of the Hancock County Court. At the close of the court's business, Williams and Orville Browning rode in "Browner's hack" to Warsaw, Illinois, and at sunset embarked on the steamboat S. B. McKee to take them back down the Mississippi River to Quincy, Illinois.⁹⁴

The following summer, on Friday, July 8, 1853, Archibald Williams was once again in Springfield, Illinois, trying cases before the U.S. Court. By this time, however, Archibald Williams was no longer serving as the United States Attorney for Illinois and was functioning before the U.S. Court as an ordinary lawyer. His Quincy law partner, Jackson Grimshaw, was with him.⁹⁵

⁹² Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 86.

⁹³ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 94.

⁹⁴ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 107.

⁹⁵ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 109.

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THE COMPROMISE OF 1850:

The slavery issue continued to vex the United States. Henry Clay, hoping to repeat his triumph with the Missouri Compromise of 1820, proposed the Compromise of 1850. It admitted California to the United States as a free state. It banned the slave trade in Washington, D.C., the nation's capital. Most of the lands acquired in the Mexican War, which later became New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of other western states, were to be organized without mention of slavery. The Southern planters were to get a strong new Fugitive Slave Law.⁹⁶

The tough new Fugitive Slave Law required U.S. Government officials in the North to help Southern slaveholders in their efforts to retrieve runaway slaves who were living in freedom in the North. The fugitive slaves were to be granted neither a writ of habeas corpus nor a jury trial before being arbitrarily sent back to their former owners in the South. If a U.S. Government official decided a runaway slave could stay in the North, the official's fee was \$5. If the official decided in favor of sending the fugitive back to the slave owner in the South, the fee was \$10. Anyone in the North, white or black, who aided a runaway slave trying to escape from his or her Southern owner was subject to fine or imprisonment.⁹⁷

The Fugitive Slave Law in the Compromise of 1850 was hugely unpopular in the North. It presented major problems to men like Archibald Williams, who was serving as United States Attorney for Illinois at the time. A strong anti-slavery man, Archibald Williams, as a U.S. Government official, was required by the new law to participate fully in returning runaway slaves to their masters in the South.

THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION OF 1850:

In the U.S. House of Representatives, one of the strongest supporters of the Compromise of 1850, with its Fugitive Slave Law, had been

⁹⁶ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2nd edition, p. 179.

⁹⁷ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years – One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 105.

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Representative William A. Richardson. A Democrat, Richardson was the Representative from the Fifth District of Illinois, which included Quincy, Illinois, and the surrounding region. Richardson's opponent for reelection to his seat in the U.S. House in 1850 was Orville Browning, a Whig and a close friend of fellow Whig Archibald Williams.

All three men were friends and fellow lawyers. William Richardson and Orville Browning met during the Black Hawk War and became lifelong friends. Archibald Williams first encountered Richardson when they were both practicing before the court in Rushville, Illinois, which was Richardson's hometown at the time. The three men were together many times in court, sometimes as allies and other times as opponents.⁹⁸

Nonetheless, the 1850 congressional campaign in the Fifth District was a bitter one. Orville Browning attacked William Richardson strongly on the issue of the Fugitive Slave Law, which Richardson had taken a leading role in getting adopted in the U.S. House. Browning particularly made the point, as most Whig candidates for office were at the time, that the Fugitive Slave Law cruelly and unconstitutionally suspended the writ of habeas corpus and the right to a jury trial for escaping slaves who were recaptured in the North.

AN EFFORT TO REMOVE ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS AS U.S. ATTORNEY:

Despite Orville Browning's sharp attacks, Democrat William Richardson was easily re-elected to his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. In an effort to punish Orville Browning and the Whig Party in Quincy for attacking him so fiercely, Richardson wrote a letter to President Millard Fillmore urging him to remove Archibald Williams from the office of United States Attorney for Illinois. Richardson charged that Archibald Williams, with his strong views calling for habeas corpus and trial

⁹⁸ Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 18, 23.

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by jury for runaway slaves, could not be trusted to return runaway slaves to the South as required by the Fugitive Slave Law.⁹⁹

William Richardson had good reason to believe that President Fillmore, elected Vice-President of the United States on the Whig ticket, just might remove Archibald Williams from office. Archibald Williams had been appointed U.S. Attorney by President Zachary Taylor, who had strongly opposed the new Fugitive Slave Law. President Taylor died in office, however, on July 9, 1850. The Vice-President who succeeded Taylor as President, Millard Fillmore, was a strong supporter of the Fugitive Slave Law and used his influence to get it passed by Congress. William Richardson calculated that, if he could convince President Fillmore that Archibald Williams was not properly enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law, President Fillmore would remove Archibald Williams from office.

Democrat Richardson's little ploy against the Whigs in Quincy failed because Richardson was not certain of his facts. Richardson had relied on hearsay and rumors when he charged that Archibald Williams was not properly enforcing the Fugitive Slave Law. The *Quincy (Illinois) Whig* reported sarcastically:

“This somebody reported the story to another little body, and that little body repeated it to Sam, and Sam run with it to [Representative Richardson...who] writes his letter to the President [Millard Fillmore].”¹⁰⁰

Williams defended himself against Richardson's charges, and the matter went no further. A little less than two years later, during his 1852 campaign for reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives, Richardson admitted that he had had no basis for criticizing Archibald Williams over his enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, October 29, 1850, and February 4, 1851, quoted in Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 118.

¹⁰⁰ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, February 11, 1851, quoted in Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 118.

¹⁰¹ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, September 18, 1852, quoted in Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 129.

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ARGUING IN DEFENSE OF LIQUOR DISTILLERIES AND LIQUOR SALES:

Ironically, despite the unpleasantness of William Richardson trying to get Archibald Williams removed as U.S. Attorney for Illinois, Richardson joined with Archibald Williams and Orville Browning in defending liquor distilleries and liquor sales in Quincy, Illinois, from a state prohibition law. It was another round in the cycle where the three men were bitter enemies in politics one minute and working together as fellow attorneys in court the next.

In 1851, the Illinois state legislature banned certain liquor sales, and a number of Quincy residents were indicted for violating the new law. As an emerging industrial center in western Illinois, Quincy had a number of distilleries in the city, so the issue had an economic impact. Orville Browning attacked the new law's constitutionality in court, while Archibald Williams and William Richardson defended a number of individuals and distillers in the case.¹⁰²

¹⁰² *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, June 30, 1851.

CHAPTER 10

THE SLAVERY ISSUE INTENSIFIED

In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a novel about the harsh treatment of slaves. The book was an instant bestseller. It greatly stoked Northern public opinion against slavery.

THE PACIFIC RAILROAD AND THE KANSAS AND NEBRASKA ACTS:

There was major interest in the early 1850s, both North and South, in building a transcontinental railroad to the Pacific Ocean and the newly admitted state of California. The Southerners, led by Jefferson Davis, had well-developed plans for a southern route running from Memphis and New Orleans across Texas to the Pacific Ocean.

Opposing the Southerners was Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas, a Democrat. He was allied with Chicago railroad interests, who wanted the transcontinental railroad to connect from Omaha, Nebraska, and Kansas City, Kansas, via a northern route to San Francisco, California. Rail traffic on the Nebraska route would mainly funnel through Chicago as it went to and from the far West.

This northern transcontinental railroad line would be built across Kansas or Nebraska, or both. Kansas and Nebraska were large and underpopulated areas that had not yet been organized into U.S. territories. To create civil government in these two areas for his nation-spanning railroad to run through, Senator Douglas introduced his Kansas and Nebraska bills.

The bills created Kansas Territory and Nebraska Territory. In an effort to keep the slavery issue from derailing his plans for a northern route for the transcontinental railroad, Douglas proposed that the citizens of each new territory be permitted to vote on whether to be slave or free. Douglas was relying “on the extremely popular western dogma of popular sovereignty.” Douglas hoped that his popular sovereignty doctrine might be applied to

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other territories coming into the United States, thus settling the slavery-in-the-territories issue once and for all.¹⁰³

Much to Stephen Douglas's surprise, a wave of reaction against the Kansas and Nebraska bills swept the Northern states. If the citizens of Kansas, or Nebraska, or both, voted to permit slavery, there would be slavery in the free area north of the line created by the Missouri Compromise. The Kansas and Nebraska bills would, in effect, repeal the Missouri Compromise. That compromise had been in effect more than three decades, since 1820. To many Northerners, it had worked well by keeping future slave states south of a definite line across the western United States.

Despite the criticism of his Kansas and Nebraska bills, Stephen Douglas resolutely pushed them through both houses of Congress and had them signed into law by President Franklin Pierce, who was slowly turning the Democratic Party into a pro-slavery party. As of mid-1854, the Kansas and Nebraska bills, by then the Kansas and Nebraska acts, were the law of the land.

By this time, Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln had become outspoken opponents of any extension of slavery into the territories. They were particularly opposed to popular sovereignty for Nebraska, because that raised the possibility that Nebraska might become a slave state if the popular sovereignty election in Nebraska went that way.

Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln, and many of their Whig Party colleagues in Illinois, became known as "anti-Nebraska" men because of their strong opposition to popular sovereignty for the state of Nebraska.

IN COURT WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

Throughout the 1840s and 1850s – a period of intense political activity and unrest – Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln each continued to practice law. In many instances, they met in the courtroom, sometimes as allies but just as often as competitors. A typical example was

¹⁰³ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2nd edition, p. 191.

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the case of *Bruen v. Ganes* in 1845. Abraham Lincoln was listed as “acting for Williams.”¹⁰⁴

In another case, *Smith et al v. Dunlap* in 1850, it was Abraham Lincoln for the plaintiff and Archibald Williams for the defendant. This case involved the Bank of Illinois in a dispute over the value of State of Illinois indebtedness.¹⁰⁵

And there was *Forsythe v. Peoria* in 1855. This was a land dispute dating back to the time when the French were in control of the land that would become Illinois. Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln both argued for the plaintiff. Orville Browning represented the defendant.

The case was tried in Chicago, Illinois. At one point in the trial, Archibald Williams, Abraham Lincoln, and Orville Browning all “took tea at Blackwell’s” in Chicago. Robert S. Blackwell was a well-known Chicago attorney who was the author of *Blackwell on Tax Titles* and other legal publications.

The case of *Forsythe v. Peoria* was decided for the defendant, which meant that Browning was the victorious attorney with Williams and Lincoln on the losing side.¹⁰⁶

THE DEATH OF NANCY KEMP WILLIAMS:

On March 16, 1854, Archibald Williams’s first wife, Nancy Kemp Williams, passed away. She died giving birth to a daughter, Nancy Williams, who survived the birth and lived to adulthood. Archibald Williams and Nancy Kemp Williams had been married for 22 years.

Archibald Williams’s close friend, Orville Browning, recorded the death of Nancy Kemp Williams in his diary with a simple notation. It was typical of Browning to close each day’s entry with a review of the weather. Browning wrote:

¹⁰⁴ Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume I, p. 344.

¹⁰⁵ Benjamin P. Thomas, *Lincoln - 1847 to 1853: Day-by-Day Activities* (Springfield, IL: 1936), p. 209.

¹⁰⁶ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 190, 192.

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“Mrs. Williams, the wife of Archibald Williams, Esquire, died this morning. Warm, pleasant day.”

The funeral of Nancy Kemp Williams was held the following day, March 17, 1854, at 4 P.M. Orville Browning served as one of her pall bearers.¹⁰⁷

A DEBATE IN PITTSFIELD, ILLINOIS, ON THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILLS:

On Friday, March 24, 1854, Archibald Williams was in Pittsfield, Illinois, attending court. Pittsfield was the county seat of Pike County, Illinois, which was located to the south of Quincy, Illinois.

That evening, both Democrats and Whigs gathered at the Pike County courthouse in Pittsfield to debate the Nebraska issue. James W. Singleton, a former Whig but still a friend of Archibald Williams and Orville Browning, served as a spokesman for the Democratic Party and defended extending popular sovereignty to Nebraska. Orville Browning pleaded the case for the Anti-Nebraska men.

James W. Singleton’s argument for popular sovereignty was well-stated. He asserted “that slavery ought to be permitted to diffuse itself, and that it was unfeeling and inhuman to deny to the people of old Virginia the right to quit their impoverished soil and take their [slaves] with them to the beautiful and fertile plains of Nebraska and Kansas.”

Archibald Williams also wished to address the meeting to further the Anti-Nebraska cause. It was almost midnight, however, so Williams’s address was rescheduled for the following evening. Williams was ill the next night and unable to go out to speak, so his address was rescheduled for the following Wednesday evening.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 133.

¹⁰⁸ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 134.

CHAPTER 11

THE 1854 CAMPAIGN FOR THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Despite the death of his wife earlier that year, Archibald Williams was a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in the late summer and early fall of 1854. He challenged incumbent Democrat William A. Richardson, who was a close ally of Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas. Both of those Democrats were supporters of popular sovereignty and had played key roles in the U.S. Congress in the passage of the Kansas and Nebraska bills.

THE FIFTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS:

The U.S. House District in which Archibald Williams was going to run, the Fifth District of Illinois, had an interesting and combative history. Following the 1840 U.S. Census, the district boundary lines were redrawn to greatly favor the Democratic Party over the Whig Party. Two counties, Greene and Macoupin counties, were added to the district to give the Democrats a strong edge.¹⁰⁹

In 1843, Stephen A. Douglas ran as the Democratic candidate for the newly redrawn U.S. House District. Douglas had moved to Quincy, Illinois, a few years earlier for the express purpose of advancing his political career. His Whig opponent for the Quincy seat in Congress was Archibald Williams's close friend, Orville Hickman Browning. Douglas defeated Browning in a close race and headed to Washington, D.C., to take his place in the United States House of Representatives.

In 1846, the Illinois state legislature elected Stephen A. Douglas a United States senator from Illinois. As a result, Douglas no longer needed to

¹⁰⁹ Theodore C. Pease, "Introduction," Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. xv.

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live in Quincy and the Fifth District of Illinois, so he moved to Chicago and pursued his political career from there.

The Fifth District seat remained in Democratic hands. Douglas was succeeded in the U.S. House of Representatives by William A. Richardson. Orville Browning twice attempted to win the seat for the Whigs – in 1850 and 1852 – but the gerrymandering of the district to favor of the Democrats made a Whig victory extremely difficult if not impossible. Democrat William A. Richardson was reelected both times.

When Archibald Williams took on the task of running against Democratic incumbent William A. Richardson in 1854, it was agreed by most observers that Williams was facing an exceedingly difficult uphill battle. In addition, Archibald Williams was running against a fellow lawyer and longtime acquaintance, if not a close friend.

AN “ANTI-NEBRASKA” CANDIDATE:

In 1854, mainly because of the Kansas and Nebraska acts, old party ties were breaking up. Nonetheless, a Whig Party convention met in Quincy, Illinois, on Friday, August 18, 1854, and “nominated A. Williams, Esquire, for Congress.”¹¹⁰ Instead of running as only a Whig for the U.S. House of Representatives, however, Archibald Williams ran as an “anti-Nebraska” Whig candidate.¹¹¹ Opposition to popular sovereignty in Nebraska, and the resulting possibility of Nebraska becoming a slave state, was the central theme of his campaign. In the years following 1854, most Anti-Nebraska candidates became Republicans, as did Archibald Williams.

Archibald Williams’s close friend, Orville Browning, could have had the Anti-Nebraska Whig nomination for the U.S. House of Representatives from the Quincy, Illinois, region in 1854, but he declined. Archibald Williams then stepped up to make the race, although his chances of victory were considered very slim. James W. Singleton, the former Whig turned Democrat, “was so confident that Williams would be defeated by a large

¹¹⁰ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 151.

¹¹¹ “Anti-Nebraska: A Whig Ticket That Is Quite a Curiosity In Its Way,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, February 1, 1893, p. 2.

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majority that he promised Orville Browning a thousand pounds of pork if [Democrat] Richardson's majority was less than three thousand votes."¹¹²

Campaigning for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives was very different from campaigning for the U.S. Senate. Senators were selected by the state legislatures, but U.S. House members had to win the votes of the general electorate in their particular "congressional district." In his 1854 campaign for the U.S. House, Archibald Williams had to give speeches, try to line up local support, and do all the other things that comprise a competitive election campaign.

By 1854, Archibald Williams was described by one observer as having cut back on his legal career in Quincy and Adams County, Illinois. He was said to be devoting his time only to "cases of great magnitude."¹¹³

A historian noted that, although Archibald Williams "generally showed little interest in running for office," he "ran ... for Congress in the Fifth District in 1854. There was not much hope of victory in the district that year."¹¹⁴

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS'S OPPONENT FOR THE U.S. HOUSE – WILLIAM A. RICHARDSON:

William Alexander Richardson, similar to Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln, was a native of the state of Kentucky. He was born in Fayette County, Kentucky, on January 16, 1811. He was well-educated, having attended Walnut Hill preparatory school, Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, and Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky.

Richardson departed from Transylvania University at the end of his junior year. He was a teacher for one year in a small rural school, after

¹¹² Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 82. Also see Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 151.

¹¹³ John McA. Palmer, *Bench and Bar of Illinois* (Chicago, IL: 1899), Volume II, p. 280.

¹¹⁴ Norma Lorene Johnston, "Lincoln's Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans," Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 24.

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which he embarked on a legal career by joining the law office of Allen and Simpson in Winchester, Kentucky. In March of 1831, he was admitted to practice law in the courts of Kentucky.

Two months later, in May of 1831, William Richardson moved to Illinois and began practicing law in Shelbyville, Illinois. Again, similar to Archibald Williams, Abraham Lincoln, and Orville Browning, Richardson served a brief stint of military service, for a month or so, in the Black Hawk War. He resettled in Rushville, Illinois, in Schuyler County.¹¹⁵

Richardson's Physical Appearance:

In contrast to Archibald Williams, who was thin and somewhat reserved, William Richardson possessed one of the “most striking personalities of his era.” He was a “large man with course features and a powerful voice.” It was said that “he commanded attention because of his appearance but also because he was fitted for leadership.”

Among Richardson's virtues were “frankness and kindness.” Abraham Lincoln praised him for his profound sense of loyalty. Richardson was attacked by his opponents for drinking too much alcohol. He admitted he “imbibed a good deal, but he would not tolerate a man who could not keep his drinking under control.” He shared Abraham Lincoln's fondness for earthy humor, but his comrades saw that as being affable rather than vulgar.¹¹⁶

Richardson's Early Political Career:

In 1835, William Richardson ran for State's Attorney for the Fifth Judicial Circuit. His opponent for State's Attorney was Orville Browning, a close friend of Archibald Williams in Quincy, Illinois. Richardson, a Democrat, and Orville Browning, a Whig, were close personal acquaintances but became political competitors from that election onward.

¹¹⁵ Mary Nell Frier, “The Political Career of William Alexander Richardson,” Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, p. 1-14.

¹¹⁶ Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 321.

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Richardson defeated Browning in this first round of their many electoral and political encounters.

State's Attorneys were selected by both houses of the state legislature rather than by a vote of the people. Abraham Lincoln was in the state House of Representatives at that time. Lincoln demonstrated the weakness of political party ties in that era by voting for Democrat Richardson rather than for his fellow Whig – Orville Browning.¹¹⁷

One year later, in 1836, Richardson resigned as State's Attorney to run for the Illinois House of Representatives from Schuyler County. He was elected and served two years in the Illinois House with Abraham Lincoln. In 1837, Archibald Williams joined Richardson and Lincoln as members of the Illinois House of Representatives.

In 1838, William Richardson ran for and was elected to the Illinois state Senate. For the next two years, Richardson was serving in the Illinois state Senate while Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln were still in the Illinois state House of Representatives.

Richardson left the state Senate at the end of his term in 1842. Two years later, in 1844, he ran for the Illinois House of Representatives, was elected, and then was selected Speaker of the House, the top leadership position in the Illinois House. By this time, William Richardson was one of the important leaders in the Democratic Party in Illinois.

Richardson's Marriage and Move to Quincy, Illinois:

In 1838, William Richardson married Cornelia H. Sullivan, of Quincy, Illinois. They had four children. Several years later, the couple moved from Rushville, Illinois, to Quincy, Illinois. They remained in Quincy – in the same town with Archibald Williams and Orville Browning – for the rest of their lives.

¹¹⁷ Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 25.

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Richardson Was an Anti-Mormon:

In 1845-1846, Richardson took a leading role in organizing a state militia to drive the Mormons out of Illinois once and for all.¹¹⁸ Richardson's anti-Mormon attitudes contrasted with those of Archibald Williams, who had worked to shape a just, more peaceful, and safe exit for the Mormons from Illinois.

Richardson in the Mexican War:

In 1846, William Richardson left the legislature to enter military service in the Mexican War. After giving a fiery and patriotic speech in front of the courthouse in Rushville, Illinois, Richardson recruited and organized a company of men to fight for the United States in Mexico. At the battle of Buena Vista, Richardson became field commander of all the Illinois regiments when the commanding officer, John Hardin, was killed in action.

At the moment the Mexican Army attacked the Illinois troopers, Richardson had his sword shot from his hand by an enemy bullet. "Well, by thunder, I guess they are shooting at us," he said. Later, Richardson's cap was shot off his head without his being injured. "Well, they can have that as long as it is empty," he shouted. He fought bareheaded for the remainder of the battle.¹¹⁹

This particular military action did not go well for the Illinoisans. So many men were killed and wounded that Richardson and his troops had to retreat. They had so decimated the Mexicans, however, that the Mexicans also had to withdraw and could not secure a victory.

William Richardson emerged from the Mexican War with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. From that day forward, he was frequently addressed as

¹¹⁸ Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 61-62.

¹¹⁹ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, May 5, 1847, quoted in Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 77.

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Colonel Richardson. He was awarded a sword by the Illinois state legislature for his military gallantry at Buena Vista.¹²⁰

Needless to say, William Richardson's military exploits in the Mexican War were well reported in the Illinois newspapers and became one of his primary assets in subsequent election contests for political office. He skillfully exploited his military record "to promote himself into the national political arena."¹²¹

Richardson in the U.S. House of Representatives:

After the United States won the Mexican War, Richardson began a new phase of his political career. That was to follow in the footsteps of, and become a loyal supporter of, Stephen A. Douglas, who was the most prominent and influential Illinois Democrat of the age. In 1847, Stephen Douglas left his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and was elected to the U.S. Senate. Richardson ran for and won Douglas's former seat in the U.S. House, the seat in which Quincy, Illinois, was located.

Richardson became U.S. Senator Stephen Douglas's trusted ally in the U.S. House of Representatives. On a number of occasions, Richardson spoke out publicly in defense of Douglas and his policies. In 1853-1854, when Douglas began pressing for passage in the U.S. Congress of his Kansas and Nebraska territorial bills, Richardson became an avid supporter of those bills in the U.S. House of Representatives.

William Richardson served as chairman of the House Committee on Territories, and thus he had a great deal of influence over the bills creating the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Richardson's key role in support of the Kansas and Nebraska bills – particularly the Nebraska bill – made him very popular in the Democratic Party. On the other hand, Richardson's support of the Nebraska bill subjected him to a storm of criticism from anti-slavery Northern Whigs, such as Archibald Williams, Orville Browning, and Abraham Lincoln.

¹²⁰ For a full discussion of William A. Richardson's service in the Mexican War, see Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 64A-79.

¹²¹ Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 79.

**Richardson Guides the Nebraska Bill
Through the U.S. House of Representatives:**

As Chairman of the Committee on Territories, William Richardson had the primary responsibility of getting the Nebraska bill adopted on the House floor. Because the bill provided for popular sovereignty, and the resulting possibility that Nebraska citizens could vote to become a slave state at a future date, the debate was raucous and long-winded. There were 100 speeches, 45 in favor of the bill and 55 against it. One House session lasted through 36 hours of loud bickering and yelling with members climbing up on their desks to shout their approval or disapproval of the bill.

At one point Senator Stephen Douglas, who had gotten the bill through the Senate, appeared on the House floor, where he did not belong, and began haranguing and challenging the opposition to the bill. “Many members imbibed freely to keep going through the long hours, and the liquor made them quarrelsome and dangerous. Through it all, under the severest of handicaps, Richardson remained steadfast to his goal.”¹²²

Richardson refused to compromise and argued on the House floor that the Nebraska bill, with the controversial proposal for popular sovereignty firmly intact, was the only way to preserve the Union. His perseverance paid off when the bill passed by a vote of 113 to 100. Senator Douglas tried to take the credit for getting the Nebraska bill through the House, but it was William Richardson “who managed the bill day in and day out to its passage.”¹²³

And so it was that Archibald Williams’s opponent in the 1854 House of Representatives election in the Fifth District of Illinois was not just another member of the House. William Richardson was the man most responsible for the successful passage of the controversial Nebraska bill in the U.S. House. A Richardson biographer described the new law as “the most profoundly agitating legislation of the 19th Century.”¹²⁴

¹²² Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 149.

¹²³ Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 152.

¹²⁴ Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 1.

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But Richardson would pay a price for his monumental legislative achievement. Both the Nebraska bill itself, and the manner in which it was passed, would make him a target in the upcoming congressional election. To get things started, the *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig and Republican* newspaper charged that the Nebraska bill was “hurried through the [U.S.] House in the most tyrannical and overbearing manner.”¹²⁵

Richardson Tries Not To Run for Reelection

William Richardson said he did not want to run for reelection to his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1854, but he was nominated as a candidate at the Democratic Convention held in August in Mount Sterling, Illinois. He decided to go ahead, make the race, and defend his actions in support of the Nebraska Act.

Richardson Could Have Lost On the Anti-Nebraska Issue:

This survey of William Richardson’s fulsome political career suggests the size of the task Archibald Williams took on in opposing Richardson’s reelection to the U.S. House. Richardson, over the previous years, had been elected State’s Attorney, state Representative, state Senator, Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, and four times to the U.S. House of Representatives. He was the protégé and close political ally of Stephen Douglas, one of the most popular politicians in Illinois electoral history.

In addition, Richardson has proved himself a military hero in the victorious Mexican War, which had been fought only eight years earlier. And, perhaps most important, the U.S. House of Representatives district in which Richardson and Archibald Williams were competing was a heavily Democratic district, and Richardson was the Democratic candidate.

But there was one major factor in the election in Archibald Williams’s favor. That was William Richardson’s close association with Stephen

¹²⁵ *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig and Republican*, June 5, 1854, quoted in Mary Nell Frier, “The Political Career of William Alexander Richardson,” Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, p. 13..

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Douglas and the successful passage in the U.S. House of the Nebraska Act. The election thus was not only a personal contest between Archibald Williams and William Richardson. It was a referendum on the newly-enacted Nebraska law. And, because of Richardson's close association with Senator Stephen Douglas, the race was considered by many "a test of Douglas's strength as the leader of the Democratic Party in Illinois."

Given the great extent of the public outcry against the Nebraska Act that was sweeping both Illinois and the northern part of the United States, there was at least some possibility that Archibald Williams just might defeat an entrenched Democratic incumbent such as William Richardson – and repudiate Senator Douglas at the same time. As a result, "the Fifth District contest attracted all the political observers of the state [of Illinois]."¹²⁶

FALSE CAMPAIGN CHARGES AGAINST ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

In the midst of Archibald Williams's 1854 campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives, the opposition Democrats charged that, while at the 1847 Illinois state Constitutional Convention, Williams twice voted against proposals to make it easier for the foreign born to vote in Illinois elections.

The Whig Party newspaper in Quincy, the *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig*, quickly rose, in print, to Archibald Williams's defense:

"We have examined the Journals of the Convention, and we now not only deny that Mr. Williams voted against any such propositions – but say that none such were voted for or offered for the consideration of the Convention. Mr. Williams voted for the 1st section of Article 6 of the present Constitution, which regulates the right of suffrage; this was adopted by the Convention by a large majority... It was afterwards ratified by the people by about a 40,000 majority."

"What is the next falsehood that will be retailed against Mr. Williams?"¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 155.

¹²⁷ "Mr. Williams against the Foreigner," *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig*, August 25, 1854, p. 3.

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Apparently the “next falsehood” was a charge by the Democrats that Archibald Williams, again while at the 1847 Illinois state Constitutional Convention, had voted for a religious test as a qualification for public office in Illinois. The Democrats mockingly asked whether Archibald Williams wanted Illinois to be “a Presbyterian state, a Methodist state, a Baptist state, a Catholic state, a Universalist state, or an Infidel state?”

Once again the *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig* refuted the charge against Archibald Williams. He voted against a proposed provision of the state constitution forbidding a religious test, the paper explained, only because he was going to vote for an even stronger provision forbidding a religious test in its place.¹²⁸

These ardent defenses of Archibald Williams by the *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig* illustrated the high level of political party competition in Quincy and Illinois at that particular time. It was a competition that was directly reflected in the highly partisan newspapers of the time.

¹²⁸ “That ‘Religious Test,’” *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig*, September 19, 1854, p. 2.

CHAPTER 12

A SPEECH IN PITTSFIELD, ILLINOIS

On September 11, 1854, Archibald Williams gave a campaign speech in Pittsfield, Pike County, Illinois. Pike County is located immediately south of Adams County and Quincy, Illinois. The speech was printed in a newspaper. This speech may be the only written record of an actual speech by Archibald Williams.¹²⁹

The speech must have sounded more like a legal brief than a campaign speech. It systematically put forth detailed arguments and defended them with long quotes from famous Americans, most of them Democrats. Archibald Williams even went so far as to describe those he was quoting as “witnesses,” as if they were testifying in court. The speech thus clarified and confirmed Archibald Williams’s reputation as a “reasoner” rather than a bombastic and emotional speaker.

Internal Improvements:

The speech began on the subject of internal improvements, a national program that had received longtime support from the Whig Party. Archibald Williams took a strong stand in favor of the U.S. Government spending “vast revenue to the improvement of harbors on our lakes and to the removal of obstructions that impede the navigations of our rivers.” He then pointed out that the sitting Democratic President, Franklin Pierce, had vetoed a major harbors and rivers bill.

Archibald Williams assured his listeners that, if elected, he would “earnestly, and to the extent of my ability, advocate liberal appropriations of money for river and harbor improvements.”

¹²⁹ “Speech of Archibald Williams Delivered at Pittsfield, Pike County, Ill., September 11, 1854.” Source not identified. Copy in Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. Stamped 67339. The complete speech is in Appendix F.

**Condemned the Repeal of
the Missouri Compromise:**

Having quickly disposed of the internal improvements issue, Archibald Williams turned to the major subject of his talk – the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by Congress by passing a bill providing for popular sovereignty in Nebraska. His opening argument was that, by repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Congress reintroduced the slavery issue into U.S. politics, an issue which the Missouri Compromise had succeeded in quieting for more than a quarter of a century. Williams said:

“Congress, at its last session, repealed the Missouri Compromise and thereby revived the slavery agitation, the sectional strife, and the fearful struggle which it was thought had been forever put to rest by the various compromises on this subject.”

**Congress Consistently
Opposed Slavery in the Territories:**

Archibald Williams then proceeded to demonstrate that, until it passed the Nebraska bill on January 23, 1854, “Congress had been in favor of freedom and free institutions, and against Slavery extension.” The process began, Williams argued, when the Continental Congress banned slavery in the North Western Territory that later became the states of the upper Midwest. Williams quoted the actual language of the congressional act:

“Article 6: There shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.”

Williams accused his opponent, Democrat William Richardson, of saying that slavery had been banned in the North Western Territory in order to keep that area of the country from growing tobacco in competition with Virginia. The logic was that, without slaves, tobacco could not be profitably grown in the North Western Territory.

Sounding briefly like an emotional speaker, Archibald Williams attacked Richardson for accusing the great leaders of Virginia of protecting tobacco rather than opposing the spread of slavery. Williams said:

“Virginia at that time was guided in her councils by her [George] Washington, her [John] Marshall, her Patrick Henry and [Thomas] Jefferson.

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If these great patriots could now rise from their tombs, they would with withering indignation denounce this as a slander injurious to their motives and dishonoring their fair fame. – They, though slave holders, were no slavery propagandists.... They were governed by no low and sordid motives but by...high and noble sentiments...”

Democratic Party Traditionally Opposed Slavery in the Territories:

Archibald Williams then began introducing his “witnesses,” all of them prominent Democrats, who had previously strongly advocated for the Missouri Compromise and the peaceful solution it had created to the slavery issue. Williams quoted directly from all of the Democrats at great length.

The “witnesses” included U.S. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, U.S. Representative Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, U.S. Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan, President James K. Polk, and even Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the principal advocate of using popular sovereignty to undo the Missouri Compromise.

An unusual “witness” was the Missouri state legislature. The last “witness” quoted was Archibald Williams’s Democratic opponent, William Richardson.

In the case of William Richardson, Archibald Williams noted Richardson’s prediction of what would happen in the United States if the Missouri Compromise were cancelled and the slavery issue was no longer amicably settled. Richardson’s words were quoted directly by Williams:

“If this excitement shall continue, [and] if this agitation shall be kept up until sectional parties can be formed and united – until the South can be arrayed against the North, and the North against the South – until the kindly feeling of one section can be changed to hate against the other section – we may despair of the perpetuity of our Government, and prepare our minds for its certain overthrow.”

**Archibald Williams on
The Missouri Compromise:**

Having thoroughly tarred the Democrats with their own words where the effects of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise were concerned, Archibald Williams then presented his own views. He elaborated:

“Thus I have proved by these witnesses, all of them prominent Democrats, that the Missouri Compromise was a compromise, – that it was considered by the Slave Holding States as a great triumph, – that it calmed the troubled waves and restored peace and good will throughout the states of the Union, – that it was hallowed by patriotism, by success, and by its association with great names now transferred to History, – that it has been acquiesced in cheerfully and cordially by all parties and sections of the country for more than a quarter of a century as a fair, just and honorable adjustment – and that it had become ‘canonized in the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb.’”

Archibald Williams then called upon his listeners to decide for themselves whether the Missouri Compromise should be preserved unchanged. “You, fellow-citizens, have to answer this question,” Williams said. “As you value the peace of the country and the safety of our glorious Union, answer it impartially and honestly!”

Both Political Parties Opposed Agitation over Slavery:

Archibald Williams noted that both political parties, in their 1852 national convention platforms, had pledged not to revive political agitation and conflict over the slavery issue. Williams then pointed out that Stephen A. Douglas himself affirmed the desirability of defusing the slavery issue as settled by the Compromise of 1850. Archibald Williams quoted Douglas as saying:

“The two great political parties had with singular unanimity, affirmed the Compromise of 1850 as a cardinal article of their faith and proclaimed it to the world as a final settlement to the controversy and an end of the agitation.”

Following the quote from Douglas, Archibald Williams asked his listeners:

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“Why did he [Douglas] afterwards recommend this departure [the Nebraska bill] and thereby revive this fearful struggle?”

Congress Can Prohibit Polygamy As well as Slavery in the Territories:

Archibald Williams next defended the idea that slavery could be banned in Nebraska by arguing that Congress also possessed the power to ban polygamy on the part of the Mormons in Utah. Williams said:

“To that wild and unbridled licentiousness which sanctions polygamy in a Christian country, provided the people of a territory think proper to establish it as one of their domestic institutions, I am totally opposed. In my opinion, Congress has the power, and should exercise it, to prohibit polygamy in the Territory of Utah.”

A “Fusion Party” Repealed The Missouri Compromise:

Archibald Williams criticized the fact that the Nebraska bill had been enacted, not by the Democrats or the Whigs in the U.S. Congress, but by a “fusion party” composed of a wide variety of unusual political groups. Williams said:

“It [the Nebraska bill] was not passed by either of the great political parties, but by a fusion party, comprising all the nullifiers, most of the Southern members, Whigs as well as Democrats, and about half the Democrats of the Northern States.”

Williams then noted that it was the work of this fusion party – the Nebraska bill – which precipitated the great public reaction that was sweeping the Northern states and had become known as the Anti-Nebraska movement. Williams exclaimed:

“When the people of the free States heard that a ‘ruthless hand’ had been found ‘reckless enough to disturb’ an ancient Compromise,... they met together throughout the land, by thousands and tens of thousands, and remonstrated against it.”

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A Sarcastic Conclusion:

Archibald Williams concluded his Pittsfield, Illinois, speech with a touch of sarcasm. He noted that Stephen Douglas was accusing those who opposed Douglas's popular sovereignty for Nebraska with being the agitators, whereas Williams believed it was the other way around. Williams said:

“Your servants [Senator Douglas and the congressional supporters of the Nebraska bill], as they are called, come home and modestly tell you that, although in your opinion they have done a great wrong, destructive of the peace of the country, and dangerous to the security of the Union itself, yet, as the deed is done, you must quietly submit or you will become AGITATORS, and you are advised to acquiesce in the wrong and to vote a vote of thanks to the wrongdoers.”

EVALUATING THE SPEECH:

Viewed as a whole, Archibald Williams's speech in Pittsfield, Illinois, on September 11, 1854, was standard anti-Nebraska. Williams attacked his opponent, Democrat William Richardson, vigorously for supporting popular sovereignty for Nebraska and thereby doing away with the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850.

Williams made it clear that his position was one of compromise on the slavery issue. Slavery could continue to exist in the eleven original states of the American South, but slavery could not be tolerated in any form in the new territories being added to the United States.

The justification for preserving slavery, but only in those states where it already existed, was the peaceful preservation of the Union and putting an end to slavery “agitation” in both the North and the South.

CHAPTER 13

THE OUTCOME OF THE 1854 U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ELECTION

On Monday, September 18, 1854, Archibald Williams was in Oquawka, Illinois, attending a session of the court there. The court adjourned at noon to permit Archibald Williams and his Democratic opponent for Congress, William Richardson, to address “the people at the courthouse.”¹³⁰

ORVILLE BROWNING CAMPAIGNED FOR ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

Although Orville Browning had declined to run as the Anti-Nebraska candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1854, he made several speeches throughout the Fifth Congressional District in behalf of Archibald Williams’s candidacy. On Monday, October 9, 1854, Browning was drumming up support for Williams in Carthage, Illinois, the city to the north of Quincy in which Joseph Smith, the founding leader of the Mormons, had been murdered by a mob.

The same day that Browning was campaigning for Archibald Williams in Carthage, Democrat Stephen A. Douglas was to speak in Carthage as well. Douglas was traveling Illinois at the time to give lectures defending his Kansas-Nebraska acts and their emphasis on popular sovereignty. Douglas came to Browning’s room in Hamilton’s lodgings in Carthage. An attempt was made to have Browning and Douglas debate face-to-face, but the two political leaders could not agree on the debate rules.

As it was, Stephen Douglas spoke by himself in Carthage in the afternoon. He addressed between 800 and 1,000 persons in the courthouse square.

¹³⁰ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 153.

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Douglas's presence in town, however, gave added importance to Orville Browning's campaign speech for Archibald Williams in Carthage that evening. Browning spoke in the Hancock County Courthouse, which was packed for the occasion. Browning noted: "It was crowded to overflowing, one side being filled with ladies, every nook and corner was full. The jury rooms were filled, and the hall outside the door far down the stairway."¹³¹

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS:

On Thursday evening, October 19, 1854, Archibald Williams gave a major campaign address in Kendall Hall to the people of Quincy, Illinois. The subject of his talk was the Nebraska question. When Archibald Williams finished his speech, his good friend and fellow lawyer Abraham Jonas spoke for half an hour.¹³²

STEPHEN DOUGLAS SPOKE IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS, FOR WILLIAM RICHARDSON:

As would have been expected, William Richardson invited Stephen Douglas to come to Quincy, Illinois, and give a speech strongly endorsing Richardson's candidacy for reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives. Douglas's speech was described by the *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, the

¹³¹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 155-157. Also see Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 82-83.

¹³² Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 158.

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Democratic Party newspaper in town, as a “scathing excoriation” of Douglas’s critics, particularly the Abolitionists.¹³³

ABRAHAM LINCOLN SPOKE IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS, FOR ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

Abraham Lincoln departed his hometown of Springfield, Illinois. For two days he traveled by railroad and stagecoach, arriving in Quincy, Illinois, after dark on October 31, 1854.

Lincoln came to Quincy to speak in behalf of Archibald Williams’s candidacy for the U.S. House of Representatives. In a letter to U.S. Representative Richard Yates, Lincoln wrote: “I am here now going to Quincy, to try to give Mr. [Archibald] Williams a little life.”¹³⁴

Lincoln made the trip at the urging of another friend of his from Quincy, Abraham Jonas. It was Abraham Lincoln’s first documented visit to Quincy, Illinois.¹³⁵

Jonas was a Whig and a political compatriot of Archibald Williams, Abraham Lincoln, and Orville Browning. He was a member of one of the first Jewish families to settle in Quincy, Illinois.

On the night Abraham Lincoln arrived in town, Abraham Jonas met Lincoln at the Quincy House, which was the largest and finest hotel in Quincy. The following day, Lincoln paid a visit to Orville Browning.

Lincoln spoke in behalf of Archibald Williams in Kendall Hall. Located on the southwest corner of Sixth and Maine in Quincy, Kendall Hall was a well-known spot for political events and theatrical presentations. In 2013, Kirlin’s store occupied the location.

Abraham Jonas was “convinced that a speech by Lincoln in reply to [the ideas of Stephen] Douglas would be more effective than any other” type of campaign event. Lincoln directed the main thrust of his remarks to one of

¹³³ *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, September 28 and 25 and October 23, 1854, quoted in Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 156.

¹³⁴ Abraham Lincoln to Richard Yates, October 30, 1854, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume II, p. 284.

¹³⁵ Jim Barry, Internet – LincolnDouglasQuincyDebate.com

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the leading questions of the time – whether Nebraska should be a free state or be allowed to determine its slave-or-free status through popular sovereignty.¹³⁶

Lincoln attacked the Kansas-Nebraska acts because they threatened to extend slavery into two areas that had been guaranteed free since 1820, a space of 34 years. Lincoln termed this the breaking of a sacred promise.

According to the *Quincy Whig*, there was a large audience that “listened with unwearied attention and an approbation emphasized by repeated outbursts of enthusiastic applause.” The newspaper summarized Abraham Lincoln’s speech on behalf of Archibald Williams this way:

“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 [Missouri Compromise], 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.”

The newspaper reporter apparently approved of the speech, because he ended his story by describing Lincoln as “one of the ‘truly great men’ of Illinois.”¹³⁷

Abraham Jonas had escorted Lincoln to the Whig rally in behalf of Archibald Williams. “Afterwards the two old friends went to an oyster house for refreshments and political talk. Then Jonas walked Lincoln back to the Quincy House at Fourth and Maine, where [Lincoln] was staying the night.”¹³⁸

It is interesting to note that Abraham Lincoln came to Quincy to campaign for Archibald Williams and Stephen Douglas came to the same city to speak in behalf of William Richardson. In a minor way, the speeches of Lincoln and Douglas in Quincy in 1854 were a warm up for the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates that took place four years later in 1858.

¹³⁶ Carl Landrum, “Lincoln and his Quincy Friends,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, February 14, 1965.

¹³⁷ *Quincy Whig*, November 3, 1854.

¹³⁸ Carl Landrum, “From Quincy’s Past: Archibald Williams, Early Lawyer,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, December 5, 1971.

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ELECTION DAY – 1854:

The night before election day was Monday, November 5, 1854. A large Anti-Nebraska meeting was held in Kendall Hall in Quincy, Illinois. Archibald Williams addressed the crowd, as did his close friends Orville Browning and Abraham Jonas, among others.

Election day, Tuesday, November 6, 1854, was a beautiful day in Quincy, Illinois, with the sun shining and little wind blowing. The good weather and a large vote for Archibald Williams in Quincy raised a brief hope that Williams might possibly win the election. The issue was still in doubt on the following day, Wednesday, November 7, 1854.

By Thursday, November 8, 1854, enough voting returns had come in to determine the outcome. Orville Browning grumbled to his diary: “We are beaten in this county. Had hoped for better things.... Election returns have been received so far as to make it certain Mr. Williams is beaten.”¹³⁹

So, despite enjoying the public support of Abraham Lincoln, Archibald Williams was defeated in his quest for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Democrat William A. Richardson was re-elected. Large Democratic majorities in Schuyler and Brown counties guaranteed the race to Richardson.

Richardson was well aware, however, that the political tides were running in the direction of the Anti-Nebraska men in 1854. In an election-eve letter to Stephen Douglas, he speculated things were going so poorly for the Democrats, in both Illinois and the nation, that he might lose to Archibald Williams. He was right about Illinois and the nation, but he was wrong in predicting his own loss. His majority over Archibald Williams was more than 800 votes, better than Richardson had done two years earlier in 1852 against Orville Browning.¹⁴⁰

The election news from the rest of Illinois was as favorable to the Anti-Nebraska men as Richardson worried it would be. The Anti-Nebraska

¹³⁹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 161.

¹⁴⁰ Dennis J. Thavenet, “William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 156-157.

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candidates won a majority of the Illinois members of Congress and also gained a majority of the members of the Illinois state legislature.¹⁴¹

In a post-election letter to Orville Browning dated November 12, 1854, Abraham Lincoln commented in a matter-of-fact manner on Archibald Williams defeat. Lincoln wrote: “We now understand here that Mr. Williams is beaten also. Schuyler and Brown [counties] are said to have played thunder.”

Lincoln was pleased, however, with the overall results. He noted to Browning: “It looks as though Anti-Nebraska will have the [U.S.] House of Representatives.”¹⁴²

Archibald Williams’s unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. House in 1854 was an important event in his life and made him part of a significant political movement in United States history. Reacting to the threat of popular sovereignty bringing slavery to Kansas and Nebraska, Archibald Williams joined a virtual army of other men who ran under the Anti-Nebraska label in 1854 to express their firm opposition to any expansion of slavery into the territories. The end result of this Anti-Nebraska movement, in which Archibald Williams was a full participant, was the breakup of the Whig Party and the later creation of the Republican Party.

MENTIONED AGAIN IN A LINCOLN LETTER:

Slightly more than a month after Archibald Williams was defeated in his bid for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Abraham Lincoln wrote a letter in which Lincoln seemed to be comparing himself to Archibald Williams. The reason for making such a comparison was not made clear in the letter, which began as follows:¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln’s Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 83.

¹⁴² Abraham Lincoln to Orville Browning, November 12, 1854, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume II.

¹⁴³ Abraham Lincoln to T. J. Henderson, December 15, 1854, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume II, p. 293-294.

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Springfield
Dec. 15, 1854

Hon. T. J. Henderson:
Dear Sir:

Yours of the 11th was received last night, and for which I thank you. Of course I prefer myself to all others; yet it is neither in my heart nor my conscience to say I am any better man than Mr. Williams.

(remainder of letter)

Yours truly
A. LINCOLN

The above was the only thing the letter had to say about Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams directly. One explanation for Lincoln comparing himself to Archibald Williams might have been that both men were thinking of running for U.S. Senator from Illinois in 1855. Although Lincoln and Williams may have had competing ambitions from time to time, those ambitions were never strong enough to drive the two men apart, either as friends or political allies.

The remainder of Abraham Lincoln's letter to T. J. Henderson on December 15, 1854, concerned the desperate political situation the Democrats were in following that party's sizable losses in the 1854 elections. Lincoln described the Democrats' discomfort from the election results thusly:

We [Lincoln and the Anti-Nebraska men] shall have a terrible struggle with our adversaries. They are desperate, and bent on desperate deeds. I accidentally learned of one of the leaders here writing to a member south of here, in about the following language. "We [the Democrats] are beaten. They [the Anti-Nebraska men] have a clear majority of at least nine, on joint ballot. They *outnumber* us, but we must *outmanage* them. Douglas must be sustained. We [next page] must elect the Speaker; and we must elect a Nebraska U.S. senator, or elect none at all."

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Similar to the election of Zachary Taylor as President in 1848, the defeat of the Democrats by the Anti-Nebraska men in 1854 was one of the high points in Abraham Lincoln's political career prior to his own election as President of the United States.

Concomitantly, the Anti-Nebraska sweep of 1854 was a rare defeat for Stephen A. Douglas. Noted for his great political skills, Douglas completely misjudged the extent to which popular sovereignty and the possibility of Nebraska becoming a slave state had upset Northern public opinion. One historian deemed that intense public reaction to be "the most astounding outburst of mass indignation ever provoked by an Act of Congress."¹⁴⁴

Stephen Douglas was badly punished at the polls in 1854 for his major miscalculation on public approval of popular sovereignty. That miscalculation on Douglas's part proved to be one of the major causes of the American Civil War.

¹⁴⁴ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2nd edition, p. 191-192.

CHAPTER 14

THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN LETTER TO OWEN LOVEJOY

By August of 1855, the Whig Party was in total disarray. The defeat of Winfield Scott as the Whig Party candidate for President of the United States in 1852 had badly demoralized the Whigs. Many ended up joining the Know-Nothing Party with its strong policies against immigrants. In the meantime, the Democrat who won the 1852 presidential election, Franklin Pierce, was continuing his efforts to turn the Democratic Party into the party of the expansion of slavery. Also disturbing was the fact that most of the Anti-Nebraska candidates elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1854 were Know-Nothings rather than Whigs.

Abraham Lincoln did not quite know what to do in this volatile situation in which the Whig Party was fading away and the Know-Nothings were gaining strength. Lincoln wrote a letter to Owen Lovejoy, an abolitionist lawyer and minister in Princeton, Illinois. Owen Lovejoy's brother, Elijah Lovejoy, had been an abolitionist newspaper publisher who was killed by a pro-slavery mob in Alton, Illinois, in 1837. Owen Lovejoy became the leading abolitionist in Illinois in his efforts to avenge his brother's death.

In his 1855 letter to Owen Lovejoy, Abraham Lincoln explained his hesitation in acting in such a difficult political environment:

“Yours of the 7th was received the day before yesterday. Not even *you* are more anxious to prevent the extension of slavery than I; and yet the political atmosphere is such, just now, that I fear to do anything, lest I do wrong. Know-Nothingism has not yet entirely tumbled to pieces... About us here, they [the Know-Nothings] are mostly my old political and personal friends [former Whigs]; and I have hoped their organization would die out without the painful necessity of my taking an open stand against them.”

Abraham Lincoln then expressed to Lovejoy his contempt for the Know-Nothings and their anti-immigrant attitudes:

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“Of their principles [the Know-Nothings’s principles] I think little better than I do of those of the slavery extensionists. Indeed I do not perceive how any one professing to be sensitive to the wrongs of the Negroes, can join in a league to degrade a class of white men [immigrants].”

Toward the end of his letter to Owen Lovejoy, Abraham Lincoln pointed to a public meeting recently held in Quincy, Illinois. A resolutions committee, chaired by Archibald Williams, had recommended a set of principles on which opponents of slavery in the territories might be willing to “fuse” together into a single political party. The resolutions were unanimously adopted at the public meeting. Lincoln wrote to Lovejoy:

“I have no objection to ‘fuse’ with anybody provided I can fuse on ground which I think is right; and I believe the opponents of slavery extension could now do this, were it not for this [Know-Nothingism]. In many speeches last summer I advised those who did me the honor of a hearing to ‘stand with anybody who stands right’ – and I am quite willing to follow my own advice. I lately saw, in the *Quincy Whig*, the report of a preamble and resolutions, made by Mr. [Archibald] Williams, as the chairman of a committee, to a public meeting and adopted by the meeting. I saw them but once, and have them not now at command; but so far as I can remember them, they occupy about the ground that I should be willing to ‘fuse’ upon.”¹⁴⁵

THE ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS “RESOLUTIONS” ON FUSION AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY:

The “resolutions, made by Mr. [Archibald] Williams,” to which Lincoln referred in his letter to Owen Lovejoy, came about this way. Ichabod Coddington, a well-known lecturer on behalf of the Abolition of Slavery, was touring Illinois at the behest of the newly growing Republican

¹⁴⁵ Abraham Lincoln to Owen Lovejoy, August 11, 1855, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume II, p. 316-317.

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Party. The theme of his lectures was that all the various groups opposed to slavery should unite in the Republican Party.

Ichabod Codding came to Quincy, Illinois, on Tuesday, July 4, 1855. For five evenings he lectured in Kendall Hall, drawing large audiences and urging the various anti-slavery factions to “fuse.” On the fourth evening of Codding’s five lectures in Quincy, a resolutions committee was formed chaired by Archibald Williams.

The resolutions committee was dominated by the Whig Party. The chairman, Archibald Williams, was a Whig, as was a second member of the committee, E. H. Dudley. The third member, W. Powers, did not have a party identification.

On Saturday night, the final night of Ichabod Codding’s lecture series in Quincy, Archibald Williams presented the recommendations of the resolutions committee to the audience. The resolutions expressed strong opposition to the spread of slavery to the territories but called for allowing slavery to continue in those states where it already existed. This was an early and clear statement of a position that later became the cornerstone of the formation of the Republican Party in Illinois. The lecture audience adopted the resolutions unanimously, urging unity upon all who agreed with the resolutions and the disregarding of all other more divisive issues.¹⁴⁶

Ichabod Codding was delighted with the adoption of the resolutions written by Archibald Williams and the resolutions committee at the meeting in Quincy, Illinois. For the first time, there had been a fusion of Whigs, Free Democrats, and Anti-Nebraska Democrats in a city in middle and southern Illinois. Codding saw his Quincy lectures as a major contributor to the Republican Party movement in Illinois.¹⁴⁷

The real significance of Archibald Williams’s work with the resolutions committee at the Ichabod Codding lectures in Quincy, Illinois,

¹⁴⁶ Victor B. Howard, “The Illinois Republican Party, Part II, The Party Becomes Conservative, 1855-1856,” *Journal Of The Illinois State Historical Society*, Autumn, 1871, p. 290-291. Also see *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig*, July 28, 1855, and *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, August 6, 1855, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Victor B. Howard, “The Illinois Republican Party, Part II, The Party Becomes Conservative, 1855-1856,” *Journal Of The Illinois State Historical Society*, Autumn, 1871, p. 291. Also see Ichabod Codding to Editors, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1855.

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was that the resolutions appear to have influenced, or perhaps confirmed, the thinking at the time of Abraham Lincoln. As a result, Abraham Lincoln mentioned the resolutions favorably in his letter to Owen Lovejoy. It would soon become clear that both Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln had joined Ichabod Coddin in his struggle in 1855 to find a way to unite the various groups opposed to slavery in the territories into a single “fused” political movement.

CHAPTER 15

AT THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

On December 6 and 7 of 1855, Archibald Williams was in Washington, D.C., arguing a legal case before the United States Supreme Court. The opposing lawyer before the Supreme Court was Archibald Williams's old Quincy, Illinois, friend and political ally, Orville Browning.

There is no record of how Archibald Williams traveled to Washington, D.C., for his appearance before the highest court in the United States. However, Orville Browning recorded in his diary that he used a mixture of steamboats on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers and a variety of railroad trains to get himself to the nation's capital. It can be assumed Archibald Williams had much the same sort of travel experience.¹⁴⁸

Browning noted at the time that he was nervous about arguing before the highest court in the land, but he overcame his nervousness and turned in an eloquent argument praised by others. On the first day, December 6, 1855, Browning spoke first for the plaintiff. "Mr. Williams followed for the defendant, and [Browning] replied in a speech of half an hour."

On the second day, December 7, 1855, Browning once again went first. "Mr. Williams followed [Browning], but [Browning] did not reply, all the questions raised having been fully discussed."¹⁴⁹

The case involved a controversy in which both men had much experience and knowledge – rival land claims. Orville Browning argued in behalf of Joel Wright, who had secured title to a property by paying back

¹⁴⁸ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 206-209.

¹⁴⁹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 211-212. Also see Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Bloomington University Press, 1957), p. 54-55.

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taxes. Archibald Williams represented Schuyler H. Mattison, who claimed Wright had gained title through “bad faith.” The Supreme Court was to decide whether the concept of “bad faith” had been handled properly by the judge at the lower court level.

The Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Wright v. Mattison* in January of 1856. The high court’s ruling was a victory for Browning and a defeat for Williams. The Supreme Court ruled that “bad faith” had been improperly determined by the judge in the lower court, thereby producing an incorrect decision against Browning’s client. The Supreme Court ordered the case to be retried with the question of “bad faith” being determined by the jury and not by the judge.¹⁵⁰

It is not known whether Browning’s client or Williams’s client prevailed at the lower court level.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.:

Archibald Williams’s daughter, Almira Jane Williams, was in Washington, D.C., at the time her father argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court. Orville Browning paid a visit to her on the evening of December 6, 1855, at Willard’s Hotel.¹⁵¹

Orville Browning attempted to pay a call a second time to Almira Williams while she was in Washington, D.C., but she was not “in” at the Willard Hotel that evening.¹⁵²

On December 11, 1855, Archibald Williams and Orville Browning “went to Judge McLean’s at Mrs. Carter’s to tea.” John McLean was an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, one of the justices who had just heard Williams and Browning make their arguments before the Supreme Court in *Wright v. Mattison*.

¹⁵⁰ *Wright v. Mattison*, 59 US 50 (1855).

¹⁵¹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 212.

¹⁵² Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 216.

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A number of members of Congress, mainly from Maryland and Pennsylvania, were in attendance at the gathering, which lasted until 9 P.M. Browning described it as “a very pleasant party.” Browning noted, however, that, even in that august company, Browning himself “had to do most of the talking,” which “is not a very pleasant thing.”

In his diary account of the gathering at Judge McLean’s and Mrs. Carter’s, Browning described Archibald Williams as “my friend Williams of Quincy.”¹⁵³

A STRONGER NEWSPAPER ADVOCATING FOR A NEW POLITICAL PARTY:

In the mid-1850s, the Republican Party was emerging as a political powerhouse in the American Midwest. At that time, Archibald Williams joined with a group of other men in Quincy, Illinois, to recruit a strong editor for the Republican-leaning newspaper in Quincy. At the request of Orville Browning, F. A. Dallam, editor of the *Oquawka Plaindealer* in Oquawka, Illinois, came down to Quincy to see about buying an interest in the *Quincy Republican* newspaper, also known as the *Quincy Whig Republican*.

At a meeting in Orville Browning’s office in Quincy, Illinois, on Friday, April 4, 1856, Archibald Williams and the other men made the arrangements to buy an interest in the *Quincy Republican* newspaper for F. A. Dallam. It is not known if Archibald Williams put any of his own money into the project, although he may have. Upon completion of the deal, F. A. Dallam promptly moved from Oquawka to Quincy to take charge of the newspaper, thereby strengthening the presentation of the Republican Party point of view in Quincy.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 214.

¹⁵⁴ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 231.

CHAPTER 16

THE FOUNDING OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN ILLINOIS

Archibald Williams played a significant role at an 1856 Anti-Nebraska Convention held in Bloomington, Illinois. Williams had worked hard to drum up Anti-Nebraska sentiment in Quincy, Illinois. On Thursday, May 29, 1856, “hundreds” of Anti-Nebraska delegates assembled in Bloomington. At 10 A.M., Archibald Williams “was called to the chair temporarily.” He presided over the Bloomington convention until a permanent president was elected.¹⁵⁵

During the convention, Abraham Lincoln gave a major speech on the slavery issue in Major’s Hall in Bloomington. The speech was so powerful that the listeners, even the newspaper reporters and Lincoln’s strong supporters, put down their pencils and made no record of it. Some call it Lincoln’s “Lost Speech.”

From the recollections of those who heard it, Abraham Lincoln’s “Lost Speech” at Bloomington in 1856 sought to join all the divisive groups that constituted the Anti-Nebraska movement into a united political force. A noted historian summarized the speech this way:

“Doubting Whig conservatives had to be satisfied without alienating neurotic abolitionist radicals. Germans must be won over, but touchy Know-Nothings not meanwhile lost. Not a single group could be spared. Bygones and grievances simply had to be forgotten by everybody.”¹⁵⁶

As for slavery, Lincoln in his “Lost Speech” rejected the pleadings of the abolitionist elements and worked to bring everyone under the same tent with the simple slogan: “No slavery in the territories.”

¹⁵⁵ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 238. Harry E. Pratt, *Lincoln - 1840 to 1846: Day-by-Day Activities* (Springfield, IL: 1939), p. 204 and 234.

¹⁵⁶ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2nd edition, p. 225-226.

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While attending the 1856 Anti-Nebraska convention in Bloomington, Illinois, Archibald Williams stayed at the home of Judge David Davis. Judge Davis would later become one of Abraham Lincoln's campaign managers in Lincoln's successful campaign for U.S. President in 1860. In 1862, President Lincoln would appoint David Davis an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

The Bloomington Convention in 1856 was considered to be the birth of the Republican Party in Illinois.¹⁵⁷ Archibald Williams thus was one of the founders of the Illinois Republican Party, along with Abraham Lincoln, Orville H. Browning, and a number of others. Archibald Williams also was likely to have been in Major's Hall in Bloomington when Abraham Lincoln gave his famous "Lost Speech."

Historians argued that Archibald Williams, Orville H. Browning, and Abraham Lincoln did not "found" the Illinois Republican Party at Bloomington in 1856. It was more likely the three men were part of a "band of Whigs who, by May, 1856, had taken over the Republican Party [in Illinois] and organized it on conservative lines."¹⁵⁸ They took an emerging political party with abolitionist tendencies and moderated it into a party committed only to "No slavery in the territories."

QUESTIONABLE USE OF THE TERM "OLD LINE WHIG":

Archibald Williams was an enthusiastic convert from the Whig Party to the Republican Party. A few years after 1856, however, when the Republican Party started to enjoy considerable political success, many of the new Republican Party members fallaciously tried to argue they had, like Williams, been "old-line Whigs." That implied they had been faithful

¹⁵⁷ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1926), Volume II, p. 25-30.

¹⁵⁸ Theodore C. Pease, "Introduction," Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. xvii. Also see Victor B. Howard, "The Illinois Republican Party, Part II, The Party Becomes Conservative, 1855-1856," *Journal Of The Illinois State Historical Society*, Autumn, 1871, p. 306.

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adherents to the Whig Party and its philosophy. In reality these newcomer Republicans had mainly been Democrats.

Archibald Williams, to the great amusement of his friends, summed up these Republicans with a questionable political past this way:

“An old-line Whig [has come] to mean a man who drank bad whiskey and always voted the Democratic ticket.”¹⁵⁹

CRITICAL OF PRESIDENT FRANKLIN PIERCE:

On the evening of Wednesday, June 11, 1856, Archibald Williams gave a major speech at the Hancock County Courthouse in Carthage, Illinois.

The previous evening, at the same location, there had been two major speeches by supporters of Democratic U.S. President Franklin Pierce and his “pro slavery administration” in Washington, D.C. Orville Browning, who witnessed the Democratic Party speechmaking, described President Pierce’s policies as “atrocities.”

Archibald Williams addressed a variety of “political subjects” in his talk, but he particularly criticized President Pierce.¹⁶⁰

These two days of partisan political debate in Carthage, Illinois, illustrated the extent to which the slavery issue was dividing the United States. The two days of debates also highlighted the fact that Archibald Williams was becoming more closely allied with the anti-slavery forces.

CHAIRMAN OF A MEETING ON “BLEEDING KANSAS:”

The night of September 8, 1856, found Archibald Williams in a familiar role – chairman of a meeting on a political topic of current interest. The occasion was the visit to Quincy, Illinois, of William H. Ralston, who

¹⁵⁹ “Hon. Archibald Williams, Quincy,” in *United States Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery* (Chicago, American Biographical Publishing Company, 1876), Illinois Volume, p. 152.

¹⁶⁰ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 240.

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had been in Kansas Territory observing the situation there. The struggle over whether the territory should be slave or free had escalated into armed warfare, earning Kansas the nickname of “Bleeding Kansas.” The meeting was held at the Adams County Court House in Quincy. A newspaper reported:

“Mr. Ralston was called for, and made a statement of what he had seen of the outrages and murders committed by the Pro-Slavery party in Kansas, upon unoffending and peaceable Free State citizens. He concluded his remarks with the avowal, that, although all his life a Democrat, for the sake of his country and his own honor and reputation, upon the present issue he could act with that party no longer. His statement was received with the most intense excitement, and he concluded among loud and continued cheering.”¹⁶¹

Events in Kansas in the late 1850s illustrated the failure of the popular sovereignty idea of Democrats Stephen Douglas and William A. Richardson. Supporters of slavery as well those seeking a free state rushed into the territory, each side determined to make the territory the way they wanted it. The end result was military-style conflict in Kansas, not the peaceful solution that Douglas and Richardson had promised with popular sovereignty. The situation resulted in further agitation of the slavery/anti-slavery issue throughout the nation.

IN DEFENSE OF MISS MARY B. PEARSON:

On Thursday, October 30, 1856, Miss Mary B. Pearson went on trial for larceny in the courthouse in Quincy, Illinois. Her defending lawyers included Archibald Williams and Orville Browning.

The prosecution witnesses faced a strong cross examination from the defense attorneys. The prosecution witnesses soon “were overwhelmed with shame and confusion. The evidence, instead of making a case, tended to establish a conspiracy against the defendant and swept away every ground of

¹⁶¹ Newspaper article, source not identified, dated Quincy, September 8, 1856.

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suspicion against her... The prosecution was abandoned and the jury rendered a verdict of not guilty without leaving the box.”¹⁶²

THE ELECTION OF 1856:

By the fall of 1856, Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams had abandoned the Whig Party and become members of the Republican Party. The following comment was subsequently made about Archibald Williams’s conduct of his political life and his conversion from Whig to Republican:

“We have already referred to Mr. Williams as a politician, but in this allusion let no injustice be done to his fame or his memory. He was not, at any time of life, as far as we know, a politician, in the ordinary acceptation of that term. He had none of the arts about him by which politicians usually achieve position and distinction.”

“He was a politician simply in the fact that for many years he was a leading member of the old Whig Party, and more recently of the Republicans. Whenever the political party to which he belonged had it in its power to confer the honors of office upon him, it has been done.”¹⁶³

It was in 1856 that the newly formed Republican Party ran its first candidate for President of the United States – John C. Fremont. He was defeated in the 1856 presidential election by Democrat James Buchanan. At the 1856 Democratic National Convention, Buchanan gained the Democratic nomination over Lincoln’s main rival in Illinois, Democratic U.S. Senator Stephen A. Douglas.

DRED SCOTT V. SANFORD:

The following year, in 1857, the United States Supreme Court handed down the *Dred Scott v. Sanford* decision. This ruling by the highest court in the land declared that slaves remained the personal property of their owners even when they were in free states. Dred Scott, a slave, had been taken to the

¹⁶² Theodore Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 261.

¹⁶³ “Death of Hon. Archibald Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, Volume XXX, Number 4, September 28, 1863.

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free states of Illinois and Wisconsin by his owner and then returned to the slave state of Missouri. The court stated that being in free states made no difference and Dred Scott would always belong to his owner and master.

The result of the *Dred Scott* decision was to further inflame Northern opposition to the institution of slavery and its further spread to newly acquired United States territories.

MORE LEGAL PUBLICATIONS:

In 1858, there was published a legal essay by Archibald Williams. The title page of the pamphlet read:

An
EXAMINATION
Of The
OPINION AND DECISION
Of
THE SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS
In The Cases Of
Benjamin Gettings, & Co.,
Vs.
John Stearns, & Co.
BY ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

This legal publication by Archibald Williams had a publisher listed, but it was a publisher with a decided political bent in its name. The publisher was The Whig and Republican Steam Power Press of Quincy, Illinois.¹⁶⁴

Apparently there was a second case in which John Stearns, as an individual, countersued against Benjamin Gettings, also as an individual. This second case also went to the Illinois state Supreme Court. Thus *Benjamin Gettings, & Co., vs. John Stearns, & Co.*, was closely followed by

¹⁶⁴ Archibald Williams, "Examination of the Opinion and Decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois in the Cases of *Benjamin Gettings, & Co., vs. John Stearns, & Co.*," found in a bound collection of legal pamphlets, "Arguments in the Supreme Court of Illinois," Volume I, 1845 to 1870, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.

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Stearns vs. Gettings. This second case gave Archibald Williams the opportunity to publish another legal brief highlighting his argument before the Illinois state Supreme Court.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ “Supreme Court, January Term, 1860, *John Stearns vs. Benjamin Gettings*, Argument of Archibald Williams for Plaintiff in Error,” found in a bound collection of legal pamphlets, “Arguments in the Supreme Court of Illinois,” Volume I, 1845 to 1870, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.

CHAPTER 17

THE ELECTION – AND DEBATES – OF 1858

On June 17, 1858, over one thousand delegates gathered in Springfield, Illinois, for the Illinois state Republican Convention. The major task for the convention was to nominate a Republican candidate to oppose Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, who was running for re-election to the United States Senate.

Douglas was in a weakened position. He had antagonized Democratic President James Buchanan, who was supporting a pro-slavery constitution for Kansas. Douglas, of course, preferred popular sovereignty for Kansas. The Buchanan Democrats in Illinois were opposing Douglas as strenuously as the Republicans were. Nonetheless, Douglas still had a strong base of Democratic Party supporters in Illinois.

Three of the Republican Convention delegates were Abraham Lincoln's old friends from Quincy, Illinois. They were Orville Browning, Abraham Jonas, and Archibald Williams.¹⁶⁶ Orville Browning wrote the party platform for the state Republican Convention to adopt.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS OR ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOR U.S. SENATE IN 1858:

Archibald Williams had been mentioned as a possible opponent against Stephen Douglas for the 1858 U.S. Senate seat from Illinois.¹⁶⁷ By the time of the Republican Convention, however, Williams was solidly backing Lincoln. Many years later, a man named Joseph G. Waters offered this perspective on the situation:

“[Archibald Williams] was the foremost lawyer of Illinois... He was in ability, looks and life, the exact counterpart of Abraham Lincoln, and Mr.

¹⁶⁶ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig and Republican*, April 1, 1858, and May 28, 1858.

¹⁶⁷ “Lincoln Autographed *Debates: The Archibald Williams Copy*,” in “Lincoln Lore,” *Illinois History Journal*, August 1979, p. 4.

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Lincoln obtained the nomination to stand for United States senator, because the Republicans knew it was a hopeless contest and they did not desire to take to defeat the more prominent Republicans, chief of whom was Archibald Williams. This may be new, but it is a fact.”¹⁶⁸

What was probably occurring was that, by the 1850s, Archibald Williams was so well-known in Illinois that his name was “mentioned” whenever a U.S. Senate seat became vacant, initially in the Whig Party and later in the decade in the Republican Party. There is no record, however, that Archibald Williams made any sort of a serious attempt to secure the 1858 U.S. Senate nomination from the Republican Party in Illinois.

THE “HOUSE DIVIDED” SPEECH:

Abraham Lincoln was unanimously nominated by the 1858 Illinois state Republican Convention to run against Stephen Douglas. Lincoln was characterized in the nominating resolution as the “first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate as the successor of Stephen A. Douglas.”¹⁶⁹

That evening, Abraham Lincoln spoke to the convention delegates in the chamber of the Illinois state House of Representatives in Springfield. He delivered what became known as his famous “House Divided” speech. In it he predicted the United States would become either all slave or all free. He said:

“‘A house divided against itself cannot stand.’ I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved – I do not expect the house to *fall* – but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ “Burial Saturday: Body of A. L. Williams Will Arrive Tomorrow,” *Topeka Capital*, August 29, 1907.

¹⁶⁹ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years - One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 137.

¹⁷⁰ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years - One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 138.

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Did Archibald Williams see and hear Abraham Lincoln give his famous “House Divided” speech? Archibald Williams was elected to the 1858 Illinois state Republican Convention and attended it. There is good reason to believe Archibald Williams was present in the Illinois House chamber in Springfield when Abraham Lincoln gave one of his most important and compelling speeches.

AT DINNER IN CHICAGO:

On Friday, July 16, 1858, Archibald Williams was in Chicago, Illinois, attending court.

Along with Jackson Grimshaw, Orville Browning, and a man named Henderson, Archibald Williams dined at the home of Norman B. Judd in Chicago. Judd, a native of New York, came to Chicago as a lawyer in 1836. He was an active friend of Abraham Lincoln, served in Congress, switched from Democrat to Republican, and was appointed minister to Prussia in 1861 when Lincoln became President of the United States.¹⁷¹

A DISTRICT CONVENTION ENDORSES ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOR U.S. SENATE:

In late August of 1858, Archibald Williams attended a House of Representatives District Republican Convention held at Augusta, Illinois. At that time, Adams County (Quincy) and Hancock County (Carthage) were both in the same House of Representatives district.

The Democrats, led by Stephen Douglas, were criticizing the Republicans in Illinois for strongly endorsing Abraham Lincoln as “the first and only choice” of the Republicans for U.S. Senator. Up to that time, political parties in Illinois had generally refrained from endorsing candidates for statewide offices.

The district convention Republicans meeting in Augusta decided to oppose Douglas’s criticism head-on. The *Quincy Daily Whig* reported:

¹⁷¹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 330.

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“That convention did not consider it un-Republican to express its wishes for a senatorial candidate... It indorsed the selection of the state Republican Convention [Abraham Lincoln], which was held at Springfield [in] June... The convention adjourned with nine long and hearty cheers for the Republican cause [and] for Abraham Lincoln...”¹⁷²

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

As the Republican candidate for U.S. Senator from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln launched his 1858 election campaign. His Democratic opponent was his longtime nemesis – incumbent Democratic Senator Stephen A. Douglas.

Douglas was nicknamed the “Little Giant” because of his short stature coupled with his significant political skills and achievements. It is important to note that Douglas lived in Quincy prior to his election to the United States Senate.¹⁷³

Two of Lincoln’s friends in Quincy, Illinois, waded into the campaign in behalf of Lincoln. Orville Browning and Archibald Williams each embarked on a speaking tour of nearby cities in Illinois to try to help Lincoln win the election. The Republican Party newspaper in Quincy enthusiastically announced that Browning would campaign for Lincoln and called upon Archibald Williams to do the same:

“The notice [that Browning will campaign for Lincoln] ... 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.”¹⁷⁴

Orville Browning’s speeches in support of Lincoln were limited in number because of heavy legal business and ill health. Archibald Williams, on the other hand, was highly praised for his extensive speaking schedule in

¹⁷² “A Leaf from History,” *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig*, April 16, 1902, p. 1.

¹⁷³ John Tillson, *Quincy Past and Present*, p. 112.

¹⁷⁴ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig and Republican*, September 2, 1858. Because Archie was a nickname for Archibald Williams, there was no official way to spell it. Sometimes it was spelled Archie, but at other times it was Archy.

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Abraham Lincoln's behalf. The Republican Party newspaper in Quincy, Illinois, noted:

“Old ARCHY WILLIAMS is doing good service for the Republican cause... He has already spoken at Macomb, Oquawka, Monmouth, Cameron, Galesburg, and other points...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...”

In addition to this strong endorsement of Archibald Williams's efforts in the 1858 campaign, the Quincy newspaper urged the young men of the region to follow Williams's example and campaign for Lincoln themselves.¹⁷⁵

It is sad to note that Archibald Williams was being described in the newspapers during the 1858 election campaign as “old” and “in the winter of his life.” Apparently age was beginning to take a toll on both his appearance and his vitality. It may have taken a great deal of physical exertion on Archibald Williams's part to maintain the heavy speaking schedule in behalf of Abraham Lincoln that he did.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS AND THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES:

Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas engaged in a series of legendary debates in Illinois during the late summer and early fall of 1858. The two men drew large crowds to these political encounters, and their words were spread by telegraph to newspapers throughout the United States. Lincoln and Douglas in their great debates tussled mainly over the issue of human slavery and how it should be dealt with by a divided nation.

Archibald Williams was an important enough political figure in Illinois in 1858 that his name came up three times in the course of the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

¹⁷⁵ *Quincy (Illinois) Whig and Republican*, October 11, 1858.

First Lincoln-Douglas Debate:

At the first debate, held in Ottawa, Illinois, on August 21, 1858, Stephen Douglas was making a sarcastic review of Abraham Lincoln's political career. Douglas noted that Lincoln had received the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate in Illinois in 1858 only because of a "deal" under which Lincoln previously did not run for U.S. Senate in return for being "guaranteed" the party nomination in 1858. Douglas sought to cast derision on Lincoln by referring jokingly to the other possible Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate nomination in 1858 who were forced to step out of the race in Lincoln's favor.

The following debate quote by Douglas includes some of the positive audience reaction to Douglas's statements, written in italics and enclosed in parenthesis:

"It was in consequence of this arrangement that the Republican Convention was empanelled to instruct for Lincoln and nobody else, and it was on this account that they passed resolutions that he was their first, their last, and their only choice. Archy Williams was nowhere, Browning was nobody, Wentworth was not to be considered, they had no man in the Republican Party for the place except Lincoln, for the reason that he demanded that they should carry out the arrangement. (*'Hit him again.'*)"¹⁷⁶

Third Lincoln-Douglas Debate:

By the time of the third debate, held in Jonesboro, Illinois, on September 15, 1858, it was apparent that Stephen Douglas had decided that he had a winning issue. It was the issue of embarrassing Abraham Lincoln with the fact that he had insisted on being the "first, last and only choice" of the Republican Party for the U.S. Senate nomination in Illinois in 1858. In the debate at Jonesboro, Douglas not only gave a more detailed explanation of the "deal" that brought Lincoln the nomination, but he increased from three to five the number of prominent Illinois Republicans who were deemed by Lincoln to be of insufficient quality for the office. Douglas said:

¹⁷⁶ Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume III, p. 7.

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“When the Republican convention assembled at Springfield in June last for the purpose of nominating State officers only, the Abolitionists could not get Lincoln and his friends into it until they would pledge themselves that Lincoln should be their candidate for the Senate; and you will find, in proof of this, that that convention passed a resolution unanimously declaring that Abraham Lincoln was the ‘first, last and only choice’ of the Republicans for United States Senator. He was not willing to have it understood that he was merely their first choice, or their last choice, but their *only* choice. The Black Republican party had nobody else. Browning was nowhere, Gov. Bissell was of no account, Archie Williams was not to be taken into consideration, John Wentworth was not worth mentioning, John M. Palmer was degraded, and their party presented the extraordinary spectacle of having but one---the first, last, and only choice for the Senate. (*‘Laughter.’*)”¹⁷⁷

Fourth Lincoln-Douglas Debate:

On the occasion of the fourth debate, held in Charleston, Illinois, on September 18, 1858, Stephen A. Douglas expanded even further his long and sarcastic tale of how Lincoln was “the first, last, and only choice” for the Republican Party U.S. Senate nomination in 1858. Douglas’s list of candidates who might have qualified for the nomination was lengthened to six, and this time out, for the first time, Douglas used phraseology that implied that all six men had very much wanted to be nominated instead of Lincoln. Douglas said:

“And now I will explain to you what has been a mystery all over the State and Union, the reason why Lincoln was nominated for the United States Senate by the Black Republican convention... Every man was surprised and many disgusted when Lincoln was nominated. Archie Williams thought he was entitled to it. Browning knew that he deserved it, Wentworth was certain that he would get it, Peck had hopes, Judd felt sure that he was the man, and Palmer had claims and had made arrangements to secure it; but to their utter amazement, Lincoln was nominated by the convention, (*‘Laughter,’*) and not only that, but he received the nomination

¹⁷⁷ Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume III, p. 109.

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unanimously, by a resolution declaring that Abraham Lincoln was ‘the first, last, and only choice’ of the Republican Party.”¹⁷⁸

Over the course of the three Lincoln-Douglas debates noted above, Stephen Douglas mentioned six men as possible candidates who might have been nominated instead of Abraham Lincoln for U.S. Senator from Illinois in 1858. Of the six, only three – Archibald Williams, Orville Browning, and John Wentworth – were named in all three debates by Douglas. Archibald Williams’s name was brought up first in two of the debates, and Orville Browning was cited first in a third.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS SPEAKS IN BEHALF OF LINCOLN IN GALESBURG:

On October 7, 1858, a Lincoln-Douglas debate was held in Galesburg in Knox County, Illinois. The debate was held outdoors in a cold wind and drew a sitting and standing crowd of over 20,000 people.¹⁷⁹

After the Lincoln-Douglas debate in Galesburg, Archibald Williams spoke in favor of Lincoln’s election to the U.S. Senate at a gathering of local Republicans at Dunn’s Hall in Galesburg. Williams’s powerful speech elicited this comment from a newspaper reporter: “There are more brains in [Archibald Williams’s] skillet than all the rest put together.”¹⁸⁰

One of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was held in Quincy, Illinois, but there is no record that Archibald Williams had anything important to do with it.

“...BUT THE GAME IS NOT PLAYED OUT.”

Abraham Lincoln lost the 1858 U.S. Senate election in Illinois to Stephen A. Douglas, but the extensive national newspaper coverage of the

¹⁷⁸ Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume III, p. 174.

¹⁷⁹ Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years - One Volume Edition* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1954), p. 140.

¹⁸⁰ Jason Sherman, *Free Democrat*, October 8, 1858, found in Herbert Mitgang, editor, *Abraham Lincoln: A Press Portrait*, p. 125.

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Lincoln-Douglas debates made Lincoln a nationally known political leader, particularly in the newly founded Republican Party. Despite the bitterness of his defeat, Lincoln did not lose heart in his support of the antislavery cause. A close friend, Charles S. Zane, who was an attorney, wrote:

“Mr. Lincoln’s confidence in the justness of the antislavery battle never faltered through the years I knew him. In January, 1859, while the Democrats were celebrating the election of Stephen A. Douglas to the United States Senate, Archibald Williams...came into Lincoln’s office and finding him writing said: ‘Well, the Democrats are making a great noise over their victory.’ Looking up Lincoln replied: ‘Yes, Archie, Douglas has taken this trick, but the game is not played out.’”¹⁸¹

DEBATES BOOK AUTOGRAPHED BY LINCOLN WAS GIVEN TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

The debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas during the 1858 U.S. Senate campaign in Illinois became so famous that Abraham Lincoln handed out signed presentation copies of the debates to his close friends and political allies. One was given to Archibald Williams and bore the inscription: “To Hon: Archibald Williams, with respects of A. Lincoln.”

The fact that Abraham Lincoln gave a signed copy of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, perhaps the most famous election campaign debates in U.S. history, to Archibald Williams was yet another sign of Lincoln’s close friendship and strong political alliance with Archibald Williams. The Archibald Williams copy of the Lincoln-autographed debates is in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Charles S. Zane, “A Young Lawyer’s Memories of Lincoln,” found in Rufus Rockwell Wilson, editor, *Lincoln Among His Friends: A Sheaf of Intimate Memories*, p. 134.

¹⁸² “Lincoln Autographed *Debates*: The Archibald Williams Copy,” in “Lincoln Lore,” *Illinois History Journal*, August 1979, p. 4.

CHAPTER 18

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1860

In 1859, a strong opponent of slavery, John Brown, launched an armed raid on the United States Armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia (later West Virginia). Brown's goal was to steal the rifles and ammunition stored in the armory and use them to arm the slaves in the South so the slaves themselves could fight for freedom from their owners.

John Brown's raid failed, and he was captured and tried for treason against the United States. He was convicted and hanged on December 2, 1859.

The effect of John Brown's raid was to further inflame the "agitation" over slavery, in both the North and the South.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN FOR PRESIDENT:

As a result of his notable performance in his 1858 Senate campaign debates with Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln was being discussed as a possible candidate for the 1860 Republican Party nomination for President of the United States. Despite being Lincoln's close political allies, however, "neither Browning nor Jonas nor [Archibald] Williams was among those who placed much faith in the political gossip of a possible presidential chance" for Abraham Lincoln.¹⁸³

Horace Greeley of New York City was the editor of the *New York Tribune*. The newspaper had been organized to further the cause of the Whig Party and then, later on, the Republican Party. One historian described Greeley as "the greatest of the Whig journalists."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Norma Lorene Johnston, "Lincoln's Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans," Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 39.

¹⁸⁴ Wilfred E. Binkley, *American Political Parties: Their Natural History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2nd edition, p. 164.

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Greeley gained great fame with his admonition: “Go west, young man. Go west!” By the year 1859, Horace Greeley was one of the most influential persons in Republican politics in the United States.

On Christmas Eve of 1859, Horace Greeley was in Quincy, Illinois, giving a lecture in Kendall Hall. The next day, Christmas Day of 1859, it was arranged for Greeley to meet with a number of prominent Quincy Republicans, all of them former Whigs. Among them were Archibald Williams, Orville Browning, Abraham Jonas, and Jonas’s law partner, Henry Asbury.

During the discussion, Horace Greeley asked whom this group of Illinois men wanted for the Republican nominee for U.S. President in 1860. The men from Quincy put forward the names of William Seward, John McLean, and Edward Bates.

Henry Asbury, one of the Quincy lawyers present, described what happened next this way:

“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 whom I meant. I said: ‘Gentlemen, I mean Abraham Lincoln of Illinois.’”

There was an embarrassing silence. It was interrupted by Abraham Jonas, who came to the aid of Henry Asbury by saying there might be something to the idea that Abraham Lincoln could be the 1860 Republican nominee.¹⁸⁵

Thus it was that Archibald Williams was present at an early meeting at which the name of Abraham Lincoln was boosted for President of the United States with a famous and influential Republican journalist – Horace Greeley. It was not recorded as to whether or not Archibald Williams had anything to say at the meeting.

THE 1860 REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION:

In the middle of May in 1860, the Republican National Convention was held at the Wigwam, a large convention center and meeting hall in

¹⁸⁵ Henry Asbury to K. K. Jones, Quincy, Illinois, October 2, 1882, letter at Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

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Chicago, Illinois. Although former New York Governor William Seward was ahead in the early balloting, Abraham Lincoln of Illinois steadily won more delegate votes and became the Republican nominee for President of the United States on the third ballot.

THE 1860 DEMOCRATIC PARTY NATIONAL CONVENTION:

By the time of the 1860 Democratic National Convention, the Southerners had become disenchanted with popular sovereignty as the solution to the slavery issue. Their fears about popular sovereignty were the mirror image of Northern fears. If the Northerners were concerned that residents of Kansas and Nebraska would vote *for* slavery in the two new territories, the Southerners worried that the settlers in Kansas and Nebraska would *not* vote to allow slavery there. The Southerners believed that creating two new *free* states would pave the way for slavery eventually to be abolished throughout the United States.

Stephen Douglas ran for the Democratic nomination for President in 1860, and his convention manager was William Richardson, who had defeated Archibald Williams in the 1854 campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives seat from the Quincy region. At the 1860 Democratic convention, Richardson relentlessly pushed for both Douglas's nomination and for popular sovereignty. Richardson's strong emphasis on popular sovereignty caused Southern delegates to walk out of the convention and thereby created a major split in the Democratic Party.

William Richardson succeeded in gaining the 1860 nomination for President for Stephen Douglas. It can be argued that Richardson's steadfastness in supporting Douglas and popular sovereignty at the 1860 Democratic National Convention "sounded the death knell for the Democratic Party" by splitting the party into opposing Northern and Southern wings.¹⁸⁶

It is interesting to note that the man who defeated Archibald Williams for the House of Representatives in 1854, William Richardson, was the driving force behind two of the most divisive events in United States history.

¹⁸⁶ Dennis J. Thavenet, "William Alexander Richardson, 1811-1875," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1967, p. 227-228.

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No. 1: Richardson secured passage of the Kansas-Nebraska acts in the House of Representatives in 1854. No. 2: Richardson managed the winning of the Democratic nomination for President for Stephen Douglas – with a platform supporting popular sovereignty – in 1860. Richardson thus was a major player in two of the crucial events that led to the American Civil War.

A QUINCY, ILLINOIS, ISSUE IN THE 1860 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN:

After winning the 1860 Republican Party nomination for President, Abraham Lincoln immediately launched his campaign to win the White House. As the campaign developed, however, a political quandary connected to Archibald Williams emerged for Lincoln in the city of Quincy, Illinois.

Abraham Lincoln had come to Quincy, Illinois, in 1854 to speak in behalf of Archibald Williams's campaign as an anti-Nebraskan for the U.S. House of Representatives. After Lincoln gave the talk and left the city, Quincy Democrats began spreading a story that Lincoln visited a Know-Nothing lodge while campaigning for Archibald Williams in Quincy.

The Quincy Democrats resurrected the Know-Nothing Lodge story in Abraham Lincoln's 1860 campaign for the presidency. The Democrats revived the falsehood in hopes of forcing Abraham Lincoln into a difficult dilemma. If Lincoln said the story was a lie, which it was, he would lose the electoral support of the Know-Nothings. If Lincoln remained silent, however, and let the lie appear to be true, he risked falling out of favor with foreign-born voters, who were well aware of the negative attitude the Know-Nothings had toward them.

Abraham Jonas, a mutual friend of Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams in Quincy, informed Lincoln by letter that this leftover rumor from the Archibald Williams campaign of 1854 was once again being spread in Quincy. A prominent Quincy Democrat, Isaac Morris, was soliciting affidavits from persons of Irish national origin that Lincoln was seen coming out of a Know-Nothing lodge.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Abraham Jonas to Abraham Lincoln, Quincy, Illinois, July 20, 1860, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, Library of Congress, cited in Norma Lorene Johnston, "Lincoln's Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans," Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 46.

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In a letter of reply to Abraham Jonas, Lincoln denied the made-up story about a visit to a Know-Nothing lodge. Lincoln wrote: “I was never in one [a Know-Nothing lodge], 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.”

Abraham Lincoln’s letter instructed Abraham Jonas to go to known Know-Nothings in Quincy and gather counter affidavits identifying the Isaac Morris affidavits as falsehoods. But, ever the wise political strategist, Lincoln warned Jonas to be aware of the trap Lincoln’s enemies had set for him.

“Our adversaries think they can gain a point, if they could force me to openly deny this charge,” Lincoln pointed out to Jonas. “For this reason, it must not publicly appear that I am paying any attention to the charge.”¹⁸⁸

Apparently Abraham Lincoln’s crafty strategy worked, because the old rumor about the Know-Northing lodge, a political relic from Archibald Williams’s 1854 campaign for the House of Representatives, quickly disappeared from the 1860 presidential campaign.

AT TEA IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS:

On Friday, August 11, 1860, Archibald Williams went to tea at the Quincy, Illinois, home of Orville and Eliza Browning. Other guests at the tea were Governor John Wood of Illinois and U.S. Senator (from Illinois) Lyman Trumbull. That afternoon Trumbull had given a major address to a large audience in the Concert Hall in Quincy.¹⁸⁹

John Wood was the founder of Quincy, Illinois, having settled there in 1822. He was repeatedly elected Mayor of Quincy. He was elected Lieutenant Governor of Illinois in 1856 and became Governor when

¹⁸⁸ Abraham Lincoln to Abraham Jonas, Springfield, Illinois, July 21, 1860, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume IV, p. 85-86, cited in Norma Lorene Johnston, “Lincoln’s Relationships with Four Quincy Republicans,” Masters Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1955, p. 46.

¹⁸⁹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 422.

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Governor William H. Bissell died early in 1860. Wood became Quartermaster General of the state of Illinois during the Civil War.¹⁹⁰

Lyman Trumbull was born in Connecticut but came to Illinois in 1837. He served as a Judge on the Illinois Supreme Court and in 1854 was elected to Congress as an Anti-Nebraska Democrat. He was elected U.S. Senator from Illinois in 1855 and served in the Senate throughout the Civil War. He went from being a Democrat to being a Republican, then a Liberal Republican, and a Democrat again. As the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, he was co-author of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution that freed the slaves after the Civil War.¹⁹¹

As the Republican Party gained strength in the United States in the late 1850s, Archibald Williams began going to tea and other social events with the emerging leaders of the Republican Party. Although some were relatively unknown in the late 1850s when Archibald Williams met them, many, such as Lyman Trumbull, subsequently became notable. They either were elected to office as Republicans, or were appointed to important government offices by Abraham Lincoln following Lincoln's election as President of the United States.

CAMPAIGNING FOR LINCOLN FOR PRESIDENT:

Archibald Williams, along with a number of other Republicans from Quincy, Illinois, went on the road to boost Abraham Lincoln for President in the 1860 election campaign. At times, political passions resulted in very boisterous interruptions at these meetings:

On Saturday, August 25, 1860, Archibald Williams and his son, Archibald Llewellyn Williams, set out by carriage for a Republican picnic and rally at Stones Prairie, near Payson, Illinois. Also in the carriage were Orville Browning and Abraham Jonas.

¹⁹⁰ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 47 n.

¹⁹¹ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 260 n.

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About 10,000 persons attended the event. The people dined from baskets of food placed on the ground. Abraham Jonas, Orville Browning, and Jackson Grimshaw were the major speakers at the rally.

Democrats supporting Stephen A. Douglas for President became drunk and disorderly and tried to break up the meeting. A number of fights took place, but the Democrats failed to interrupt the speechmaking by the Republicans.

The Republicans at the rally were protected by a group of younger party members known as the Wide Awakes. At one point the Wide Awakes repelled Democratic rowdies who were firing shots through a Republican banner. The Republican speakers refused to be deterred by the noise and commotion.¹⁹²

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ELECTED PRESIDENT:

Abraham Lincoln, running as a Republican, was elected President of the United States in 1860. He based his campaign on his firmly held position of “no slavery in the territories.” Lincoln’s Democratic opponent, now known as a “Northern Democrat,” was his longtime competitor from Illinois, Stephen A. Douglas, who continued to advocate popular sovereignty for the new territories.

A third candidate in the race was Vice President John Breckinridge, of Kentucky, who was labeled a “Southern Democrat” and pitched his campaign to the defense of slavery. A fourth candidate was John Bell, of Tennessee. His Constitutional Union Party emphasized preserving the Union.

The Northern states plus California voted for Abraham Lincoln. The Southern states voted for John Breckinridge. Only the slave state of Missouri voted for Stephen A. Douglas. John Bell ran a distant fourth to the first three candidates.

¹⁹² Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 425. Also see Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln’s Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 106. Also see *Quincy Whig*, August 27, 1860.

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Abraham Lincoln's strong support in the North enabled him to win the presidency in this hard-fought four-way race. Unfortunately, Lincoln's election precipitated the secession of a number of Southern states from the Union, the formation of the Confederate States of America, and the beginning of the U.S. Civil War between the North and the South.

CHAPTER 19

ON THE EVE OF CIVIL WAR

The threat of Civil War greatly concerned Americans in both the North and the South. Old friends and acquaintances often found themselves on different sides of the Mason-Dixon Line separating the anti-slavery North from the slaveholding South. One of those was Andrew Johnston, Archibald Williams's old law partner in Quincy, Illinois, who had moved from Quincy in the North to Richmond, Virginia, in the South. As the war clouds gathered, Andrew Johnston expressed his deep feelings about the impending Civil War in letters to a number of his old friends and acquaintances in Quincy.

A LETTER TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS'S SON FROM ANDREW JOHNSTON OF VIRGINIA:

Andrew Johnston, formerly of Quincy, Illinois, but subsequently of Richmond, Virginia, wrote a letter to Archibald Williams's son, John Hamilton Williams.¹⁹³

Johnston had been Archibald Williams's law partner in the 1840s. John Hamilton Williams had been, since the mid-1850s, his father's (Archibald Williams's) law partner.

In the letter, dated December 18, 1860, Andrew Johnston wrote to John Hamilton Williams expressing Johnston's great concern over the deteriorating situation between the North and the South following Abraham Lincoln's election as President of the United States in November of 1860.

Johnston wrote: "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

¹⁹³ Andrew Johnston to John Hamilton Williams, Richmond, Virginia, December 18, 1860, copy in Johnston file, Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois.

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separation... My heart...is fastened on both sides of that which may be a division line of nations.”

A LETTER TO ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS FROM ANDREW JOHNSTON OF VIRGINIA:

The following day, on December 19, 1860, Andrew Johnston wrote a similar letter from his home in Richmond, Virginia, to Archibald Williams, the father of John Hamilton Williams. In the letter, Johnston made it clear that he was hoping Archibald Williams might use his close friendship and the resulting influence over Abraham Lincoln to try to prevent the increasing drift of the North and the South into civil war. Johnston noted in the first paragraph:¹⁹⁴

“There are personal relations between you and me, which will give to what I may say here more weight than it could command with strangers: and if I make any impression on you, that impression may be reflected upon others, whose speech and action will be important to the country.”

Clearly the “others” that Andrew Johnston wanted Archibald Williams to make an “impression” on included President-elect Abraham Lincoln.

Andrew Johnston first sought to convince Archibald Williams of the depth of anger in the South against the North. Discontent in the South, he wrote, “is so widely and seriously felt, and with such solid conviction, as to amount to almost unanimity in the belief, that new assurances must be given on the part of the North, or that the South must dissolve the union that exists between them.... Not only the young and ardent, but the old and prudent – men, whose age, families, fortunes, all, incline them to peace at any possible price – seem to be more and more convinced that a great crisis is upon us.”

With the separation of the South from the North thus appearing to be inevitable, Johnston urged Archibald Williams to think about what might happen next. He wrote further:

“What then? Peaceable secession? Coercion by the North! What shall be the result? I answer, let us part as relatives and kinsmen, who have

¹⁹⁴ Typed copy, letter, Andrew Johnston to Archibald Williams, Richmond, Virginia, December 19, 1860, Archibald Williams file, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, hand lettered p. 18, 19.

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quarreled irreconcilably.... [Let] us part without bloodshed, rapine, and all the horror that civil war must inflict upon the land, and its unhappy inhabitants.... [The] land is wide enough, now at least for both... [Let] there be peace between us, so long, as God's Providence will permit. If the endeavors to preserve the Union prove unavailing, let our statesmen address themselves to the terms of an agreement to dissolve it."

Having strongly urged upon Archibald Williams a peaceful separation rather than a war for national reunion, Andrew Johnston repeated his request that Williams work to influence those around him. Johnston then speculated sympathetically on the terrible choices facing President-elect Lincoln:

"If what I have said does have any weight with you, I know it will influence your own counsel to others, and I trust it may work towards the preservation of peace. I have looked and longed for some declaration from [Abraham] Lincoln that might tend to tranquillize and reassure the South.... But, in all probability, he finds himself in a position that might well embarrass the wisest and bravest man: and has not yet resolved upon his course. May God guide him and all others, whom he makes his instruments, into paths that will lead to the peaceful ending of these troubles."

Andrew Johnston's letter to Archibald Williams on the eve of the United States Civil War highlighted the great turmoil which Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency had caused in the United States. Torn between loyalty to his current neighbors in Virginia and friendship for his former neighbors and friends in Quincy, Illinois, Johnston hoped he might, through Archibald Williams, have some hope of somehow mitigating the oncoming conflict.

AN ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS LETTER TO HIS OLDER BROTHER:

On January 13, 1861, Archibald Williams wrote a letter to his older brother, Wesley Williams. Similar to Archibald Williams, Wesley Williams was born in Kentucky but moved to western Illinois in early adulthood. He settled in Hancock County, Illinois, the county just to the north of Adams County, Illinois, and Quincy, Illinois. At the time Archibald Williams wrote the letter, Wesley Williams was getting his mail in Elvaston, Illinois, a small town located midway between Nauvoo, Illinois, and Carthage, Illinois.

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Wesley Williams served in a number of minor offices in Hancock County, including justice of the peace and probate judge.

Archibald Williams's letter read:¹⁹⁵

Chicago January 13, 1861

My Dear Brother,

Your letter of the 4th Inst. has been duly read. I need not assure you that I will with great pleasure do all in my power to aid Wesley in procuring the appointment which he desires. [Wesley C. Williams, age 27, was Wesley Williams's grown son.]

If Mr. Lincoln shall be allowed to be inaugurated, you had better draw up an application in the form of a recommendation by some of his friends, stating his former residence in California, his intention or desire to return there, and his fitness for the office.

When this is done, let me know and I will write Mr. Lincoln a letter on the subject. If I should visit Springfield this winter and have an opportunity, I will [show] it to Mr. Lincoln.

[President James] Buchanan ought to be hung for imbecility and his chief cabinet officers for treason.

In great haste your loving
Brother
Archibald Williams

The letter is typical of what happens when someone is elected President of the United States. The elder Wesley Williams was hoping that his brother, Archibald Williams, with his close friendship with Abraham Lincoln, could persuade the new president to give his son, Wesley C. Williams, a good government job.

Young Wesley C. Williams led an adventurous life. He participated in the 1849 California Gold Rush. Apparently he hoped to return to California

¹⁹⁵ Typed copy, letter, Archibald Williams to Wesley Williams, Chicago, Illinois, January 13, 1861, Archibald Williams file, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, no page number.

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with a presidential appointment to a U.S. Government office. That apparently did not happen, because Wesley Williams served in the Union Army during the Civil as Wagon Master for Company G, 12 Illinois Cavalry. In 1862, he was captured by the Confederates at Harpers Ferry, but General Stonewall Jackson demobilized and paroled him because Jackson could not handle such a large number of prisoners.

But there was much more going on in this letter than Archibald Williams agreeing to ask President-elect Lincoln to appoint Wesley C. Williams to office. Archibald Williams twice commented on the then current political situation, something he did not often do in his letters.

The first important comment was: “If Mr. Lincoln shall be allowed to be inaugurated...” Due to the political turmoil created by Abraham Lincoln’s election to the U.S. presidency, there was much speculation that, one way or another, Lincoln might not be allowed to take office as the Constitution provided in early March of 1861.

The second important comment was: “Buchanan ought to be hung for imbecility and his chief cabinet officers for treason.” Archibald Williams did not spell out for his brother Wesley exactly why the outgoing President, a Democrat, should be “hung,” but clearly Buchanan and his cabinet were doing things that Archibald Williams found very unwise, disturbing, and distressing.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN’S INAUGURATION:

Mr. Lincoln’s inauguration as President was on March 4, 1861. Archibald Williams went to Washington, D.C., to participate in the ceremonies. At that time, the journey to Washington from Quincy, Illinois, was not a simple thing. It required days and nights of the discomfort and hardship of travel. But who could miss the inauguration of one of one’s best friends and associates as President of the United States?¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ Memorandum from Annabel Walton Loevy (Mrs. W. G. Rule), great granddaughter of Archibald Williams.

CHAPTER 20

ALMOST ON THE SUPREME COURT, THEN U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE IN KANSAS

With the election of Abraham Lincoln as President in 1860, a new political party moved into the White House and had at its disposal all of the political appointments – the patronage – that went with the presidency. In February of 1861, Orville Browning wrote a letter to President-elect Lincoln recommending that their mutual friend, Archibald Williams, be appointed the United States Attorney for the northern district of Illinois.¹⁹⁷

This was the same position Archibald Williams was appointed to by Whig President Zachary Taylor, and which Williams held from 1849 to 1853. In the intervening years, Illinois had gone from one U.S. judicial district to two – northern and southern – because of population growth.

But Lincoln did not name Archibald Williams to be United States Attorney for northern Illinois. The new President offered Archibald Williams a seat on the Supreme Court of the United States. Williams turned the offer down, citing his advanced years (age 59) and declining health. Williams argued that President Lincoln should give the appointment to a younger jurist, whose influence on the Court and the nation might long outlast Lincoln's presidency.¹⁹⁸

This event was summarized in a biography of Archibald Williams included in a history of Quincy, Illinois: "Mr. Williams was offered a seat on the United States Supreme Bench so late in life that he refused the honor on

¹⁹⁷ Browning to Abraham Lincoln, undated letter (probably February, 1861), R. T. Lincoln collection, 34: 7585, cited in Maurice G. Baxter, *Orville H. Browning: Lincoln's Friend and Critic* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 110.

¹⁹⁸ Arthur Charles Cole, Ed., *Constitutional Debates of 1847* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1919), p. 982.

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the ground that his advanced age would disqualify him from completely performing the arduous and honorable task of that position.”¹⁹⁹

JUDGE OF THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT IN KANSAS:

President Lincoln then appointed Archibald Williams to be the United States District Court Judge for Kansas. “Greatly to [Lincoln’s] surprise,” Archibald Williams accepted that appointment and moved to Topeka, Kansas, to preside over the District Court.

Archibald Williams was the first person to ever serve as United States District Court Judge in the *state* of Kansas.²⁰⁰ Prior to the Civil War, Southerners in the U.S. Congress had prevented Kansas from being admitted to the Union as a free state. Once Abraham Lincoln was elected President, however, the Southern states began to secede from the Union, and Southern senators and representatives began resigning their seats in Congress. By late February of 1861, with most of the Southerners gone, there were sufficient Northern votes to vote Kansas into the United States as a free state.

Once Kansas became a state, Abraham Lincoln almost immediately appointed his longtime friend, Archibald Williams, to be the first U.S. District Court Judge for the state.

An Illinois Judge named David Davis apparently applied pressure to Abraham Lincoln to appoint Archibald Williams to be Judge of the U.S. Court in Kansas. David Davis was one of Abraham Lincoln’s campaign managers in Lincoln’s successful quest for the U.S. presidency in 1860.

Abraham Lincoln was quoted as saying: “[Judge] Davis, with that way of making a man do a thing he wants to or not, has forced me to appoint

¹⁹⁹ David F. Wilcox and Lyman McCarl, *Quincy and Adams County; History and Representative Men* (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), p. 158. Also see William H. Collins and Cicero F. Perry, *Past and Present of Quincy and Adams County*, Illinois (Chicago, IL: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1905), p. 272-273. Also see *History of Adams County*, p. 415.

²⁰⁰ “Death of Judge Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, included in “Death of Hon. Archibald Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, Volume XXX, Number 4, September 28, 1863.

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Archie Williams [as the] Judge in Kansas right off...”²⁰¹ Lincoln said further: “I’ve got a hatful of dispatches already from Kansas chiefly protesting [Williams’s appointment] and asking if I was going to fill up all the offices from Illinois.”²⁰²

Despite the opposition from Kansas, Abraham Lincoln appointed Archibald Williams to be U.S. District Court Judge of Kansas just four days after Lincoln was inaugurated President of the United States. William’s appointment as a U.S. judge was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on March 12, 1861.²⁰³

As a newly appointed U.S. Judge, Archibald Williams quickly appointed an old Quincy, Illinois, friend, John T. Morton, to be clerk of the U.S. District Court in Kansas. Morton was a graduate of Illinois College and had been editor of the *Quincy Whig* newspaper from 1852 to 1859.²⁰⁴

Archibald Williams moved his family to Topeka, Kansas, to begin his service as United States Judge. One of his sons, Archibald Llewellyn Williams, moved to Topeka “just a little while before his father came here.”²⁰⁵ The son, Archibald Llewellyn Williams, trained as a lawyer similar to his father, spent the remainder of his life in Topeka, Kansas, served four years as the state Attorney General, and became a prominent attorney for the Union Pacific Railroad.

In 1862, about one year after appointing Archibald Williams the U.S. District Court Judge for Kansas, President Lincoln appointed David Davis to

²⁰¹ Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editors, *Herndon’s Informants*, p. 620 (Letter from Henry C. Whitney to William H. Herndon, June 23, 1887).

²⁰² Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, editors, *Herndon’s Informants*, p. 649 (Letter from Henry C. Whitney to William H. Herndon, circa 1887).

²⁰³ Wikipedia: Archibald Williams.

²⁰⁴ *Quincy Whig*, July 21, 1854, and March 16, 1861, quoted in Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 67 n.

²⁰⁵ “End Came at His Summer Home in Colorado; Suffered Gradual Breakdown for Years; Formerly U.P. Attorney,” *Topeka State-Journal*, August 29, 1907.

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the United States Supreme Court. Davis was the man who had so strongly recommended Archibald Williams for U.S. Judge in Kansas.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH NATIVE AMERICANS:

While serving as Judge of the District Court of Kansas, Archibald Williams participated in treaty negotiations with Native American tribes in order to advance the construction of a railroad.

The railroad was the Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western. It had been chartered by the Kansas territorial legislature to construct a rail line from Leavenworth, Kansas, to Pawnee, near Fort Riley. The railroad was to go through Lawrence and Topeka, Kansas. Eventually the railroad was to build westward from Pawnee to the 100th meridian, where it would hopefully connect to a transcontinental railroad or, even better, become the transcontinental railroad.

Complicating the development of the railroad was a Native American reservation. The Delaware Indians were located east of Lawrence. The main line would have to be constructed through the Delaware reservation. At that point, something very unusual happened. The builders decided to involve the Delaware Indians in the financing of the railroad.

The deal worked like this. The Delaware Indians would sell their lands to the railroad. At a future date these lands could be sold at a profit by the railroad, because as the railroad was constructed the value of the lands would steadily increase. In the meantime, the railroad could use the unsold lands, with their great potential for future worth, as collateral for loans that would pay the construction costs of the railroad. These financial arrangements were set in a treaty negotiated between the Delaware Indians and the U.S. Government.²⁰⁶

Under an initial treaty – the 1860 treaty of Saxcoxieville – the railroad – the Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western – purchased lands from the Delaware tribe of Kansas for almost \$300,000. The treaty specified that part

²⁰⁶ For a full discussion of the development of the railroad and the treaty with the Delaware Indians, see David G. Taylor, “Thomas Ewing, Jr., and the Origins of the Kansas Pacific Railway Company,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Summer 1976 (Volume 42, No. 2), p. 155-179.

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of the money be used to educate the Delaware Indians in agricultural pursuits. The remainder of the funds was to be invested in the stock market.

The railroad failed to pay the almost \$300,000 to the Native Americans. Abraham Lincoln, a strong supporter of building western railroads, did not want the treaty, and thus the railroad, to fail. He dispatched Judge Archibald Williams to negotiate a new treaty under which the railroad would pay the Delaware for their land with the proceeds from selling railroad bonds. In order to raise the cash to build its tracks, the railroad was to mortgage the land it had purchased from the Native Americans.

Judge Archibald Williams, after carefully inspecting both the bonds and the mortgage, presented the new treaty to the Delaware tribe. He likely met with some or all of the chiefs – named John Connor, Sax-cox-ie, Ne-con-he-con, and Rock-a-to-wha – who had approved the original treaty. Judge Williams convinced the chiefs to accept the new treaty.²⁰⁷

President Lincoln accepted in turn the treaty as renegotiated by Archibald Williams. Before sending the treaty to the U.S. Senate for final approval, however, Lincoln slightly amended the treaty to further guarantee payment to the Native Americans and to grant additional time for the railroad to complete its part of the contract.

At this time, mid-1861, Abraham Lincoln's and Archibald Williams's mutual friend, Orville Browning, was a U.S. Senator. Lincoln entrusted Archibald Williams's renegotiated treaty to Browning to get it approved in the U. S. Senate. Lincoln sent the following letter to Senator Browning:²⁰⁸

Executive Mansion
July 20, 1861

Hon. O. H. Browning
My dear Sir:

To-day I send to the Senate the arrangement made through Mr.

²⁰⁷ “Order for Issue of Bonds for Use of Delaware Indians,” June 10, 1861, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume IV, p. 400-402.

²⁰⁸ Abraham Lincoln to Orville Browning, Washington, July 20, 1861, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume IV, p. 455.

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Williams with the Delaware Indians, asking their advice as to the making a formal treaty of it, as it already is in substance. On very full reflection I have thought this course the safest and best. I will thank you if you will move an amendment in about these words: "Provided that no part of said lands, shall be patented, until the money price for such part shall have been fully paid; and provided further that time shall be extended, so that the rights of said Railroad Company under the treaty to which this is supplemental, shall not be forfeited until ____.

These provisos for the perfect security of the Indians on the one hand; and for the benefit of the Co. on the other. The blank you will fill of course.

Yours as ever
A. LINCOLN

It is interesting to ponder the fact that Abraham Lincoln and Archibald Williams appeared to be going out of their way to reach a fair agreement for the Native Americans. Lincoln and Williams did this despite the fact that both of them fought against Native Americans some 30 years earlier in the Black Hawk War.

Archibald Williams did more than just support the Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western Railroad through new treaty negotiations with the Delaware Indians. In March of 1861, Archibald Williams, noting his capacity as judge of the United States district court for Kansas, sent a letter, along with other prominent Kansans of the time, strongly supporting the construction and financing of the railroad.²⁰⁹

The Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western railroad was built, but it did not become the mainline of the transcontinental railroad. The transcontinental, the Union Pacific, was built across Nebraska rather than Kansas. The eastern terminus of the Leavenworth, Pawnee and Western was shifted from Leavenworth to Kansas City, Kansas. The railroad was renamed the Kansas Pacific, and it was built from Kansas City to Denver,

²⁰⁹ "Brief of papers filed with application of the Leavenworth, Pawnee, and Western Railroad Co.," March 1861, Ewing Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Colorado. It remained in 2016 a busy single-track mainline railroad, by that time a key part of the Union Pacific railroad.

TEA WITH GENERAL JOHN POPE:

On Tuesday, September 17, 1861, Archibald Williams, now *Judge* Archibald Williams, went to tea at the home of Orville and Eliza Browning in Quincy, Illinois. By this time, Orville Browning was a United States Senator from Illinois. The other guest at the tea was Union Army General John Pope.²¹⁰

General Pope was the son of U.S. District Court Judge Nathaniel Pope of Illinois, in whose courtroom both Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln had argued many a case. The younger Pope was a graduate of the military academy at West Point, New York. He commanded troops in the Mexican War and won significant victories in that conflict.

Subsequent to having tea with Archibald Williams, General Pope participated in two significant battles in the Civil War. He was the winning commander for the Union at the Battle of Island Number Ten, a strong point in the Mississippi River located between Tennessee and Missouri. Later in the Civil War, General John Pope was in command of Union troops when they suffered defeat at the hands of the South at the Second Battle of Bull Run.

A SECOND MARRIAGE:

While serving as the United States District Court Judge for Kansas, Archibald Williams married Ellen M. Parker. The ceremony was conducted on September 24, 1861, in the Quincy, Illinois, home of Judge Williams's daughter, Almira, and her husband, Dr. C. H. Morton. The ceremony was performed by Reverend Wright of Iowa.

²¹⁰ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 501.

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“Ellen Parker was a family friend, a lovely and charming person who capably managed his household and family [matters].²¹¹

A LAST VISIT WITH ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln met for the last time when, along with his friend U.S Senator Orville Browning, Williams visited Abraham Lincoln at the White House on Thursday evening, May 29, 1862. There is no record of what the three old friends and political allies talked about.²¹²

By that time, the American Civil War was in full swing. After meeting with Archibald Williams at the White House, President Abraham Lincoln and Senator Orville Browning went over to the War Department in Washington, D.C.

IN DEFENSE OF MAJOR LANGDON C. EASTON:

In the spring of 1863, there was a movement in Kansas to dismiss from military service Major Langdon C. Easton, who was serving as the quartermaster (supplies officer) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The charge against him was disloyalty to the Union. The case came to the attention of President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., who sent the following letter to Edwin M. Stanton, the Secretary of War.²¹³

Hon. Sec. of War. Executive Mansion,
Sir. Washington, April 16, 1863

I understand that Major Easton, Q.M. in regular Army, and now serving at Leavenworth, Kansas, is sought to be dismissed on a charge of disloyalty. The present Governor of Kansas, Senator Pomeroy, and U.S. Judge

²¹¹ Undated memorandum to Walton T. Loevy from Annabel Walton Loevy (Mrs. William Glenn Rule), great granddaughter of Archibald Williams.

²¹² Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: 1925 and 1923), Volume I, p. 547.

²¹³ Abraham Lincoln to Edwin M. Stanton, April 16, 1863, in Roy P. Basler, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: 1953), Volume VI.

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Williams, (the latter of whom I have known nearly thirty years) all say he is not disloyal, but is a worthy and efficient officer. I therefore think we better not act without positive evidence. Perhaps better wait to hear from the Governor after he has reached home. Yours truly

A. LINCOLN

The governor of Kansas at the time was Thomas Carney. Secretary of War Stanton's reply to Lincoln, if there was one, has not been located. As for Major Easton, nothing came of the charge of disloyalty because he went on to a distinguished career for the remainder of the Civil War as quartermaster of the Army of the Cumberland. In that role, Major Easton was quartermaster to Union General William T. Sherman in his campaigns from Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Atlanta, Georgia, and from Atlanta, Georgia to Savannah, Georgia (General Sherman's "March to the Sea").

The April 16, 1863, letter from Abraham Lincoln to Edwin Stanton is significant because President Lincoln clearly identifies Archibald Williams as a person he has "known nearly thirty years."

CHAPTER 21

DEATH AND BURIAL OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

After a long illness, Archibald Williams passed away on September 21, 1863. Returning to Illinois from Topeka, Kansas, he died at the old family home in Quincy, Illinois, on the east side of Sixth Street between Hampshire and Vermont, closer to the latter street. His daughter, Almira Jane Williams (Mrs. Charles Morton), was still living in the house at the time of his death.

A particularly emotional account described his death this way:

“He was for many years in very feeble health, and in that office he died, in his daughter’s arms, at Quincy, his [first] wife having gone many years previous, and by his death he left a vacancy in the ranks of the Bar of this state that has never been filled.”²¹⁴

U.S. Senator Orville Browning was visiting in Quincy at the time and was said to have been “at the old campaigner’s side almost to the last.”

In his diary, Orville Browning gave the following account of the death of Archibald Williams:

“Sunday, September 20, [1863]. At church in A.M. During my absence at church, I was sent for to go to Dr. Morton’s [home] to see the Honorable Archibald Williams, of Kansas, who was there very sick. I went at 12 o’clock and found him past hope of recovery. Remained with him till 4 P.M. and went home to dinner taking Judge [Charles B.] Lawrence with me. At 5 P.M. went back and remained with Judge Williams till 9 P.M. and left him for the night. He had a few lucid intervals through the day.”

“Monday, September 21, 1863. Before I arose this morning, I was sent for to go to Dr. Morton’s. I reached there quarter past 6 A.M. He died just before my arrival. I was informed by those who were with him through

²¹⁴ George C. Bates, “The Bench and Bar of the Northwest: The Hon. Archibald Williams,” *The Chicagoan*, November 15, 1868, typewritten copy in Archibald Williams File, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, hand-numbered page 81.

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the night that he neither spoke nor gave signs of consciousness after I left him last night.”

“At 2 P.M. a meeting of the bar was held in the courtroom presided over by Honorable [Charles B.] Lawrence, and resolutions expressive of our estimation of the deceased, and sorrow for his loss, adopted. We also resolved to attend the funeral in a body at 10 o’clock A.M. on Wednesday morning next [Wednesday, September 23, 1863].”²¹⁵

THE RESPONSE TO THE DEATH OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

Upon Archibald Williams’s death, President Abraham Lincoln appointed another Illinois friend, also a lawyer, to succeed Williams as Judge of the U.S. District Court of Kansas. The new appointee’s name was Mark W. Delahay.

A local newspaper described the death of Archibald Williams this way: “He had been confined to his bed about two weeks, by general debility, and hopes were entertained of his recovery, but his advanced age...had not left him with physical resources sufficient to rally and recover his exhausted vitality, and he passed away from us at an early hour yesterday morning.”²¹⁶

Another newspaper mourned Archibald Williams’s passing with these words: “A self-educated, self-made man... His feeble frame, his over-tasked mind overcame his bodily strength, and he passed away calmly in the vigor of his mental prowess.”²¹⁷

Great praise was lavished on Archibald Williams at the time of his death. One newspaper published the following comment from a friend and admirer identified only as “G,” who possibly was Archibald Williams’s longtime law partner Jackson Grimshaw:

“We have lost a dear friend, and the Bar one of its brightest ornaments. There were few better lawyers than Archibald Williams. He was

²¹⁵ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: Illinois State Historical Library, 1925 and 1933), Volume I, p. 642-643.

²¹⁶ “Death of Hon. Archibald Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, Volume XXX, Number 4, September 28, 1863. For complete text, see Appendix G.

²¹⁷ *Quincy (Illinois) Daily Whig and Republican*, September 21, 1863.

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not a quick man, but his powers of analysis were unsurpassed. He thought with great clearness, and while not eloquent in the usual acceptance of that word, few could withstand the power of his reasoning.”

“What he knew was always well and clearly known, and was well and clearly told. Honest, generous, kindhearted to a fault, but very retiring and modest, none knew him well that did not love him.”²¹⁸

Usher Linder, a contemporary of both Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln, was a Universalist in his religious practices and believed that everyone would go to heaven. Years after Archibald Williams died, Linder wrote: “[Archibald Williams] is now walking the golden streets with Douglas and Lincoln.”²¹⁹

The *United States Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery* summed up the death and life impact of Archibald Williams this way: “His death, which occurred in Quincy, September 21, 1863, ended the active career of one whose influence can never die.”²²⁰

A GRAVE MONUMENT FOR ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

The Adams County Bar Association arranged for sculptor Cornelius G. Volk to carve and erect a handsome monument at the grave of Judge Archibald Williams. The grave was located in Woodland Cemetery in Quincy, Illinois. The marble monument consisted of “a beautiful shaft [obelisk] upon a carved base representing a pile of books with scrolls on which the artist inscribed: ‘Erected by the Bar Association of Adams County in memory of our brother.’”²²¹

²¹⁸ “Death of Judge Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Whig*, included in “Death of Hon. Archibald Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald*, Volume XXX, Number 4, September 28, 1863.

²¹⁹ “Lincoln Autographed *Debates*: The Archibald Williams Copy,” in “Lincoln Lore,” *Illinois History Journal*, August 1979, p. 4.

²²⁰ “Hon. Archibald Williams, Quincy,” in *United States Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery* (Chicago, American Biographical Publishing Company, 1876), Illinois Volume, p. 152.

²²¹ Carl Landrum, “From Quincy’s Past: Archibald Williams, Early Lawyer,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, December 5, 1971.

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The *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig* gave a review of the Archibald Williams graveyard monument:

“Mr. Volk deserves great credit for the taste and skill displayed in this monument, which stands near the edge of the bluff [overlooking the Mississippi River] in the cemetery, and is well worthy of a visit from any of our citizens. The cemetery contains many specimens of [Cornelius Volk’s] skill as an artist, but none are more appropriate than this, which is a worthy tribute to the memory of a worthy and distinguished individual [Archibald Williams].”²²²

A BAR ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION FOR ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS:

On October 27, 1863, the Bar Association of Adams County, Illinois, adopted the following resolution on the life of Archibald Williams:

“[He was] eminently a frank and sincere man. You always knew what he was and where he was. He never deceived a friend or betrayed a trust, or trifled with an interest. None ever doubted his word. None ever questioned his honesty. He was alike the ornament of official position and of the private station.”

“The radiance shed by the influence of his moral deportment was not less beneficial upon society than his legal and logical mind and professional courtesy were upon the bar. He lived for others, not himself. He lived for the benefit of his race and country.”

“He was not a seeker of wealth: with all of his energy, untiring industry and great endowments, he died without it, leaving behind him little else but the rich inheritance of his professional and exemplary character.”²²³

²²² “Monument Of Archibald Williams,” *Quincy (Illinois) Herald-Whig*, August 26, 1865, typewritten copy by Father Landry, Archibald Williams file, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, hand-numbered page 78.

²²³ William H. Collins and Cicero F. Perry, *Past and Present of Quincy and Adams County, Illinois* (Chicago, IL: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1905), p. 272-273.

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DEATH OF ELLEN PARKER WILLIAMS:

Archibald Williams's second wife, Ellen Parker Williams, outlived her husband by 46 years. She passed away at Blessing Hospital in Quincy, Illinois, on May 4, 1910. At that time she was living at 321 North Seventh Street in Quincy.

She remained in close contact with Archibald Williams's children throughout that long period. On Tuesday, June 19, 1877, she went to tea with her stepson, John Hamilton Williams, and his family at the home of Orville and Eliza Browning in Quincy.²²⁴

The funeral services for her were conducted from the residence of her stepson, John Hamilton Williams, at 1233 North Sixth Street in Quincy. Two of her step-granddaughters, Mrs. Hannibal A. Loevy and Mrs. Walter D. Franklin, both of St. Louis, Missouri, came to Quincy prior to her death "to see their [step] grandmother while she could still enjoy them."

One of her funeral notices concluded with this statement:

"Mrs. [Ellen Parker] Williams was a character of unusual strength and integrity, helpful and self-reliant almost to the end of a long and useful life. She was a member of the Christian church [and] was aged over 80."²²⁵

²²⁴ Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, IL: 1925 and 1923), Volume II, p. 477.

²²⁵ "Death of Aged Lady," *Quincy Daily Journal*, May 4, 1910, p. 3.

CHAPTER 22

A RETROSPECTIVE ON ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Five years after the death of Archibald Williams, on November 15, 1868, a retrospective on his life and accomplishments was published in Chicago.²²⁶ The lengthy article, filled with the customary high and flowery praise typical of the age, sought to delve into the deeper and more personal aspects of Archibald Williams's character.

Appearance and Manner:

A lengthy and detailed physical description of Archibald Williams was presented:

“The fire blazed brightly in the old fashioned chimney corner, ... but in that corner stood a spare, quiet, diffident man, then about 45, whose large and projecting brow, deep sunken eyes, spare and meagre frame, with manners gentle and simple as a child's, an address and bearing as modest and retiring as a girl, united with a conversation exhibiting the deepest study, the most profound thought, and an education thorough and complete, made him the object of especial attention and regard of the host and all his guests. That man was Archibald Williams.”²²⁷

²²⁶ George C. Bates, “The Bench and Bar of the Northwest: The Hon. Archibald Williams,” *The Chicagoan*, November 15, 1868, typewritten copy in Archibald Williams File, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, hand-numbered pages 76-85. Also see handwritten notes, no author, Archibald Williams File, Brenner Library, Quincy University, Quincy, Illinois, no page number, between hand-numbered pages 8 and 9.

²²⁷ Bates, hand-numbered page 77.

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A Daughter's Recollections:

The article also quoted a description of Archibald Williams provided by his oldest daughter, Almira Jane Williams Morton:

“He was a most emphatic man in every particular. His convictions were strong, his feelings warm and earnest, and his scorn of moral or political obliquity was unbounded – equaled only by his contempt of legal pettifogging.”

“He was remarkably absent minded, in consequence of his absorption in any subject that occupied his thoughts – frequently coming home from the office in the coldest weather without hat or overcoat, and upon one occasion lighting his pipe with a banknote, which had been handed to him while he was talking upon a subject that interested him.”

“He was once left penniless, and many times seriously embarrassed by having to pay the debts of men for whom he had stood as security, and he often said if his life was to live over he would do the same thing – that men went to ruin for want of a little help and encouragement.”

“He retained the freshness of his feelings to a wonderful extent – would read a romance by Scott or Bulwer with the keenest delight – his face glowing or his eyes brimming as he followed the fortunes of the various characters. One night a novel – the next an abstruse work, would make him equally oblivious of time, and he would be surprised by the approach of daylight – and it was sometimes quite comical to see the shame-faced way in which he excused himself.”

“In his extreme tenderness of heart – in his compassion for and benevolence toward his needy fellow creatures, and in the rigid integrity, the entire simplicity, and the perfect modesty of his character, he was positively sublime.”

“As his public career was without blemish, so his daughter – left at sixteen years of age without a mother, and feeling in him the tenderest father, and a most congenial friend, attributed to him but one fault – *his amiability*.”²²⁸

²²⁸ Bates, hand-numbered pages 79-80.

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Best at Arguing Complicated Cases before Higher Courts:

Although viewed as a very good lawyer when arguing routine cases while riding circuit, Archibald Williams was said to be at his best when arguing complex constitutional questions before a higher court. His law partner of over 20 years, Jackson Grimshaw, was quoted on the subject:

“[Archibald Williams was] a very dangerous opponent in the rough and ready encounters of circuit practice. But, nevertheless, the true field of his greatness was in the discussion of important legal questions before an intelligent court.”

“Here he could hardly be surpassed... He argued upon the principles of the law... [He drew] from them and from the dictates of an enlightened morality and a wise view of the necessities of society, the rules which should govern the case at Bar.”

“When this power was called into full exercise, and the discussion of a great question had excited him, his argument swept you along with an almost irresistible force.”²²⁹

Admired Chief Justice John Marshall:

Archibald Williams was regarded as an authority on constitutional law. Jackson Grimshaw noted that his longtime law partner was fascinated by John Marshall, an early Chief Justice on the United States Supreme Court:

“Of all judges who had graced either the English or American Bench, [Archibald Williams] regarded Chief Justice John Marshall as the highest model. He had studied the opinions of that great man until he almost knew them by heart, certainly until he had absorbed their spirit. The opinions of the Chief Justice, on constitutional law, were his special delight, as he himself particularly excelled in that branch of American jurisprudence... He left a treatise on that subject, which is now in the possession of his son, and will soon be published.”²³⁰

²²⁹ Bates, hand-numbered page 82.

²³⁰ Bates, hand-numbered page 83.

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Unselfish With Both Talents and Money:

Archibald Williams was said to be a sharing individual. Once again Jackson Grimshaw provided an intimate view:

“But great as was Judge Williams as a lawyer, it was necessary to know him well in private life to appreciate the singular beauty of his character. The writer of this was in daily and intimate intercourse with him for many years – in prosperity and adversity, in defeat and in triumph – and he can truly say that, of all the men he has ever known, Judge Williams was the least controlled by selfish considerations.”

“It was not merely to the widowed, the fatherless, and the poor, [that] his professional services were rendered without a fee... It was not merely that an ample professional income was so freely divided with almost anyone who would ask... [It was all these things, and] he died at last with a meagre fortune.”

“...In the affairs of everyday life, in the little things where most men are so certain to be selfish – as well as the great things where they can afford to be heroic – everywhere and at all times, Judge Williams totally ignored himself for the sake of others.”²³¹

Compared to a Character in Thackeray:

Jackson Grimshaw was further quoted drawing a literary comparison with Archibald Williams:

“Judge Williams was not only a great lawyer... He was one of the most thoroughly ingrained and high-toned gentlemen the writer ever met. He belonged to that class of noble, simple-hearted gentlemen of which Thackeray has given so delightful a picture in his Colonel Newcome.”²³²

Colonel Thomas Newcome was the main character in *The Newcomes*, a novel by British writer William Makepeace Thackeray that was first published in 1855. Colonel Newcome was such an honest, upstanding, and caring person that his name became synonymous with virtue for a period of some fifty years following the publication of the novel.

²³¹ Bates, hand-numbered page 84.

²³² Bates, hand-numbered page 85.

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Kindness to Young Lawyers:

Another characteristic of Archibald Williams, also noted by Jackson Grimshaw, was his help and assistance to young lawyers just entering the legal profession:

“Judge Williams was especially distinguished by a quality for which many members of the bar, now living, will always hold him in grateful remembrance – his kindness to young lawyers. Remembering his own early struggles, he was always glad to send them clients, to advise them in the management of their cases, and to aid them with his purse. All this was done without the appearance of patronage, but rather as if he were the obliged party... The inevitable result was that he was regarded by the younger members of the profession with almost filial affection.”²³³

²³³ Bates, hand-numbered page 85.

CHAPTER 23

CONCLUSIONS

Archibald Williams was more than just “a friend and political ally” of Abraham Lincoln. He was one of a small group of politicians who provided leadership for the Whig Party in Illinois from the 1830s to the mid-1850s. Archibald Williams was well-known to and interacted extensively with Abraham Lincoln’s other political friends, both in the Whig Party and outside of it.

It can be argued that, up until the famous 1858 campaign debates with Stephen Douglas that set Abraham Lincoln apart, Archibald Williams was as well-known as Abraham Lincoln in mid-19th Century Illinois. Stephen Douglas was on solid ground when he argued that Archibald Williams was as viable a potential Republican nominee for U.S. Senator from Illinois in 1858 as Abraham Lincoln was. It was only after Abraham Lincoln’s great success in the 1858 Senate debates with Stephen Douglas that Lincoln pulled away from his Illinois compatriots and became a national political leader that far outranked his old Illinois political pals.

There were six major occasions that, during their 29 years together as friends and political soul mates, Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln interacted extensively together:

1. The first time was when Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln served together for almost six years in the Illinois state legislature in Vandalia, Illinois. It is notable that, to observers, Archibald Williams was seen as the senior man and assumed the role of mentor for Abraham Lincoln.
2. The second occasion occurred when Lincoln sent his notable letter of April 30, 1848, urging Archibald Williams to send a delegate supporting Zachary Taylor for President to an upcoming political convention. Although Taylor failed to carry Illinois, he was elected President of the United States in 1848. The result was Archibald Williams’s appointment by President Taylor to the politically

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important job of U.S. District Attorney for Illinois. Lincoln had sent a letter strongly urging the selection of Williams for the job.

3. The third time that Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln directly interacted was when Abraham Lincoln made a special trip to Quincy, Illinois, to give a public speech in behalf of Archibald Williams's 1854 campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives. Williams was running as an Anti-Nebraska candidate against incumbent Democrat William A. Richardson. In a letter to Richard Yates, Abraham Lincoln provided a colorful comment about Archibald Williams. "I am here now going to Quincy," Lincoln wrote, "to try to give Mr. Williams a little life."
4. The fourth time the two men interacted was perhaps the most significant. In 1855, a three-person committee, meeting in Quincy, Illinois, and chaired by Archibald Williams, produced a set of "resolutions" on which it was proposed that the Whigs, the Free Democrats, and the Anti-Nebraska Democrats could "fuse" into a single political party. Abraham Lincoln saw the "resolutions" in the *Quincy (Illinois) Whig* newspaper and mentioned them in a letter to Owen Lovejoy as occupying "about the ground that I should be willing to 'fuse' upon." Archibald Williams and his committee thus either influenced Lincoln's thinking at the time or strongly confirmed it. The significant point was that the Williams-led committee and its "resolutions" pointed in the direction of "No slavery in the territories," a single phrase around which an emerging "fusion party," eventually the Republican Party, united.
5. The fifth occasion of high Archibald Williams – Abraham Lincoln interaction was when Archibald Williams campaigned so extensively for Lincoln in Lincoln's 1858 campaign for U.S. Senator from Illinois. Williams is known to have spoken in at least five western and northwestern Illinois cities on Lincoln's behalf and possibly several more. As a result, Archibald Williams was one of a limited group of men who received a presentation copy of the 1858 Illinois U.S. Senate Lincoln-Douglas debates from Abraham Lincoln that had been autographed by Abraham Lincoln.
6. The sixth major interaction was when Abraham Lincoln appointed Archibald Williams the first United States District Judge for the state of Kansas. This occurred in March of 1861 shortly after

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Abraham Lincoln's inauguration as President of the United States. It was the second item of valuable political patronage that Archibald Williams received from or through Abraham Lincoln, the first having been Williams's appointment as U.S. District Attorney for Illinois in 1849.

A notable moment for Archibald Williams was when he became the recipient of one of Abraham Lincoln's most prophetic remarks. In 1859, after Democrat Stephen Douglas was elected U.S. Senator from Illinois over Abraham Lincoln, Archibald Williams mentioned to Lincoln that the Democrats were having a good time celebrating their victory. Lincoln then said to Williams: "Yes, Archie, Douglas has taken this trick, but the game is not played out." Less than two years later, Abraham Lincoln was President-elect of the United States and Stephen Douglas was one of his defeated opponents.

A sad aspect of the life of Archibald Williams was that, at the time his close friend Abraham Lincoln was elected the U.S. President, Williams was too old and possibly too ill to accept an important job in the new Republican administration in Washington, D.C. This occurred after Archibald Williams had dedicated his younger and healthier years to working hard for a minority political party, the Whig Party. The Whigs had Williams running in U.S. Senate races in 1836 and 1842 and a U.S. House of Representatives race in 1854 in which there was little or no prospect for victory.

Thus, if Archibald Williams had been healthy in early 1861, Abraham Lincoln might have appointed him to the U.S. Supreme Court, or to a Cabinet post, or to some other position of importance in the national government. Then Archibald Williams possibly could have earned a somewhat more expanded reputation as an important person in United States and Illinois history.

Another possibility was that, with the Republican Party dominating northern elections after 1860, Archibald Williams might have run for and been elected U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative from Illinois. Here again, he might have become more famous in his own right.

As it was, Archibald Williams did benefit from Lincoln's presidency by being appointed United States District Judge for Kansas. Archibald Williams served in that capacity successfully, but only for the 2½ years until his death at age 61 in September of 1863.

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Above all, the life of Archibald Williams appears to have been that of a political party workhorse. He ran for, won, and served in the state legislature. He ran for, won, and served as an effective political force at the Illinois State Constitutional Convention of 1847. He chaired many political meetings in Quincy, Illinois, on the issues of the day. He also attended, and occasionally chaired, local and state party conventions for the Whigs, the anti-Nebraskans, and the Republicans. He ran for high political offices, most notably a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1854, when the odds were stacked against him but his political party needed a candidate nonetheless. Lastly, he was a longtime political friend of Abraham Lincoln, and in every known instance gave Lincoln his full and untiring support.

APPENDIX A

**ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS, ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
AND ORVILLE BROWNING IN THE
ILLINOIS STATE LEGISLATURE – 1832-1842**

8th GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 1832-1834

Assembly met at Vandalia, Illinois, in the third Illinois state capitol building:

Convened December 3, 1832: Adjourned March 2, 1833.

Archibald Williams served two years as a state Senator from Adams County (Quincy), Hancock County (Carthage), and Pike County (Pittsfield).

9th GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 1834-1836

Assembly met at Vandalia, Illinois, in the third Illinois state capitol building:

Convened December 1, 1835: Adjourned February 13, 1835.

Second session December 7, 1835: Adjourned January 18, 1836.

Archibald Williams served two years state Senator.

Abraham Lincoln served a two-year term as a member of the state House of Representatives from Sangamon County (Springfield).

10th GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 1836-1838

Assembly met at Vandalia, Illinois, in the fourth state capitol building, known as the “Old State House in Vandalia.”

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Convened December 5, 1836: Adjourned March 6, 1837.
Second Session July 10, 1837: Adjourned July 22, 1837.

Archibald Williams, elected in 1837 to complete an unexpired two-year term in the state House of Representatives from Adams County (Quincy), probably only attended the Second Session.

Abraham Lincoln served a two-year term as a member of the state House of Representatives from Sangamon County (Springfield) and probably attended both sessions.

Orville Browning served two years as a state Senator from Adams County (Quincy) and probably attended both sessions.

11th GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 1838-1840

First Session met at Vandalia, Illinois, in the fourth state capitol building, known as the “Old State House in Vandalia.”

Second Session met at Springfield, Illinois, in temporary quarters:

Convened December 3, 1838: Adjourned March 4, 1839.
Second Session December 9, 1839: Adjourned February 3, 1840.

Archibald Williams served a two-year term as a member of the state House of Representatives from Adams County (Quincy).

Abraham Lincoln served a two-year term as a member of the state House of Representatives from Sangamon County (Springfield).

Orville Browning served two years as a state Senator from Adams County (Quincy).

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12th GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 1840-1842

Assembly met in Springfield, Illinois, in the fifth state capitol building, known as the “Old State Capitol in Springfield:”

Abraham Lincoln served a two-year term as a member of the state House of Representatives from Sangamon County (Springfield).

Archibald Williams and **Orville Browning** not listed.

Source: “County Officers,” *Past and Present of Adams County*, pp. 314-315. See also “Members of the General Assembly – 1818-1869,” *Illinois Fact Book and Historical Almanac – 1673-1968*.

ILLINOIS STATE CAPITOLS:

Territorial Capitol and First State Capitol	Kaskaskia, Illinois	1809-1818 1818-1820
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Second State Capitol	Vandalia, Illinois	1820-1824
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Destroyed by fire –

Third State Capitol	Vandalia, Illinois	1824-1836
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Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln attended sessions in this building –

Fourth State Capitol	Vandalia, Illinois	1836-1839
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The City of Vandalia replaced the Third State Capitol with this Fourth State Capitol in a failed attempt to keep the state capital in Vandalia –

State legislature met in this building for only three years –

Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln attended sessions in this building –

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Fifth State Capitol Springfield, Illinois 1840-1868

Abraham Lincoln attended sessions in this building –

Archibald Williams attended Illinois State Constitutional Convention
in this building in the summer of 1847 –

Sixth State Capitol Springfield, Illinois 1868-

APPENDIX B
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
STATE OF ILLINOIS.

IN SENATE—February 13, 1833.

Laid on the table, and 500 copies ordered to be printed for the use of the General Assembly.

Mr. ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS, from the Committee on Seminary, School Lands and Education, made the following

REPORT;

The committee on Seminary, School Lands and Education, to whom was referred a resolution instructing them to enquire into the expediency of a uniform system of schools in this State, and also into the expediency of distributing the School Fund, equitably among the several counties of this State, beg leave to report:

That the late period of the session forbids the bestowment of that attention to the subject, which its importance would seem to demand. There is perhaps, no question requiring Legislative action, so vitally interesting to the present, and to succeeding generations, so full of difficulty and perplexity, or so needing the exercise of a sound discretion. Upon the judicious arrangement of a school system, and upon the due application of our limited fund will depend the moral, intellectual, social and political condition of our highly favored country.

In considering the expediency of a uniform system of schools, it becomes necessary to direct our attention to the actual circumstances and condition of the State. The newness of the country, so recently redeemed

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from the wilderness, the sparseness of the population, and the wide extent of prairies, would render any attempt at a perfect system, which is adopted in older States entirely visionary, and impracticable. However well it may appear upon paper, it is obvious that a division of the State into townships, and a further sub-division into school districts with the designation of Teachers, Trustees, Commissioners, Treasurer, and Secretaries, would leave many portions without an inhabitant, and of course many officers without employment. And it would further result from any artificial arrangements of boundaries, that the people would in many instances be precluded from that organization which might best be accommodated to their actual circumstances.

Regarding this subject therefore, in a rational and practical point of view, it is a truth, however unwelcome to our anxious wishes, that the establishment of schools must be gradual and progressive in proportion to the advance of population, the growing resources of the people, and the development of resources to supply the lack of timber. Until those obstacles are removed, it can alone be practicable, to adapt our system to such schools as may be put in operation by the people themselves. Wherever these are already, or may hereafter be established, the funds at our command should be applied. The teachers might call together their employers, for the purpose of electing Trustees, whose duties ought to be distinctly defined, and who should be especially required to report to the Teacher, all orphan children and the children of indigent parents, for gratuitous instruction.

The several teachers should keep a schedule of the number of scholars, and the number of days they are in attendance, and this schedule should be transmitted to the school commissioner of the county, whose duty it should be to pay over to each teacher, the proportion to which he would appear from the schedule aforesaid to be entitled, from the combined proceeds of the sixteenth sections, and the school fund.

This plan recommends itself to our favorable consideration, on account of its extreme simplicity, and its peculiar adaptation to the present circumstances of the country. It presents no complicated details, it suggests no superfluous provisions, it points to no waste and uninhabited districts, it proposes no supernumerary officers, it unites divided funds, and confides them to the management of one competent and responsible individual.

The second branch of the resolution, relative to the distribution of the fund, upon equitable principles amongst the several counties, is attended

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with embarrassments long felt, and sensibly deplored by the Legislature at every session. The impression has been too widely circulated, and the vain hope too fondly cherished, that schools could be everywhere ushered into existence, and adequately supported by mere Legislative enactments. Deluded by such false hopes, and reposing a mistaken confidence in the capacity of their representatives, to provide the means of general instruction, the efforts of the people have been paralyzed, and the great cause of education, been suffered to languish for the want of suitable, and well directed exertion.

It cannot be too soon announced, nor too forcibly impressed upon the public mind, that a vigorous and united action among themselves, is indispensable to the procurement of instruction to their children, and that little, very little, can be accomplished by the State. But small as may be the fund at our disposal, it becomes a question of deep interest to the country, how it can be made most available to the highly important objects of education.

Two modes of distribution have been proposed; the one according to population, the other according to the number of counties. Whilst each mode has enlisted a warm and zealous support from its advocates, it cannot escape the candid observation of all, that both are liable to great and insuperable objections.

Adopting the principle of population, the present densely settled counties of the State, would receive a very large dividend, whilst the new and thinly inhabited counties, would be entitled to a very small share. And yet, from the rapid influx of emigrants, a few years might supply to the latter, an equal population with the former.

Adhering to the division according to counties, Sangamon and Morgan, containing about four thousand three hundred children, would be allowed no more than the county of Hancock, containing only about three hundred.

And thus would be exhibited, a singularly unequal application of a fund, which was designed alike for all the children of the State. A further objection to the distribution of the whole fund in either mode, arises from the multiplied risks of loss, and waste. Every division and sub-division, necessarily increases the danger of losing the whole. What then might be the consequence of parceling it out among fifty-six counties, and committing it to the management of so great a number of officers? Will any be willing

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upon a question of such general State concern, to narrow his views to his own district, and in confidence upon the wisdom and prudence of his own commissioners, to put to hazard the dearest interests of other portions of the country?

Another conclusive, and unanswerable argument against distributing the fund itself, is to be found in the fact that it is not in the power of the State, and cannot therefore, be so appropriated.

In the view of all these difficulties, your committee would unhesitatingly recommend, as the most eligible, and indeed the only alternative, the deposit of the fund in the State Treasury, at such interest as may be deemed proper, and the application of such interest, in connection with that accruing from the sixteenth sections, to the support of schools in the several counties. By this means, the conflicting questions as to the mode of distribution would be reconciled, since the annual accrual of interest would go forth alike to all the children, and all would be equally benefited.

The fund would remain untouched, and continually accumulating with a regular increase of interest in the hands of the State, and the many risks of waste and destruction, be thus securely obviated. And lastly, the interest can be at once commanded, and devoted to the encouragement of learning, without the delay incident to the fund itself. The circulation of the interest however small, will it is hoped, operate as a stimulus to exertion on the part of the people, and induce voluntary contributions sufficient to organize schools, whenever practicable.

Your committee would suggest, as the time is not far distant, when the State will no longer have occasion to use this fund, that it is proper to provide for that contingency, and for this purpose, they will report by bill.

APPENDIX C

**LETTER: ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS TO
HENRY ASBURY, DECEMBER 27, 1839**

*The writer of this letter was Hon. Archibald Williams,
a great lawyer in the early times in Illinois –
He died U.S. Dist. Judge of Kansas, Sept. 21, 1863*

Springfield December 27, 1839

Friend Asbury,

The Whigs are in good cheer here and the Locos in great dismay. In the first place the Spoilers were routed most signally in the political debate which commenced here shortly after their office holders convention adjourned. Then the nomination of the Harrisburgh convention was recd. here and the flag of the old Hero has been proudly floating ever since. The nomination is recd. here with great enthusiasm by the Whigs from all parts of the state. Many prefer Mr. Clay but all concur in the opinion that Harrison is the stronger man of the two. The (?) (?) Mr. Clay's condition and think he has been badly treated. Next in order of time, we decided on the 24th Just that Mr. (?), the Whig member from Pike, was entitled to his seat, and last night as if to drive them into despair, the mail brought us the glorious news that the Whigs had elected Mr. Hunter of Virginia (Whig) speaker of the (?) in Congress. You have doubtless learned that (?) is our judge.*

*Note in margin: *This was Peter (?), who made a savy(?)Judge. He died at Lehnauletpec(?) Mexico – as U.S. Consul – H.A. [Henry Asbury]*

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Your letter was submitted to Messrs. Browning and John-ston. We all concurred in the opinion that it would not be prudent to put you in nomination. Organized as the parties then were, it was out of the question to elect a Whig. Kerr(?) was excluded and Love squatted in his place. The Spoilers had just been assembled, (?) wavering(?) had been whipped into the tract(?), and the (?) had been animated by their false clamors of democracy. What is inevitable must be submitted to and so far as concerns you personally, we think there is no cause of regret, although we would not do you the injustice to compare you to the loafers that have heretofore and more – held that office. Yet I must be frank enough to own that in my opinion it is better for you to have a little more experience in your profession before you put on the judicial exercise.

It is now near the end of the third week of the session and there has been no definite action upon the subject of internal (or more properly infernal) improvement. All admit and seem anxious that something should be done. Several propositions have been submitted in the form of resolutions, some to repeal the law, some to classify, some to suspend for the present. My opinion is that the whole will be suspended until March 1841. We have a memorial before us to address or impeach Judge Pearsons. It will probably occupy some three weeks of our time. The charges preferred by the Memorialists if true ought to send him to a mad house for the balance of his life. Tell Mr. Bartlett that an article in his last paper touching the Pike contested case disturbs the equanimity of the Registerman(?). But every word was true to the letter. Ewing did hurry to his seat and state that Henderson was out of order.

Judge Young has made an arrangement per of one million of dollars of State Bonds by which we will lose \$392,400.00. Rawlings and Oakley have done

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still worse. We have truly been ably represented in Europe. His excellency the governor has favored us with a supplement to his Message the object and purpose of which was to inform us that he was mistaken when he informed us that the Bank of Illinois had not suspended specie payment. The State Bank has forfeited its charter and is preparing to close their business. It has thrown the Govies into great consternation and their great desire now is to have the Bank resuscitated. The only difficulty is they don't like by their actions to contradict all their hypocritical cant about soulless corporations. Rag barons swindling Banks. But they will have to do it. They dare not adjourn without doing so. It is said that some of the members of the late convention in this place advocated while here the policy of authorizing the Bank suspension. Perhaps the delegates from our county can give some information on the subject.

Your friend
Archibald Williams

APPENDIX D

MEETING IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS,
ON THE MORMON ISSUE,
ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1845

PUBLIC MEETING

Agreeably to previous notice, a public meeting was held at the Court House on Monday evening, September 22, [1845].

Archibald Williams was called to the Chair, and William H. Bennison appointed Secretary.²³⁴

On motion, a committee of six were appointed by the Chair to draft and report suitable resolutions for the action of the meeting. I. N. Morris, Henry Asbury, John B. Scwindler, John H. Holton, Timothy Kelly, and Albert Pearson, composed that committee.

The committee having retired, the meeting was severally addressed by [Messieurs] Ralston, Warren, Browning, Jonas, Morris, Prentiss, Skinner, Johns[t]on,²³⁵ and Dixon.

The following Preamble and Resolutions were reported by the committee appointed for the purpose, and unanimously adopted by the meeting.

Whereas, the County of Hancock, a few years since, and previous to the settlement therein of the people called Mormons, enjoyed a degree of peace and good order, not inferior to that of other counties of this State, –

²³⁴ Events at this September 22, 1845, meeting were reported in a newspaper article entitled “Public Meeting.” Neither the newspaper nor the year of the meeting was identified. Found in Special Collections, Brigham Young University Library. Paragraphing and punctuation have been altered to increase readability.

²³⁵ Rather than Andrew *Johnson*, as noted in the text, this may have been Andrew *Johnston*, a law partner and close friend of Archibald Williams living in Quincy, Illinois, at the time.

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And, whereas, since the said settlement, difficulties have been constantly but gradually growing up between the said people and the other inhabitants of the county of Hancock, which have for the last four years produced the most serious disasters, attracting the notice, even of remote parts of the United States, and giving just ground of apprehension to the people of the adjacent counties, keeping them in a high state of excitement, and not infrequently requiring their interposition, –

And, whereas, without enquiring into the cause, the history of said people elsewhere has been marked in like manner by jealousies, dissensions, violence and bloodshed, arising out of their intercourse with other citizens, who had lived in peace with one another before their arrival among them, –

And, whereas, the recent act[s] of violence on both sides in the said county of Hancock, evidence a most fearful and exasperated state of feeling, and threatens sooner or later a civil conflict of the most dreadful character, not to be terminated but by the separation of the parties, and which must involve the honor and character of our State, and the peace and happiness of this county in particular, –

And, whereas, the expulsion of the party called anti-Mormons, and the surrender of the county of Hancock to their adversaries, would probably lead in the end to a similar issue with the people in the adjacent counties, –

And, whereas, the present controversy is, consequently, of great importance to the inhabitants of said adjoining counties, and seems to require at their hands some effort to prevent the disastrous results that may follow, and quiet the present unhappy state of excitement, –

And, whereas, the Mormons have in some measure signified their willingness to leave the State within six months and seek a location elsewhere:

Therefore, Resolved, That in the opinion of this meeting, (and it is their firm conviction) that the safety of Nauvoo, as well as the welfare of the other citizens of this state, will be best subserved by their removal to some county in which their peculiar organization will not endanger the public peace, and that if this measure be not pursued, they ought, at least, to break up their present organization as a distinct community and amalgamate with the general population of the State.

Resolved, That in the event of such a conflict, as is alluded to and deprecated in the foregoing preamble, the Mormons, warned by past

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experience, may expect that the sympathy and strength of an overwhelming majority of the people will be arrayed against them.

Resolved, That this meeting does not intend to approve or condemn the conduct of either of the parties in Hancock County; but to express its sober conviction as to the probable consequences of the present unhappy state of things, and to commend them to the serious attention of all who are interested therein.

Resolved, That we respectfully but earnestly recommend to our fellow-citizens in other parts of this County [Adams County], and in other Counties of this State, to hold public meetings for the purpose of expressing and publishing their opinions on this subject.

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting [Archibald Williams] to communicate a copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions to the Authorities of Nauvoo, and to invite their early and earnest attention to the same; and when their reply shall be received, to cause the same to be published in our City [Quincy, Illinois] papers.

Resolved, That should the Mormons still signify their intention of leaving the State within a reasonable time, the Anti-Mormons of Hancock, should, and will in our opinion, accept of that proposition and cease all hasty and illegal means to expel them; and that such a measure will restore quiet to the public mind, and insure a happy adjustment of the present difficulties.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the Chairman [Archibald Williams] and the Secretary [William H. Bennison]; and that our City [Quincy, Illinois] papers and all other papers in the State be requested to publish them.

On motion of Andrew Johns[t]on, the following amendment was added to the above resolutions.

Resolved, That the committee of five to be appointed by the Chair, be requested to proceed to Hancock County as speedily as possible, and ascertain the disposition of the Mormons in relation to the proposition contained in the foregoing preamble and resolutions, and that the Chair have the privilege of appointing said committee, after the adjournment of this meeting.

In compliance with the above resolutions, the following persons were appointed a committee, for the purposes therein specified: H. Asbury, Esq.,

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John P. Robbins, A. G. Pearson, P. A. Goodwin, Esq., Dr. J. N. Ralston, Michael Rogers, and Enoch Conyers.

On motion, the meeting adjourned, to meet again on an evening to be appointed by the Chairman of this meeting, after the return of the above committee.

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Wm. H. Bennison, Sec'ry.

APPENDIX E

LETTER: ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS TO
JOSEPH GILLESPIE, FEBRUARY 17, 1850²³⁶

Quincy, February 17, 1850

Dear Joe

Yours recd. You did exactly what I would have done under similar circumstances in advocating (?-name) claims to the judgeship. There is not a cleverer fellow in the world than Livi(?) or one for whom I entertain a more cordial friendship. By the by perhaps you are not aware that Lawrence is enraptured wonderfully with you. About the first thing he said after hearing of the death of Judge Pope was that you ought to be his successor, and but for the application of our friend and neighbor Bushnell we would have been down upon you with a joint letter urging you to accept what I suppose from the result you could not have obtained. Your ex P.M. is a smart one. It is such a novel case. I doubt whether the law has provided a specific & summary remedy at least I know of none.

Your friend
Archibald Williams

²³⁶ Letter, Archibald Williams to Joseph Gillespie, February 17, 1850, original copy in Joseph Gillespie folder, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.

APPENDIX F

SPEECH

OF

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS,

DELIVERED AT

PITTSFIELD, PIKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS,

SEPTEMBER 11, 1854

FELLOW CITIZENS: - As the time allowed me is short, I shall proceed at once to the discussion of the questions at issue.²³⁷

The first question between my competitor [Democrat William A. Richardson] and myself relates to the subject of internal improvements. The [United States] government is now collecting upwards of fifty millions of dollars a year. This immense sum is now appropriated chiefly to the various officers and agencies of the government.

We have great inland lakes and rivers upon and through which an immense commerce is carried on. Congress has power, and it is its duty to regulate that commerce, and in the exercise of this power to appropriate a part of this vast revenue to the improvement of harbors on our lakes, and to the removal of obstructions which impede the navigation of our rivers.

A bill of this kind passed Congress at its last session. One of our [Illinois] Senators (Mr. [Stephen A.] Douglas) voted against it. Our other Senator did not vote at all.

²³⁷ This speech of Archibald Williams was placed on the Internet by the Illinois State Historical Society and stamped with the number 67339. Paragraphing and capitalization in the speech have been changed to make the speech more consistent and readable.

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My opponent, I understand, was prevented by sickness from voting upon it. He says, however, he would have voted for it, but he would prefer that the government discontinue appropriations for internal improvements altogether, both east and west.

One of the last acts of the President [Franklin Pierce, a Democrat,] was to veto this bill. The convention which nominated my opponent approved of the course of the Administration. From these facts I am authorized to assume that my opponent is at best but a lukewarm supporter of appropriations for river and harbor improvements.

Whilst members of Congress have been parsimonious in appropriating money for these improvements, in which the whole country has a deep interest, they have been wasteful and prodigal in appropriating money for their own individual benefit.

They have been in the habit, at each session of Congress, of appropriating to every new member, in addition to his mileage and per diem of eight dollars, a complete set of Congressional documents, each set costing the government not less than one thousand dollars. The aggregate annual cost to the government is over one hundred thousand dollars.

Large sums of money have been paid to Senators for constructive mileage, and to members of both Houses for stationery. I have not the means of estimating the amount thus paid to members, but I have no doubt it greatly exceeds the amount appropriated for rivers and harbors improvements.

This in my opinion should be corrected. The correction is in your hands. So long as you are indifferent or lukewarm on the subject, the practice will continue. When you show yourselves in earnest and demand a reform, it will be reformed.

Should I be elected, I will earnestly, and to the extent of my ability, advocate liberal appropriations of money for river and harbor improvements, and oppose all wasteful and prodigal appropriations to members of Congress or other officers and agents of the government.

I now come to a subject which, more than any other, agitates the country. Congress, at its last session, repealed the Missouri Compromise and thereby revived the slavery agitation, the sectional strife, and the fearful struggle which it was thought had been forever put to rest by the various compromises on this subject.

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My opponent, Colonel Richardson,²³⁸ says it was right to repeal this Compromise, and the convention which nominated him voted him and Senator Douglas the thanks of this Congressional District for the part they took in repealing it.

I say the repeal was wrong, and will state my reasons for so thinking:

First, I am opposed to it because it is a departure from and reversal of the whole course of Congressional Legislation on the subject. Up to the 23rd of January 1854, the Legislation of Congress had been in favor of freedom and free institutions, and against Slavery extension. It commenced with the Continental Congress with this memorable provision [on the organization of the Northwest Territory (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, etc.) in 1787]:

“And for extending the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, which form the basis wherein these republics, their laws, and constitutions are erected; to fix and establish these principles as the basis of all laws, constitutions and government which forever hereafter be formed in the said territory; to provide also, for the establishment of states, and permanent government therein, and for their admission to a share in the federal councils on an equal footing with the original states at as early periods as may be consistent with the general interest:

It is hereby ordained and declared by the authority aforesaid, that the following articles shall be considered as articles of compact, between the original states and the people and states in the said territory, and forever remain unalterable, unless by common consent, to wit;

Article 6: There shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.”

My opponent says Virginia required this provision to be made to prevent the settlers in that territory from competing with her in the growth of tobacco; thus dwarfing a noble act prompted by high and patriotic motives into a sordid and selfish calculation of cent for cent profit on the culture of tobacco.

²³⁸ William A. Richardson was addressed as Colonel because he served in the military during the Mexican War in 1846.

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Virginia at that time was guided in her councils by her Washington, her Marshall, her Patrick Henry and Jefferson. If these great patriots could now rise from their tombs, they would with withering indignation denounce this as a slander injurious to their motives and dishonoring their fair fame. –

They, though slave holders, were no slavery propagandists. In adopting this prohibition they were governed by no low and sordid motives but by the high and noble sentiments so well set forth in the preamble.

The Federal Congress under the impulse of the same patriotic sentiments, when the people of the Indiana territory, about fifty years ago, petitioned Congress for a suspension of this ordinance for ten years, refused the prayer of the petition. [A] select committee, of which Mr. Randolph of Virginia was chairman, and to which the petition was referred, made this report:

“That the rapid [growth of the] population of the State of Ohio, sufficiently evinces, in the opinion of your committee, that the labor of Slaves is not necessary to promote the growth and settlement of Colonies in that region; that this labor, demonstrably the dearest of any, can only be employed to advantage in the cultivation of products more valuable than any known in that quarter of the United States [the Midwest]; that the committee deem IT HIGHLY DANGEROUS AND INEXPEDIENT TO IMPAIR A PROVISION WISELY CALCULATED TO PROMOTE THE HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY of the North Western country, and to give strength and security to that extensive frontier.

In the salutary operation of this sagacious and benevolent restraint, it is believed that the inhabitants of Indiana will, at no very distant day, find ample remuneration for a temporary privation of [Slave] labor and [Slave] emigration.”

Three other like petitions met the same fate, and who is there now of the millions of freemen in the great States formed out of the North Western Territory, that does not feel thankful to the Continental Congress for establishing this beneficent ordinance, and to the federal Congress for continuing it. –

This ordinance applied to all the territory then belonging to the United States. Afterwards the Carolinas and Georgia ceded to the United States the territory out of which the new Southern States were made, with and upon the

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condition that Slavery should not be prohibited therein; so that Congress had no power over the subject of slaves in that territory.

After the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory in 1803, and when Missouri applied for admission into the Union as a State, the Slavery question gave rise to a fearful agitation, dangerous to the peace of the country and the safety of the Union.

The majority of the House of Representatives insisted upon applying to the whole territory the ordinance of 1787. The majority in the Senate was opposed to all restriction on the subject of Slavery.

Patriotic men on both sides of the question consulted together, and the result was an agreement that Missouri should be admitted as a State without any restriction of Slavery, and the balance of the Louisiana Territory should be divided by a line of 36° 30' north latitude; that south of that line, States should be received into the Union with or without Slavery as they should in their constitutions provide, and that north of that line Slavery should be forever prohibited.

The Missouri Compromise Act was passed to carry out this agreement, and under its provisions Missouri formed her constitution and was admitted as a Slave State at the next Congress. Afterward Arkansas was admitted as a Slave, and Iowa as a Free State.

This Compromise, in the language of Senator [Stephen A.] Douglas, in a speech in the Senate in the year 1851, had been the means of an amicable settlement of a fearful controversy in 1821, which had been acquiesced in cheerfully and cordially by the people for more than a quarter of a century, and which all parties and sections of the Union professed to respect and cherish as a fair, just, and honorable adjustment.

When Texas was annexed, this Compromise with its line of division, was, on motion of Senator Douglas, applied to the Texas Territory. When the Oregon Territory was organized, Slavery was prohibited there, my opponent voting for the bill with the prohibition.

When the Mexican Territory was acquired, slavery was prohibited there by the Mexican law, and in the Compromise measure of 1850, Congress steadily refused to repeal the Mexican law or to recognize by implication or otherwise the existence of Slavery there. On that occasion, Mr. [Henry] Clay said:

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“I never can, and never will, and no earthly power will make me, vote to spread Slavery over Territory where it does not exist.”

And Senator Douglas, in a speech which he made on that occasion against an amendment offered to the Utah and New Mexico territorial bills, providing, in substance, that the people in the territories should have power to pass all laws necessary for the protection of their property, of any description whatever, under the Constitution of the United States, said:

“The difference is this: He (Mr. Davis) desires an amendment which he thinks will recognize the institution of Slavery as now existing in this country. I do not believe it exists there now. I believe it is prohibited there by law at this time, and the offset if not the object of his amendment would be to introduce Slavery, by law, into a country from which I think a large majority of this Senate are of [the] opinion it is excluded.

And he calls upon us to introduce it there. The Senator from Kentucky, (Mr. Clay,) who brought forward this Compromise, tells us that he can never give a vote by which he will introduce Slavery where it does not exist; other Senators have declared the same thing to an extent which authorizes us to assume that the majority of this Senate WILL NEVER EXTEND SLAVERY, BY LAW, INTO TERRITORY NOW FREE.

What, then, must be the effect of the adoption of the provision offered by the Senator from Mississippi? It would be the insertion of a provision that would infallibly defeat the bill.”

Thus it will be seen that Congress refused at that time to authorize the territories to pass laws for the protection of their property, on the ground, as stated by Senator Douglas, that the effect if not the object of the provision would be to introduce Slavery there by law.

On the fourth of January, 1854, Senator Douglas, chairman of the Committee on Territories, reported a bill for the organization of the Territory of Nebraska. This bill did not propose to repeal the Missouri Compromise. In a written report accompanying and explanatory of said bill he says:

“Your committee do not feel themselves called upon to enter into the discussion of these controversial questions. They involve the same great

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issues which PRODUCED THE AGITATION, THE SECTIONAL STRIFE, AND THE FEARFUL STRUGGLE OF 1850.

As Congress deemed it wise and prudent to refrain from deciding the matter in controversy then, either by affirming or repealing the Mexican laws, or by an act declaratory of the true intent of the Constitution and the extent of the protection afforded by it to Slave property in the territories, so your committee are not prepared to recommend a DEPARTURE from the course pursued on that memorable occasion, either by AFFIRMING or repealing the 8th section of the Missouri Act, or by any act declaratory of the meaning of the Constitution in respect to the legal points in dispute.

Your committee deem it fortunate for the country and the security of the Union, that the controversy then resulted in the adoption of the Compromise measures, which the two great political parties, with singular unanimity, have affirmed as a cardinal article of their faith and proclaimed to the world as a FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE CONTROVERSY AND AN END OF THE AGITATION.

A due regard, therefore, for the avowed opinions of Senators, as well as a proper sense of patriotic duty, enjoins upon your committee the propriety and the necessity of a strict adherence to the principles, and even a literal adoption of the enactments of that justification in all their territorial bills, so far as the same are not locally inapplicable.”

It will be observed that in the view of Senator Douglas, either to affirm or repeal the Missouri Compromise would be a departure from the course pursued in 1850, would produce the agitation, the sectional strife and fearful struggle in that year, and that a due respect for the avowed opinions of Senators, as well as a proper sense of patriotic duty, enjoin the propriety and necessity of a strict adherence to the principles of the adjustment of 1850.

What the avowed opinions of Senators were I have already shown. –

Thus it will be seen that, up to the 4th of last January [1854] there had been no Congressional Legislation in favor of the extension of Slavery, and that the attempt to extend it into Kansas and Nebraska by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a departure, not only from the course pursued in 1850, but also from the whole course of the Congressional Legislation upon the subject from the beginning of the [United States] government to that time.

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For this reason I am opposed to it.

Secondly, the repeal was wrong because it violated a sacred Compromise which “had allayed all sectional jealousies and irritations growing out of the question of Slavery, and harmonized and tranquilized the whole country,” and had become “canonized in the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb,” and to the observance of which the faith of the nation was solemnly pledged.

My opponent denies that it was a compromise and says it was unjustly imposed on the South and had not been observed by the North and is astute in trying to find pretext for assailing the North. I am relieved from the necessity of discussing these points. – They have all been settled by Democratic [Party] authority to which my opponent will not except.

The first witness I introduce is Colonel [Thomas Hart] Benton. He was a citizen of Missouri when the Missouri Compromise was adopted and has been in Congress as a Senator and Representative ever since and of course his means of information on that question are better than those of any other person now living. In his history he says:

In the House there was some division among the Southern members; but the whole vote in favor of it was 134, to 42 in the negative, the latter comprising some Northern members, as the former did a majority of the Southern; among them one whose opinion had a weight not exceeded by that of any other American Statesman, William Lowndes, of South Carolina. The array of names shows the Missouri Compromise to have been a Southern measure, and the event put the seal on that charter by showing it to be acceptable to the South.”

And in a speech which he made against the repeal of the Missouri Compromise he says:

“Sir; The question has been decided. The Free States are against this bill; and it is an ill return for their past generous conduct to endeavor to force it upon them. They have been not only just but magnanimous to the Slave States.”

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My next witness is Charles Pinckney, a Representative in Congress from South Carolina. Immediately after the adoption of the Missouri Compromise, he wrote a letter of which the following is an extract:

Congress Hall, March 2, 1820, 3 o'clock at night

Dear Sir: - I hasten to inform you that this moment we have carried the question to admit Missouri and all Louisiana to the southward of 36 30', free of the restriction upon Slavery, and giving the South in a short time an addition of six and perhaps eight members of the Senate of the United States. It is considered by the Slave holding States as a great triumph."*

My next witness is General [Lewis] Cass.²³⁹ In a speech upon the Nebraska bill, in reply to a report that he had intended to propose the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, he said:

"I had no design whatever to take such a step, and thus resuscitating from its quietude a deed of conciliation, which had done its work, and had done it well, and which was hallowed by patriotism, by success, and by its association with great names, now transferred to History.

It belonged to a past generation; and in the midst of a political tempest which appalled the wisest and firmest in the land, it had said to the waves of agitation, 'Peace, be still!' and they became still. It would have been better, in my opinion, not to disturb its slumber."

My next witness is President [James K.] Polk, [a Democrat]. In his message of the 4th of August, 1848, he says:

"In December, 1819, application was made to Congress by the people of Missouri Territory for admission into the Union as a State. The discussion of the subject in Congress involved the question of Slavery, and was

²³⁹ Lewis Cass, of Michigan, served in the military in the War of 1812. He was elected U.S. Senator from Michigan and, similar to Stephen Douglas, was a strong supporter of popular sovereignty. He was the Democratic Party nominee for president of the United States in 1848 and lost the election to the Whig Party candidate, Zachary Taylor.

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prosecuted with such violence as to produce excitement, alarming to every patriot in the Union.

But the good genius of conciliation which presided at the birth of our institutions finally prevailed, and the Missouri Compromise was adopted.

The 8th section of the Act of Congress of [3rd] March, 1820, 'to authorize the people of the Missouri Territory to form a constitution and State government,' &c., provides:

'That in all that Territory ceded by France to the United States under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of 36 30' north latitude, not included within the limits of the State contemplated by this Act, Slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in punishment of crimes whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted, shall be and is hereby forever prohibited:*

Provided, always, that any person escaping into the same, from whom labor or service is lawfully claimed in any State or territory of the United States, such fugitive may be lawfully reclaimed and conveyed to the person claiming his or her labor aforesaid.'

This Compromise had the effect of calming the troubled waves and restoring peace and good will throughout the States of the Union.

The Missouri question had excited intense agitation of the public mind, and threatened to divide the country into geographical parties, alienating the feelings of attachment which each portion of our Union should bear to every other.

The Compromise allayed the excitement, tranquilized the popular mind, and restored confidence and fraternal feeling. Its authors were hailed as public benefactors.

Ought we now to disturb the Missouri Compromise? Ought we, at this late day, in attempting to annul what has been so long established and acquiesced in, to excite sectional divisions and jealousies; to alienate the people of the different portions of the Union from each other, and to endanger the Union itself?"

My next witness is Senator [Stephen A.] Douglas. In a speech made at Springfield, [Illinois,] on the 23rd of October, 1849, he said:

"The Missouri Compromise had then been in practical operation for about a quarter of a century, and had received the sanction and approbation

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of men of all parties, in every section of the Union. It had allayed all sectional jealousies and irritations growing out of this vexed question, and harmonized and tranquilized the whole country.

It had given to Henry Clay, as its prominent champion, the proud soubriquet of the 'Great Pacificator,' and by that title and for that great service, his political friends had repeatedly appealed to the people to rally under his standard as a presidential candidate, as the man who had exhibited the patriotism and power to suppress an unholy and treasonable agitation, and preserve the Union.

He [Henry Clay] was not aware that any man or any party, from any section of the Union, had ever urged as an objection to Mr. Clay, that he was the great champion of the Missouri Compromise.

On the contrary, the effort was made by the opponents of Mr. Clay to prove that he was not entitled to the exclusive merit of that great patriotic measure, and that the honor was equally due to others as well as him, for securing its adoption –

That it had its origin in the hearts of all patriotic men who desired to preserve and perpetuate the blessings of our glorious Union –

An origin akin to that of the Constitution of the United States, conceived in the same spirit of fraternal affection, and calculated to remove forever the only danger that seemed to threaten, at some distant day, to sever the social bond of Union.

All of the evidence of public opinion at that day seemed to indicate that this Compromise had become canonized in the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing, which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb.”

In a speech which he made in the Senate on the 23rd of December 1851, in favor of a resolution declaring the Compromise measures to be a definitive adjustment of all questions growing out of domestic Slavery, he [Stephen Douglas] said:

“When the stormy agitation rose in connection with the annexation of Texas, I originated and brought forward the Missouri Compromise as applicable to that territory, and had the gratification to see it incorporated in the bill which annexed Texas to the United States.

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I did not deem it a matter of much moment as applicable to Texas alone, but I did conceive it to be of vast importance in view of the probable acquisition of New Mexico and California.

My preference for the Missouri Compromise was predicated on the assumption that the whole people of the United States would be more easily reconciled to that measure than any other mode of adjustment, and this assumption rested on the fact that the Missouri Compromise had been the means of an amicable settlement of a fearful controversy in [1820], which had been acquiesced in cheerfully and cordially by the people for more than a quarter of a century and which all parties and sections of the Union professed to respect as a fair, just and honorable adjustment.”

My next witness is the Legislature of Missouri, which (in 1847),

Resolved, That the peace, permanency and welfare of our National Union depend upon a strict adherence to the letter and spirit of the 8th section of the Act to authorize the people of Missouri Territory to form a constitution and State government, and for the admission of such State into the Union on an equal footing with the original States and prohibit Slavery in certain territories, approved March 6th 1820.”

My next witness is my opponent, Colonel Richardson. In a speech which he made in Congress on the 3rd of April 1850, in favor of the compromise measures of that year [Compromise of 1850], after arguing that Slavery in the States should be left precisely as we find it, he says:

“The question of the extension of Slavery is widely different.”

Again he says, in the same speech.

“I have sought in vain to hear some reason for the passage of the Wilmot Proviso. There is a necessity to abolish or prohibit Slavery in territories where it exists. With this view the Ordinance of 1787 was passed. It had application to territory where Slavery did exist, by operation of the laws of Virginia, to which the North Western Territory belonged.

The Missouri Compromise also abolished Slavery north of 36 30’. The Compromise was passed, not to keep the territory free north of that*

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latitude, but because the laws of Louisiana, when we acquired it, recognized Slavery and carried it, consequently, unless repealed, to all the territory.”

Again he [Colonel Richardson] says:

“The Mexican territories are free now and will ever remain so; they are free by the law of nations; they are free by the laws of nature; they will remain free from causes to which I have already referred forever.

This should satisfy all, in my judgment, who are opposed to the extension of Slavery. The position is so unanswerable, that the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, Mr. [Henry] Clay, says it is incontestable truth.

I do not, and cannot believe, that the Constitution carries and protects Slavery, except in States, nor do I believe that its framers intended that it should extend to this institution. I believe it was framed for far higher and worthier purposes.

With these conflicting opinions, North and South, the question naturally arises, what can be done to restore that harmony and good feeling which should always characterize citizens of the same country?

I reply, admit California as a State in the Union with the boundaries as people have fixed them; pass a bill for a territorial government for the residue of the country; saying not one word about Slavery; leave the people who go, when they shall apply for admission; to determine for themselves what their institutions shall be.

There is, consequently, no constitutional difficulty in my road.”

He [William Richardson] thus portrays the danger of Slavery agitation.

“If this excitement shall continue – if this agitation shall be kept up until sectional parties can be formed and united – until the South can be arrayed against the North, and the North against the South – until the kindly feeling of one section can be changed to hate against the other section – we may despair of the perpetuity of our Government, and prepare our minds for its certain overthrow.”

Thus I have proved by these witnesses, all of them prominent Democrats, that the Missouri Compromise was a compromise, – that it was

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considered by the slaveholding States as a great triumph, – that it calmed the troubled waves and restored peace and good will throughout the states of the Union, – that it was hallowed by patriotism, by success, and by its association with great names now transferred to history, – that it has been acquiesced in cheerfully and cordially by all parties and sections of the country for more than a quarter of a century as a fair, just and honorable adjustment – and that it had become “canonized in the hearts of the American people as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb.”

This being the character of this [Missouri] Compromise, I ask you, fellow-citizens, in the language of President [James K.] Polk,

“Ought we to disturb the Missouri Compromise? Ought we, at this late day, in attempting to annul what has been so long established and acquiesced in, to excite sectional divisions and jealousies; to alienate the people of the different portions of the Union from each other, and to endanger the existence of the Union itself?”

You, fellow-citizens, have to answer this question. As you value the peace of the country and the safety of our glorious Union, answer it impartially and honestly!

Thirdly, I am opposed to the repeal, because it re-opens and revives the slavery agitation in its most dangerous form, and that too by a President and Congress who were solemnly pledged by the platforms of 1852, of both the great political parties, to resist all attempts to revive the agitation, in Congress or out of it, under whatever shape or color the attempt might be made.

The Whig platform is in these words:

“We deprecate all further agitation of the questions (of Slavery) thus settled, as dangerous to our peace, and will discountenance all efforts to continue or renew such agitation, whenever, wherever, or however made; and we will maintain this settlement as essential to the nationality of the Whig Party.”

The Democratic platform is as follows:

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“Resolved: that the Democratic Party will resist all attempts at renewing, in Congress or out of it, the agitation of the slavery question, under whatever shape or color the attempt may be made.”

Senator Douglas said, in his report of ... January last, that

“the two great political parties had, with singular unanimity, affirmed the Compromise of 1850 as a cardinal article of their faith and proclaimed it to the world as a final settlement to the controversy and an end of the agitation, and that either to affirm or repeal the Missouri Compromise would be a departure from the Compromise of 1850, and would produce the agitation, the sectional strife and the fearful struggle of 1850.”

Why did he [Stephen A. Douglas] afterwards recommend this departure [the Nebraska bill] and thereby revive this fearful struggle?

On the 16th of the same month, Senator Dixon proposed an amendment, repealing the Missouri Compromise, and the leading Democratic papers throughout the country announced him as having joined hands with the Abolitionists for the purpose of renewing slavery agitation.

Seven days after this, Senator Douglas adopted Mr. Dixon’s amendment, and on the 30th of the same month he made a speech in the Senate, denouncing all who opposed the repeal as abolition confederates, and declared that the only principle of the Nebraska bill was the assertion of the great principle of the right of the people to govern themselves.

And this has been the staple of all of the stump speeches made in the Free States by the friends of the bill ever since. To see how false and hysterical this pretense is, it is only necessary to look into the provisions of the bill as it then stood:

The 1st section provides that “when admitted as a State or States, the said territory, or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union with or without Slavery, as their [State] constitutions may prescribe at the time of their admission.”

The 2nd section provides that the Governor “shall approve all laws passed by the Legislative Assembly, before they shall take effect.”

The 4th section provides “that the legislative power and authority of the said territory shall be vested in the Governor and Legislative Assembly.

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The Legislative Assembly shall consist of a Council and House of Representatives, to be elected by the people of the territory.

The 7th section provided that “all the laws passed by the Legislative Assembly and Governor shall be submitted to the [United States] Congress and if disapproved shall be null and of no effect.”

The 12th section provides “that the Governor, Secretary, Chief Justices, Attorney and Marshall shall be nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the [United States] Senate, appointed by the President of the United States.”

The 14th section provides “that the Constitution and all laws of the United States, not locally inapplicable, shall have the same force and effect within the said territory of Nebraska, as elsewhere in the United States, except the 8th section of the act of Congress of the 6th of March, 1820, which being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention by Congress with Slavery in the states and territories, as established and recognized by the legislation of 1850, is hereby declared inoperative and void.”

These were the provisions of the bill which it is said asserts the grand principle of the right of the people to govern themselves.

It will be seen that the only power conferred on the people, is in the 1st and 4th sections, neither of which it is proposed to repeal. The government thus established [for Nebraska territory] is precisely the same as were the British Colonial governments against which our patriot fathers rebelled.

In both cases, the Legislative Assemblies were and are chosen by the people. In the Colonies the Governors were appointed by the King; in Nebraska by the President. In both the Governors had and have a veto. In both they are bound, the one by the acts of the British Parliament and the other by the acts of Congress. –

But there is a stump speech appended to the 14th section, which it is said asserts this great right of self-government. It is in these words:

“The true intent and meaning being, not to legislate Slavery into any State or Territory or exclude it therefrom.”

No; not to Legislate it into, &c., but to remove the barrier which keeps it out. As well might the man who removes his neighbor’s fence from around his cornfield, in the presence of a drove of hungry cattle, say to him; “my true intent and meaning is not to turn these cattle into your cornfield, but to leave them perfectly free to go in, or stay out, as they think proper.”

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“To leave the people perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions as they think proper.”

The falsehood and hypocrisy of this pretense is too palpable to deceive anyone. – The section to which it is appended subjects them to the laws of Congress, and they are also subject to a Governor with his veto imposed upon them by the President of the United States.

Marriage is a domestic institution. In one of our Territories [Utah], the people in the exercise of this unbridled squatter sovereignty, have thought proper so to regulate and form this institution, as to allow a man to have as many wives as he chooses, and they deny the power of Congress to prohibit the same; and in this they are clearly sustained by the principle asserted in this stump speech.

I am in favor of popular sovereignty in any just acceptance of the phrase. I am in favor of it as we have it in Illinois.

But to that wild and unbridled licentiousness which sanctions polygamy in a Christian country, provided the people of a territory think proper to establish it as one of their domestic institutions, I am totally opposed. In my opinion, Congress has the power, and should exercise it, to prohibit polygamy in the Territory of Utah.

I object to the manner in which the bill repealing the Missouri Compromise was passed. I have shown that it was done in violation of the faith of the nation, and of the pledges of the President [Franklin Pierce] and the members of Congress to their constituents, to resist all attempts to renew the Slavery agitation.

It [the Nebraska bill] was not passed by either of the great political parties, but by a fusion party, comprising all the nullifiers, most of the Southern members, Whigs as well as Democrats, and about half the Democrats of the Northern States.

When the people of the Free States heard that a “ruthless hand” had been found “reckless enough to disturb” an ancient Compromise, “canonized in their hearts as a sacred thing,” they met together throughout the land, by thousands and tens of thousands, and remonstrated against it.

Their remonstrations were treated with scorn and derision. Elections came on; first New Hampshire, the banner State of Democracy – the home of the President [Franklin Pierce].

The executive patronage, it is said, was freely used to carry the election in favor of the Nebraska bill.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Senator [Stephen A.] Douglas wrote and caused to be published in that State, pending the canvass, a long letter in vindication of the bill.

The Senators and Representatives in Congress from that State left their seats and went home to attend the election.

Under all these adverse influences, the result was a disastrous defeat of the violators of the Compromise.

Next came the election in the Democratic state of Connecticut. The repealers scarcely elected a corporal's guard.

The same result followed soon after in the Democratic state of Rhode Island.

In view of these demonstrations of public opinion, which admitted to no doubt that the Free States were decidedly opposed to the repeal, this fusion party took up the bill, out of its order, put it under whip and spur, and through the aid of executive patronage and by bullying members, passed it. –

One Senator [assigned] as a reason that the Northern cauldron which was then boiling, would continue to boil, and unless they passed the bill then, they could not do so for years to come.

Having passed the bill in this manner and under these circumstances, your servants [Senator Douglas and the congressional supporters of the Nebraska bill], as they are called, come home and modestly tell you that, although in your opinion they have done a great wrong, destructive of the peace of the country, and dangerous to the security of the Union itself, yet, as the deed is done, you must quietly submit or you will become AGITATORS, and you are advised to acquiesce in the wrong and to vote a vote of thanks to the wrong doers.

APPENDIX G

OBITUARY OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

QUINCY HERALD
VOLUME XXX. NUMBER 4
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1863.

Tuesday Morning, Sept. 22, 1863.

Death of Hon. Archibald Williams

The Hon. Archibald Williams, an old citizen of this city and county, and known throughout the State as a distinguished lawyer and politician, died at the residence of his son, in this city, yesterday. He had been confined to his bed about two weeks, by general debility, and hopes were entertained of his recovery, but his advanced age – we believe he was not far from seventy – had not left him with physical resources sufficient to rally and recover his exhausted vitality, and he passed away from among us at an early hour yesterday morning. Those who have known Mr. Williams intimately for thirty years past will bear cheerful testimony that as a citizen and a neighbor he was all that a man should be. As a lawyer he had but few, if any rivals, in the State. For many years he has ranked among the first level talent of the country, and with those of the legal profession who enjoyed his acquaintance and friendship his opinion upon the most perplexing and intricate points of law has had all the force of an oracle. We have already referred to Mr. Williams as a politician, but in this allusion let no injustice be done to his fame or his memory. He was not, at any time of life, as far as we know, a politician, in the ordinary acceptation of that term. He had none of the arts about him by which politicians usually achieve position and distinction. He was a politician simply in the fact that for many years he was a leading member of the old Whig party, and more recently of the Republicans. Whenever the political party to which he belonged had it in its power to confer the honors of office upon him, it has been done. During his residence of some thirty years or more in this state he has filled a number of

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

responsible official trusts, and in all of them acquitted himself with honor and credit. At the time of his death he held the highly responsible honorable position of U. S. District Judge in [Kansas], to which he was appointed by President Lincoln. In the death of Mr. Williams the country loses an upright and able jurist, the State one of her ablest lawyers and most distinguished citizens, and society a most useful and exemplary member. Intellectually, Mr. Williams was unquestionably one of the great men of the State – and one whose memory will be cherished for many long years to come by all who had been made familiar with his intellectual achievements and all who had enjoyed opportunities of realizing and appreciating his worth as a citizen, a neighbor and a friend.

Since the above was written we have received the [*Quincy*] *Whig* containing the following notice of Mr. Williams, and written, as we believe, by Jackson Grimshaw, Esq., of this city:

Death of Judge Williams.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS, of this city, died this (Monday) at 6 o'clock, at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. C. H. Morton, on Sixth Street. He has been ill for several weeks, but it was not until within a few days that his many friends gave up all hope of his recovery. His eminent abilities and long identification with the interests and politics of Quincy and Illinois deserve a better notice than we can prepare today, which must be our excuse for the omission.

Since writing the above the following has been handed us by one who has known Judge Williams long and intimately.

We have lost a dear friend, and the Bar one of its brightest ornaments. There were few better lawyers than ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS. He was not a quick man, but his powers of analysis were unsurpassed. He thought with great clearness and while not eloquent in the usual acceptance of that word, few could withstand the power of his reasoning. What he knew was always well and clearly known, and was well and clearly told. Honest, generous, kindhearted to a fault, but very retiring and modest, none knew him well that did not love him.

The younger members of the Bar found in him always a kind friend and teacher; the older men of the profession found him an antagonist worthy of the skill of the best of the Bar.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Judge Williams was a self-educated, self-made man, and tried to improve his mental powers. When Quincy was a mere village, in the year 1829, he settled here, and commenced the practice of law. He was afterward representative at various times in both branches of the Illinois Legislature, and was a distinguished member of the Constitutional Convention of 1847.

He was appointed by General Taylor [President Zachary Taylor] U. S. Attorney for the District of Illinois, and served in that capacity until the end of Mr. Fillmore's administration.

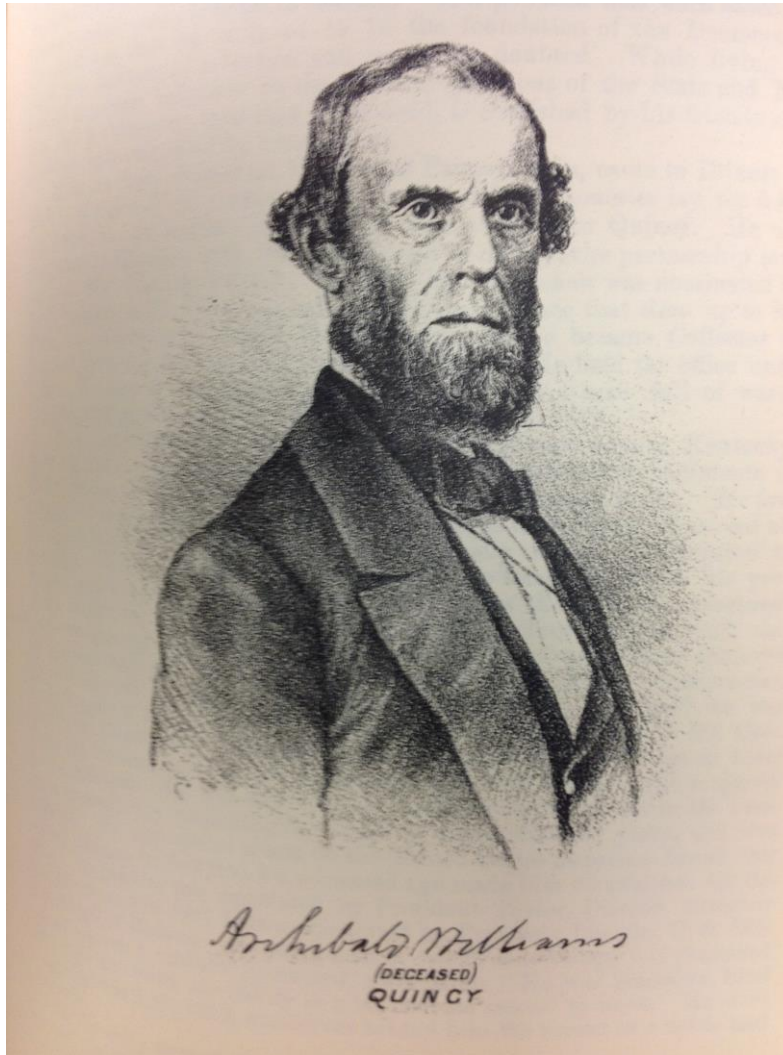
A few days after the inauguration of Mr. Lincoln as President, Mr. Williams, without solicitation on his part, was appointed United States District Judge for the State and District of Kansas, which State had just been admitted into the Union. He accepted the position and removed to Topeka, Kansas, in which place he has resided since the summer of 1861. Of feeble frame, his over tasked mind overcame his bodily strength, and he passed away calmly, in the vigor of his mental powers. We have lost – he has gained.

G.

APPENDIX H

Photographs Associated With The Life Of Archibald Williams

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS



ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS: 1801-1863

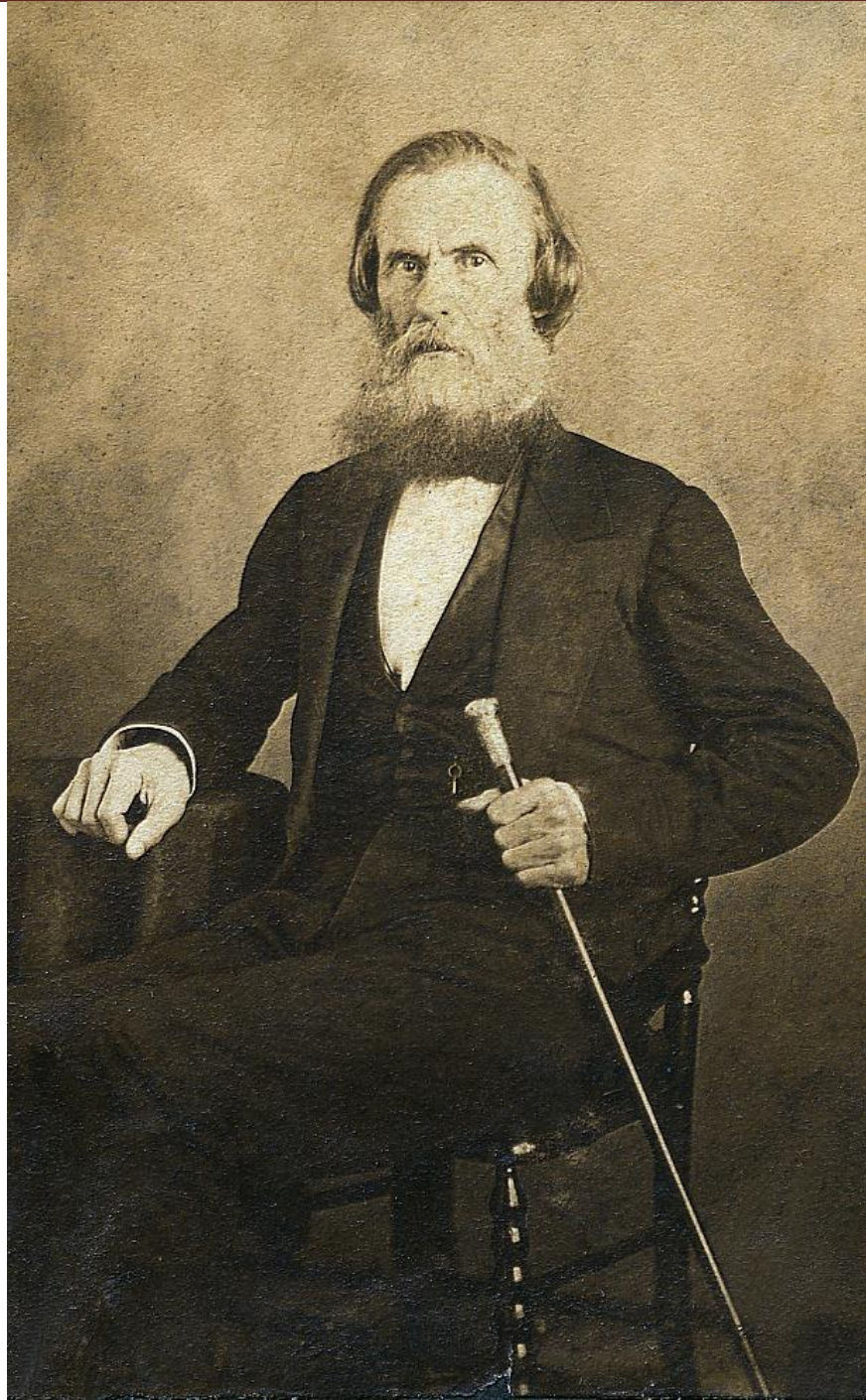
Born in Kentucky, Archibald Williams moved to Quincy, Illinois, and became a lawyer. He was elected to the Illinois state legislature, where he made the acquaintance of fellow legislator Abraham Lincoln. The two men were friends and political allies for the next 29 years.



NANCY KEMP WILLIAMS: 1815-1854

She was the wife of Archibald Williams. They were married July 28, 1831. They had nine children, five of whom grew to adulthood.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS



ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS (older)



ADAMS COUNTY COURT HOUSE: 1838-1875

This was the second court house built in Quincy, Illinois, to house the Adams County court. Archibald Williams argued many cases in the court room in this court house. The building burned down in 1875.



**SITE OF FIRST HOME OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS
IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS**

Archibald Williams and his family first lived “on the hill at the corner of Kentucky and 2nd Street” in Quincy, Illinois. This was how the property looked in September of 2013. The street in the foreground is 2nd Street. Kentucky Street is to the right.



**SITE OF LAW OFFICE OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS
IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS**

This street corner in downtown Quincy, Illinois, was the site of the law office of Archibald Williams in the 1850s. In September of 2013 one of the shops in the corner building was a fast-food hotdog store.



**KIRLIN'S STORE: SITE OF KENDALL HALL
IN QUINCY, ILLINOIS**

Kendall Hall was an auditorium in which many political events took place in Quincy, Illinois. Archibald Williams was the chairman of a number of political meetings held there. Abraham Lincoln gave a speech in behalf of Archibald Williams in Kendall Hall during Archibald Williams's campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1854. This photograph was taken in September of 2013.



OLD STATE HOUSE IN VANDALIA, ILLINOIS

Archibald Williams served as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives in this building from 1837 to 1839. Serving with Williams at that time was Abraham Lincoln of Springfield, Illinois. In 1839, mainly because of the efforts of Abraham Lincoln, the state capital was moved from Vandalia to Springfield, which was more centrally located in Illinois. At the time of this photograph, September of 2013, the Old State House in Vandalia was in excellent condition.



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CHAMBER
IN OLD STATE HOUSE IN VANDALIA, ILLINOIS**

Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln spent much time in this very room while serving together in the Illinois state legislature during the period 1837 to 1839. They were often seen talking together as they went about their legislative duties. Archibald Williams, who was several years older than Abraham Lincoln, was viewed as a mentor to Lincoln at that time.



**RECONSTRUCTED OLD STATE CAPITOL
IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

The original building was carefully dismantled and then reconstructed using all of the original materials – stone by stone and board by board. This building served as the Illinois State Capitol from 1839 until 1876. Archibald Williams was elected a delegate to an Illinois State Constitutional Convention that met in the Old State Capitol building in Springfield during the summer of 1847.



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CHAMBER
OLD STATE CAPITOL, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

The Illinois State Constitutional Convention of 1847 held major sessions in this room. Archibald Williams was described as one of three delegates, all members of the Whig Party, who dominated the work of the Constitutional Convention.



**SUPREME COURT CHAMBER
OLD STATE CAPITOL, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

Archibald Williams argued many cases in this room. He was said to be particularly adept at arguing cases on appeal before the Illinois State Supreme Court, where logic and reason were required rather than a slick presentation. The three justices of the Supreme Court sat behind the raised bench. Because this was an appeals court, there was no jury and thus no jury box in the court room.



**LAWYER'S ROOM
OLD STATE CAPITOL, SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

This is where the lawyers passed the time while waiting for their cases to come up before the Illinois State Supreme Court. Card games and board games were available, but the various attorneys could also use the room to do further preparation for their upcoming State Supreme Court cases. Archibald Williams and Abraham Lincoln both spent much time in this room. Abraham Lincoln probably told a number of his famous jokes and stories here.



**LINCOLN-HERNDON LAW OFFICES
AND UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT ROOM
IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

The upper floors of this building contained both Abraham Lincoln’s law offices and the United States District Court Room for Illinois. From 1849 to 1853, Archibald Williams served as the United States District Attorney for Illinois. He thus was the leading prosecutor for the United States Government in the various cases that came before the U.S. District Court during that time period. As U.S. District Attorney, Archibald Williams occupied an office in the building close by the U.S. District Court Room.



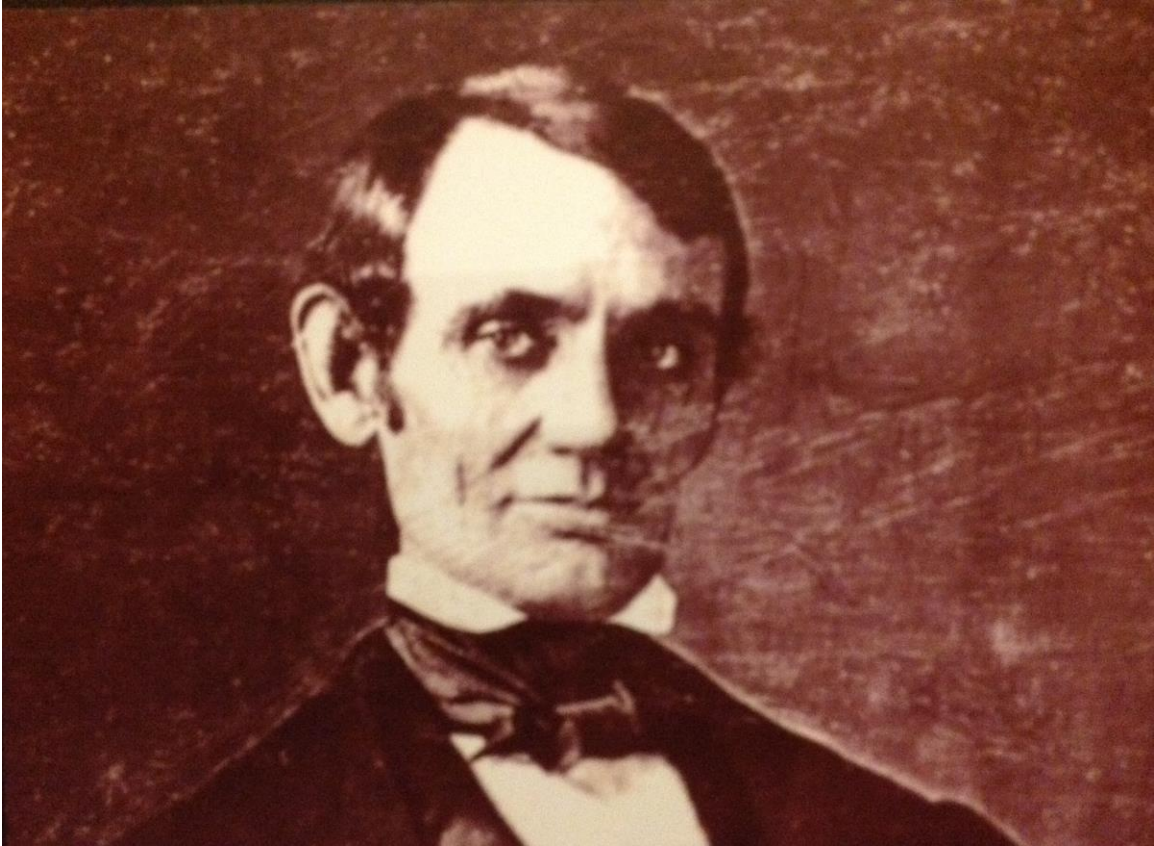
**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT ROOM
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

This is a re-creation of the United States District Court Room on the upper floors of the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices building. The exact historical location of the U.S. District Court Room in the building is not known. Archibald Williams was appointed U.S. Attorney for Illinois by President Zachary Taylor on the recommendation of Abraham Lincoln.



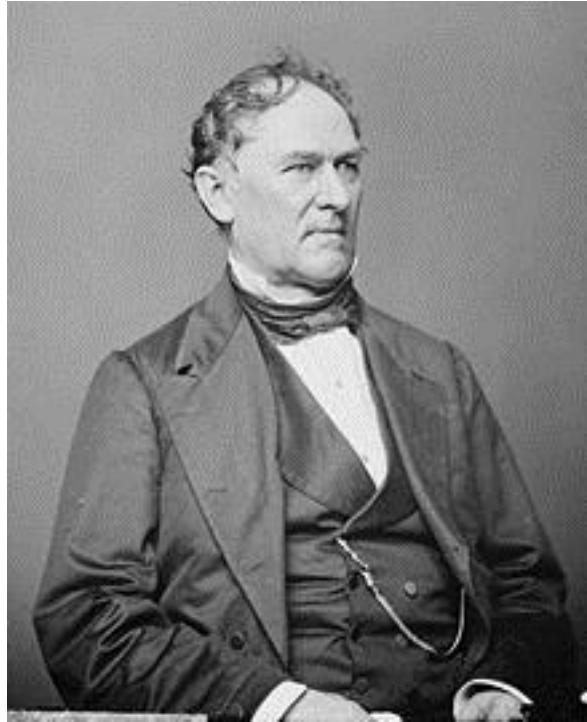
**CHAIRS FOR THE COURT JURY
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT ROOM
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS**

The United States District Court for Illinois was a trial court and thus had chairs for a jury. Both before and after his service as United States Attorney for Illinois, Archibald Williams would have argued cases in this court room as a practicing lawyer in the state of Illinois.



ABRAHAM LINCOLN: 1809-1865

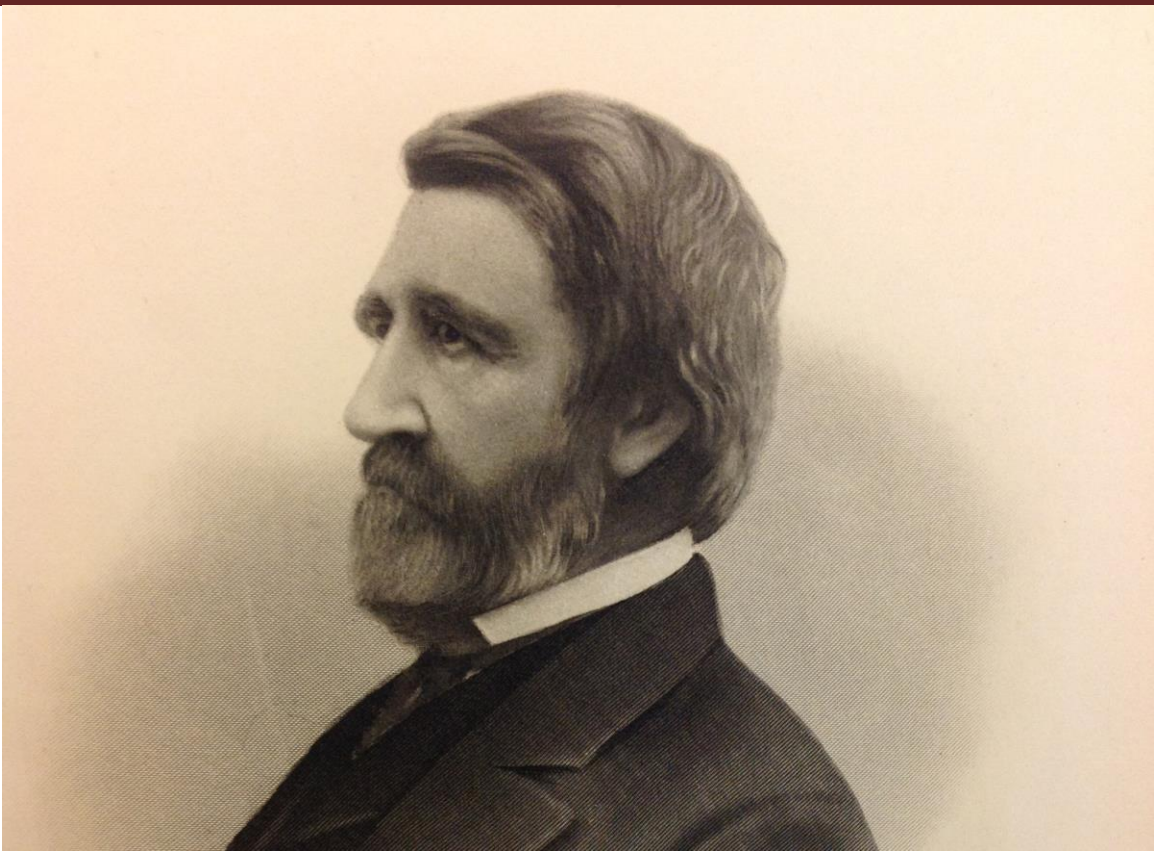
This is a photograph of Abraham Lincoln in his younger years. He looked even younger when Archibald Williams first met him and worked with him in the Illinois state legislature in the 1830s.



ORVILLE BROWNING: 1806-1881

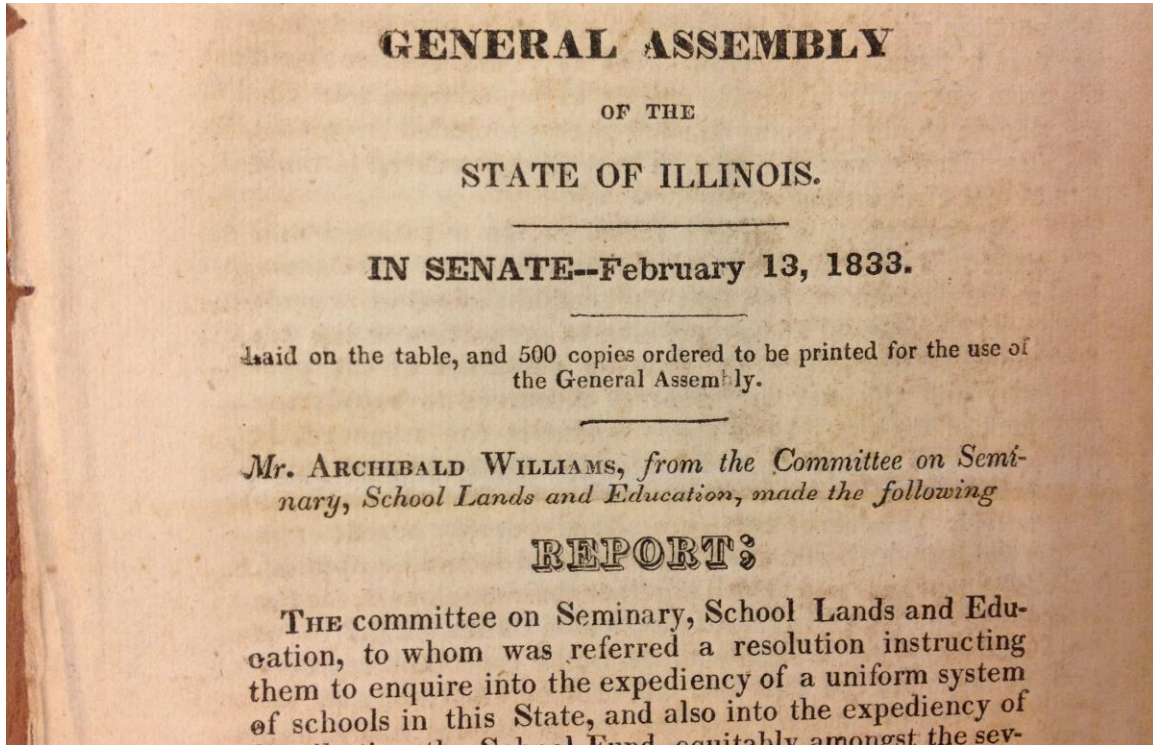
Browning was one of Archibald Williams's closest friends. The two men were practicing attorneys in Quincy, Illinois, during the middle 1800s. Both men also were good friends and political allies of Abraham Lincoln. Whereas Archibald Williams was always described as rough looking and carelessly dressed, Orville Browning was noted for his polished manners and fashionable clothing. Beginning in 1851, Browning kept a daily diary that recorded many of the political and social events in Archibald Williams's life as well as Abraham Lincoln's life.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS



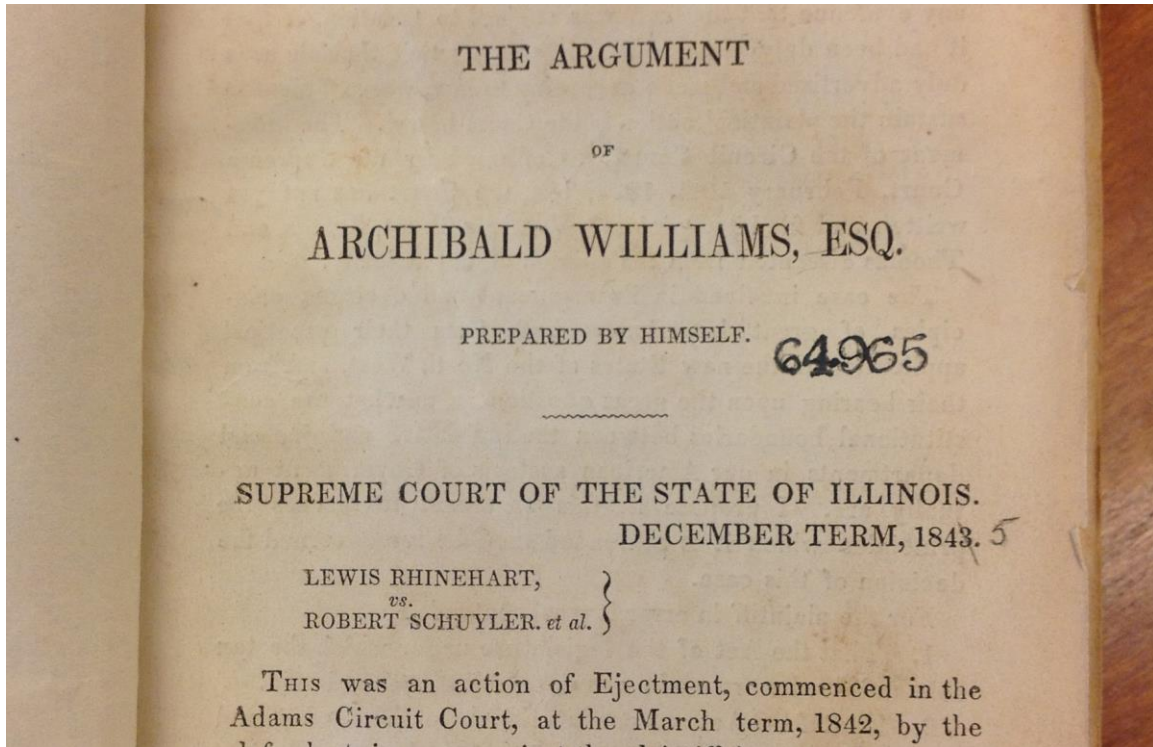
WILLIAM A. RICHARDSON: 1811-1875

William Richardson was a longtime acquaintance of Archibald Williams. Both men were lawyers and met frequently in court, sometimes as allies and other times as opponents. A staunch member of the Democratic Party, Richardson was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the Quincy, Illinois, area. While serving in the U.S. House, Richardson was instrumental in the passage of the Kansas and Nebraska acts. In 1854, Archibald Williams ran against William Richardson for his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Richardson portrayed himself as a loyal supporter of the Democratic Party. Archibald Williams campaigned as an Anti-Nebraska candidate, opposing the implementation of the Nebraska Act. Richardson defeated Archibald Williams, but the Anti-Nebraska forces won control of the United States House of Representatives.



**ILLINOIS STATE SENATE REPORT
PRESENTED BY ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS**

Although serving early in his four-year term in the Illinois State Senate, Archibald Williams in 1833 made this report to the State Senate on behalf of the Seminary, School Lands and Education Committee. The report gave a dramatic description of the primitive state of public education in Illinois at that time. The report concluded that state aid should be given to existing schools based on the number of students attending them, rather than distributing state funds either by county or by county population.



**PUBLISHED LEGAL ARGUMENT
OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS**

A number of legal arguments presented in court by Archibald Williams were published and distributed for other lawyers and interested parties to read. This particular argument, made before the Illinois State Supreme Court in 1845, is one of three such published arguments by Archibald Williams that survive and can still be read. As with so much of Archibald Williams's legal work, this published argument concerned a real estate matter.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS



JOHN HAMILTON WILLIAMS: 1833-1912

The first child of Archibald Williams and Nancy Kemp Williams, he went to law school, qualified for the bar, and became his father's law partner in Quincy, Illinois.



ALMIRA JANE WILLIAMS MORTON: 1838-1904

She was the second child of Archibald Williams and Nancy Kemp Williams. During the Civil War, she served with the “Needle Pickets,” a group of women who fed and housed Union soldiers as they passed through Quincy, Illinois. She was instrumental in preserving the memory of her father, Archibald Williams, as a prominent early Illinois lawyer and a friend of Abraham Lincoln.

ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS



GRAVE MARKER OF ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS

Archibald Williams was buried in Woodland Cemetery in Quincy, Illinois, overlooking the Mississippi River. His first wife, Nancy Kemp Williams, is buried to the right. His second wife, Ellen Parker Williams, is buried to the left.

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