

## Documents and Resources

- [Lincoln's Advice to Lawyers\\*](#)
- [Lincoln's Notes for a Law Lecture\\*](#)
- [The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln Second Edition](#)

## Commentary

- [Abraham Lincoln and Joshua Speed, Attorney and Client](#) (JISHS)
- [An Honest Calling: Lincoln's Law Practice](#) (ALI)
- [Dalby Revisited: A New Look at Lincoln's "Most Far-Reaching Case" in the Illinois Supreme Court](#) (JALA)
- [Herndon on Lincoln: An Unknown Interview with a List of Books in the Lincoln & Herndon Law Office](#) (JISHS)
- ["Judge" Abraham Lincoln](#) (JISHS)
- [Leonard Swett: Lincoln's Legacy to the Chicago Bar](#) (JISHS)
- [Lincoln and the United States Supreme Court](#) (ALA)
- [Lincoln and the United States Supreme Court: A Postscript](#) (ALA)
- [Lincoln, Benjamin Jonas and the Black Code](#) (JISHS)
- [Lincoln's Earlier Practice in the Federal Courts 1839-1854](#) (ALA)
- [Lincoln Holds Court](#) (ALA)
- [Lincoln in the United States Court 1855-1860](#) (ALA)



Lincoln as a Young Lawyer

## Lincoln Legal Career Timeline

Abraham Lincoln enjoyed a successful legal career in Illinois spanning nearly 25 years. Like most lawyers of his time, he did not attend law school. It was customary to study under established lawyers, but he lived in a rural village and taught himself. In 1834 John T. Stuart, a Springfield attorney, encouraged him to study law and lent him the necessary books. Less than three years later Lincoln was admitted to the bar and joined Stuart as a junior partner. He formed two additional partnerships before being elected President. The timeline below shows a brief overview of his career, as well as presidential appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court.

### Timeline

**NOVEMBER 12, 1831**

Writes first-known legal document for [New Salem](#) friend

- [Stephen T. Logan Talks About Lincoln](#) (ALA)
- ["Terrific in Denunciation" -- Taking a New Look at Lincoln the Lawyer](#) (Humanities)
- [The Eighth Judicial Circuit](#) (ALA)
- [The Forgotten Lincoln Circuit Markers](#) (JALA)
- [The Lawyer as Peacemaker: Law and Community in Abraham Lincoln's Slander Cases](#) (JALA)
- [This was a Lawyer](#) (JISHS)

### Lincolnia

- [The Famous "Chicken Bone" Case](#) (JISHS)
- [The Melissa Goings Murder Case](#) (JISHS)

### Places

- [Abraham Lincoln's Supreme Court\\*](#)
- [Beardstown Courthouse\\*](#)
- [Eighth Judicial Circuit Lincoln Markers](#) (HMDB)
- [Lincoln Law Career Photo Tour\\*](#)
- [Lincoln's Springfield Law Office\\*](#)
- [Metamora Courthouse\\*](#)
- [Mt. Pulaski Courthouse\\*](#)
- [Old State Capitol\\*](#)
- [Old State Capitol Photo Tour\\*](#)
- [Postville Courthouse\\*](#)

### Books

- Bannister, Dan W. *Lincoln and the Illinois Supreme Court*. Springfield, Illinois, 1994.
- Billings, Roger and

**FALL 1834**

Borrows law books from John Todd Stuart and studies in New Salem

**MARCH 24, 1836**

Takes first step for obtaining law license in Sangamon County

**SEPTEMBER 9, 1836**

Receives license to practice law in all Illinois state courts

**MARCH 1, 1837**

Name entered on list of lawyers in the Illinois Supreme Court office

**APRIL 15, 1837**

Moves to Springfield, Illinois, to practice law with John Todd Stuart

**OCTOBER 12, 1838**

Successfully represents accused murderer Henry Truett (*People v. Truett*)

**SEPTEMBER 23, 1839**

Starts practicing law on the Illinois Eighth Judicial Circuit

**DECEMBER 3, 1839**

Admitted to practice law in the U.S. circuit courts

**JUNE 18, 1840**

Argues his first of many cases before the Illinois Supreme Court

**APRIL 14, 1841**

Ends law partnership with John Stuart; becomes Stephen T. Logan's partner

**MARCH 1, 1842**

Admitted to practice law in the U.S. District Court

**DECEMBER 1844**

Dissolves partnership with Stephen Logan; accepts William H. Herndon as junior partner

**OCTOBER 16, 1847**

Appears for plaintiff in a fugitive slave case (*Bryant et al. v. Matson*)

**MARCH 7, 1849**

Admitted to practice law before the U.S. Supreme Court and gives his only oral argument there

**FEBRUARY 28, 1854**

Represents railroad before the Illinois Supreme Court (*Illinois Central RR v. County of McLean*)

**SEPTEMBER 19 - 26, 1855**

Attends trial in Cincinnati, Ohio, (*McCormick v. Manny*) but Edwin Stanton prevents his participation

**DECEMBER 1, 1856**

Takes place of David Davis as judge in Sangamon County

Williams, Frank J., editors. *Abraham Lincoln, Esq.: The Legal Career of America's Greatest President*. University Press of Kentucky, 2010.

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- Dirck, Brian. *Lincoln the Lawyer*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

- Donald, David Herbert. *Lincoln's Herndon*. DaCapo, 1989.

- Duff, John J. A. *Lincoln, Prairie Lawyer*. New York: Rinehart & Co., 1960.

- Fraker, Guy C. *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency: The Eighth Judicial Circuit*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012.

- Frank, John P. *Lincoln as a Lawyer*. Americana House, 1991.

- Hill, Frederick T. *Lincoln the Lawyer*. Fred B. Rothman & Co., 1986.

- Lincoln, Abraham. *The Papers of Abraham Lincoln: Legal Documents and Cases*. University of Virginia Press, 2008.

- Matthews, Elizabeth W. *Lincoln as a Lawyer: An Annotated Bibliography*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991.

circuit court

**MARCH 31, 1857**

Helps prosecute murder case in which defendant claimed insanity (*People v. Wyant*)

**JUNE 18, 1857**

Receives \$5,000 fee in Illinois Central Railroad case but had to sue to get it

**SEPTEMBER 8, 1857**

Present at opening of "Effie Afton" steamboat trial (*Hurd v. Rock Island Bridge Co.*)

**MAY 7, 1858**

Uses almanac to clear Duff Armstrong of murder charge (*People v. Armstrong*)

**SEPTEMBER 3, 1859**

Clears Peter Cartwright's grandson of murder charge (*People v. Harrison*)

**JANUARY 21, 1862**

Nominates Noah H. Swayne of Ohio as a U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice

**JULY 16, 1862**

Nominates Samuel F. Miller of Iowa as a U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice

**OCTOBER 17, 1862**

Nominates David Davis of Illinois as a U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice

**FEBRUARY 21, 1863**

Nominates Stephen J. Field of California as a U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice

**OCTOBER 15, 1864**

Attends Washington funeral of Roger B. Taney, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice

**DECEMBER 6, 1864**

Nominates Salmon P. Chase of Ohio as U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice

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Timeline Sources: *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, edited by Roy P. Basler and others; *Lincoln Day by Day* edited by Earl Miers

- McDermott, Stacy Pratt. *The Jury in Lincoln's America*. Ohio University Press, 2012.

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- Steiner, Mark E. *An Honest Calling: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006.

- Stowell, Daniel W. *In Tender Consideration: Women, Families, and the Law in Abraham Lincoln's Illinois*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002.

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- Townsend, William H. *Lincoln the Litigant*. Lawbook Exchange, 2000.

- Walsh, John Evangelist. *Moonlight: Abraham Lincoln and the Almanac Trial*. St. Martin's Press, 2000.

- Whitney, Henry C. *Life on the Circuit with Lincoln*. Lawbook Exchange, 2001 reissue.

- Woldman, Albert A. *Lawyer Lincoln*. Boston

and New York: Little,  
Brown, and Co., 1937.

## Other Timelines

- [Lincoln and Gettysburg Timeline\\*](#)
- [Lincoln Early Life Timeline\\*](#)
- [Lincoln Family Timeline\\*](#)
- [Lincoln Pre-Presidential Political Timeline\\*](#)
- [Lincoln Presidential Timeline\\*](#)
- [Lincoln Tomb Timeline\\*](#)
- [Mary Todd Lincoln Timeline\\*](#)
- [Robert Todd Lincoln Timeline\\*](#)

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