

Why Did Abraham Decide to Study Law and Earn His Law License

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Over the next few years, Lincoln worked with Stuart as a law partner. He worked as a litigator and understood very well the many nuances of legal practice, such as language and technical details associated with court proceedings and typical filings. This made him adept at performing tasks such as drafting title deeds, processing taxes, and assisting residents with simple legal advice. Clients came from all over the country to hire him as a legal representative. His talent for speaking and writing has helped him shine in the spotlight as one of the best lawyers in the country. During the railroad boom of the late 1800s, he participated in several lawsuits representing people fighting against railways to protect their property lines. This helped him gain a reputation as one of the most diligent lawyers in the country. In 1834, Abraham attracted the attention of a lawyer named John Stuart, who gave Lincoln many law books to study and encouraged him to pursue the profession. As brilliant as Lincoln was, in 3 years, the burly Mr. John Stuart joined his law firm as a partner. As his legal career grew, Stuart was called to the bar and licensed to practice law in 1836.

In 1838, Stuart became a representative of the General Assembly, with Illinois County confirming his election to the Illinois legislature. In the spring of 1837, Lincoln moved to Springfield, Illinois, and accepted John Todd Stuart's offer to become his junior lawyer. Stuart was mainly interested in politics and gave Lincoln little legal instruction. As a result, Lincoln had to learn to exercise the law by hearing cases in court. In November 1838, Stuart was elected to the House of Representatives and left Lincoln to run the legal partnership business alone. Stuart remained in Congress until March 1843. Lincoln's ability to learn on his own proved particularly useful when he decided to become a lawyer. Most aspiring lawyers worked directly under the wing of established senior lawyers to learn the law. Lincoln, reclusive in the countryside, decided to read and learn on his own. His self-learning techniques have proven fruitful, as evidenced by his impressive career.

Many people don't know that Lincoln was largely self-taught, learning to read in Kentucky, scratching words on the back of a shovel like a kind of notepad. Soon, Stuart won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and left the law firm to Abraham to run it, which he did successfully, although he never

other lawyers. His first partner was the man who first convinced him to study law, John Todd Stuart. Stuart, who was also the cousin of Lincoln's future wife, Mary Todd, helped Lincoln apply his newfound legal knowledge to real-life cases.

With most of his practice in Sangamon County, he continued his practice in the District Court, where he handled hundreds of cases (most of which were railroad cases) and gained a reputation as an honest lawyer. Until 1853, he was a follower of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, one of the largest in the country, even without attending any of the local law schools. As a young man, Abraham Lincoln worked on his father's farm. This experience gave him an understanding of hard work and perseverance, even if the hard work didn't match his personality or ambition to become something bigger. After becoming a young adult and moving to Illinois, he and a partner bought a store that later closed. Lincoln was stuck, holding most of the debt, but determined to pay it back honestly. He tried his hand at surveying the western United States, but it also became a job he did not like and did not succeed in. He decided to try a career as a lawyer, but instead of studying law, Lincoln was self-taught. He studied thoroughly by reading a wide selection of earlier cases and law books, and in 1836, at the age of 25, he was licensed. He began writing legal forms and dealing with simple cases, but in 1837 he became a partner in a local lawyer named John T.

Stuart. This partnership has taught him a more hands-on approach to handling legal cases, judges and the judicial system. On March 1, 1841, Stephen Logan and Abraham Lincoln formed a partnership, Logan and Lincoln. Logan was a prominent attorney in Sangamon County, he was 9 years older than Lincoln. Lincoln learned from Logan by observing him and studying procedures and precedents. His mastery of law was evident in his frequent appearances before the Illinois Supreme Court in at least 300 cases. In Logan and Lincoln, Abraham spent most of his time administering bankruptcies when the new bankruptcy law came into effect in 1842. The law was designed to protect businesses affected by depression by allowing them to declare bankruptcy if their debts exceeded their assets. The Act was repealed in 1843. The business prospered and they expanded by moving to the second floor of the U.S. District Court, where they gained access to a larger clientele and, most importantly, their law library.

In 1844, Lincoln and Logan broke off their partnership because Logan wanted to work with his son.
NOVEMBER 12, 1831 Writes the first known legal document for a friend in New Salem
FALL 1834 Borrows law books from John Todd Stuart and studies in New Salem
MARCH 24, 1836 First step toward licensing to practice law in Sangamon County
SEPTEMBER 9, 1836 Licensed to practice law in all Illinois state courts
MARCH 1, 1837 Name on the list of lawyers of the Office of the Supreme Court of Illinois
15. APRIL 1837 Moves to Springfield, Illinois to practice law with John Todd Stuart
OCTOBER

District Courts JUNE 18, 1840 Argues his first of many cases in the Illinois Supreme Court APRIL 14, 1841 Termination of the lawyer's association with John Stuart; becomes a partner of Stephen T. Logan MARCH 1, 1842 Called to the Bar of the United States District Court DECEMBER 1844 Dissolves the partnership with Stephen Logan; Accepts William H. Herndon as junior partner OCTOBER 16, 1847 Appears as plaintiff in fugitive slave case (Bryant et al. v.

Matson) MARCH 7, 1849 Admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court, where he holds his only hearing 28. FEBRUARY 1854 Represents the railroad before the Illinois Supreme Court (Illinois Central RR v. County of McLean) SEPTEMBER 19 – 26, 1855 Attended trial in Cincinnati, Ohio (McCormick v. Manny), but Edwin Stanton prevented him from attending DECEMBER 1, 1856 Replaces David Davis as judge of the Sangamon County District Court MARCH 31, 1857 Helps prosecute murder case, in which defendant claims insanity (People v. Wyant) JUNE 18, 1857 Receives \$5,000 in costs in Illinois Central Railroad case, but had to sue to obtain them 8 SEPTEMBER 1857 Present at the opening of the trial of the steamships "Effie Afton" (Hurd v. Rock Island Bridge Co.) 7 MAY 1858 Uses an almanac to acquit Duff Armstrong of murder (People v. Armstrong) SEPTEMBER 3, 1859 Acquits Peter Cartwright's grandson of murder (People v.

Harrison) JANUARY 21, 1862 Noah H. Swayne of Ohio appointed associate judge of U.S. Supreme Court JULY 16, 1862 Appoints Samuel F. Miller of Iowa as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States OCTOBER 17, 1862 David Davis of Illinois appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States February 21, 1863 Stephen J. Field of California Appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States OCTOBER 15, 1864 Attended the funeral of Roger B. Taney, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States December 6, 1864 Appoints Salmon P. Chase of Ohio as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States Chronology Sources: The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Roy P. Basler and others; Lincoln Day by Day edited by Earl Miers From an early age, Abraham was interested in reading books and learning. However, with the financial situation at home, Lincoln would work off his farm to earn part of his farm, which he would give to his father to run the house. By the age of 21, Lincoln had become a wrestling champion in his county due to his large and strong body structure. Abraham Lincoln had a 25-year legal career in Illinois, but he was never really trained in the field.

He practiced law, but did not follow the traditional path of law school. Like many lawyers in the 1800s, Abraham Lincoln never received his legal training or attended law school. At that time, a tradition began in which aspiring young lawyers and law students worked under the guidance of established lawyers to learn how to practice law instead of attending law school. However, Abraham was one of the few who studied the field on his own, consulted law books, and worked with a partner lawyer. He was

with the very first law books he would study. Lincoln's initial relationship with the law was as a legislator in Illinois.

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MOTHER OF THE WEEK® is the story of a stressed-out working mom determined to be everything to everyone, no matter what the circumstances.

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