



LINCOLN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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WATCHORN LINCOLN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

SHRINE ACQUIRES ITEMS FROM ILLINOIS COLLECTION

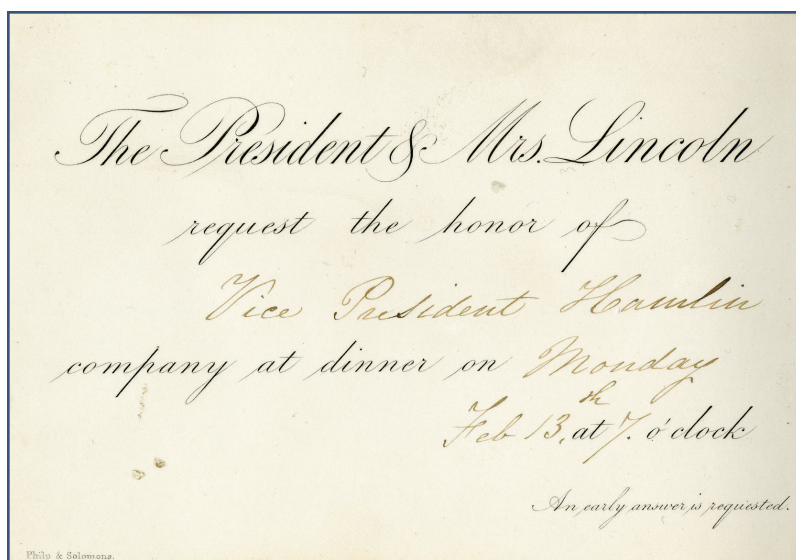
On May 21, 2025, Chicago's Freeman's-Hindman auction house offered 144 items from the Lincoln Presidential Foundation's collection. Sold to raise the funds necessary to cover an 18-year-old debt incurred when the Foundation purchased Lincoln collector Louise Taper's collection in 2007, the auction raised \$7.9 million dollars.

Originally intended for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois, the items included an 1824 notebook

containing the earliest example of Abraham Lincoln's handwriting and items from the night of his assassination, including a blood-stained pair of gloves, a handkerchief, and a cuff link, all worn by Lincoln on that fateful evening. The extraordinary items offered made up approximately 10% of the Foundation's original collection.

The Lincoln Memorial Shrine was fortunate to successfully purchase two items from the collection, one of which will be unveiled as the 2025 sponsorship acquisition at the next Watchorn Lincoln Dinner. The second item is an invitation from the Lincolns to out-going Vice President Hannibal Hamlin to a dinner at the White House on February 13, 1865 in honor of Michigan Senator Zachariah Chandler, one of the founders of the Republican Party who served on the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War.

To learn more about Vice President Hannibal Hamlin and his role as Lincoln's VP, read, "Hannibal Hamlin, A Reluctant Vice President" (pages 3-4).



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*A publication of the
Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association*

Erected in 1932 by Robert Watchorn in
memory of Emory Ewart Watchorn

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The Lincoln Memorial Shrine, located in
Smiley Park south of A.K. Smiley Public Library,
is open to the public, free of charge.
Hours of Operation: Tuesday - Sunday, 1 pm - 5 pm
For more information, visit www.lincolnshrine.org

Mission Statement:

**The Lincoln Memorial Shrine strives to be a
sustainable community resource that provides
a diverse and growing audience an opportunity
to better understand today by learning about
the past from expanded collections, exhibits,
and programs.**

SHRINE'S REPRODUCTION FIELD GUN TO BE FIRED

Don't miss an anniversary celebration for the Lincoln Memorial Shrine's reproduction field gun in Smiley Park at 10am on August 9. The 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery will be on-hand to provide an exciting program that combines historical facts with practical expertise to give a glimpse into the work of artillerymen during the Civil War. As a bonus, Abraham Lincoln presenter Robert Broski will join the morning's festivities.

Donated by Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association Trustee Boyd Nies in 2021, the Shrine's reproduction Napoleon is now on display in Smiley Park. A unique Civil War-related object for California, the cannon is a perfect selfie location! Make sure to tag @lincolnshrine and use the hashtag #lincolnshrine to share your photos.

This event is free and open to the public. Visitors of all ages are welcome. This is a popular event each year and seating is limited. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and/or blankets. Large umbrellas are discouraged. For up-to-date information, visit News & Events at www.lincolnshrine.org.



HANNIBAL HAMLIN, A RELUCTANT VICE PRESIDENT

By many accounts, Hannibal Hamlin accepted the Vice Presidency grudgingly. As a Democrat-turned-Republican from Maine, Republican political strategists saw Senator Hamlin as an advantageous choice for the Lincoln ticket. He missed the Republican National Convention in Chicago in 1860 and purportedly only learned of his nomination during a card game in Washington, DC. Being interrupted by a bystander who shared the news, Hamlin, it is claimed, exhibited irritation over the interruption, rather than excitement over the development.



Portrait of Hannibal Hamlin by Mathew Brady, 1860

A highly experienced politician who had served as Governor of Maine, a member of the House of Representatives, and a Senator, Hamlin's insight helped Lincoln as he composed his cabinet, but his influence stopped there. After the inauguration, Lincoln reverted to the then-common practice by Presidents of excluding Vice Presidents from cabinet meetings or including them in meaningful ways in decision making. As a result, Hamlin did not spend much time in Washington, DC, returning to Maine following his inauguration on March 4, 1861. Initially expecting to aid the war effort from the northeast, Hamlin tired of waiting for instructions from Lincoln and, at fifty-two years old, enlisted in the Maine State Coast Guard, where he attained the rank of Corporal and served until September.

He split the rest of the war years between Maine, New York, and the Capitol, but missed the excitement of the political domain where he thrived. Hamlin had experienced many achievements during his long career in national politics, making his political credentials stronger than Lincoln's. On the issue of slavery alone, he participated in the drafting of the Wilmot Proviso that would have banned slavery from the territories annexed from Mexico in the west, and was one of the few Democrats in Congress to vote against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which opened the Kansas and Nebraska Territories to slavery. Like many of his contemporaries, he switched from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party in 1856 over the issue of slavery. As Vice President, Hamlin supported emancipation and enlisting free Black men before Lincoln adopted the issues.

As the 1864 presidential election neared, Hamlin was not tapped to be a part of Lincoln's reelection ticket. With Maine secure as a Republican state—thanks in part to Hamlin—Senator Andrew Johnson of the rebelling state of Tennessee was selected instead. Hamlin supported the successful election of the Lincoln-Johnson ticket in spite of the snub, an outcome that meant that Hamlin would soon be free to return to politics in a more active role. By the time the invitation arrived from the Lincolns to attend the White House dinner in honor of Michigan Senator Zachariah Chandler in February of 1865, Hamlin was in the last few weeks of his time as VP.

Following Lincoln's assassination and the conclusion of the devastating Civil War, Hamlin was appointed as Collector of the Port of Boston by President Andrew Johnson, but resigned the post in 1866 in protest to Johnson's Reconstruction policies and his self-serving political maneuvering. He returned to the Senate in 1869 and served until 1881 when he became the United States Minister to Spain. He resigned from his foreign post in 1882 and retired to Maine.

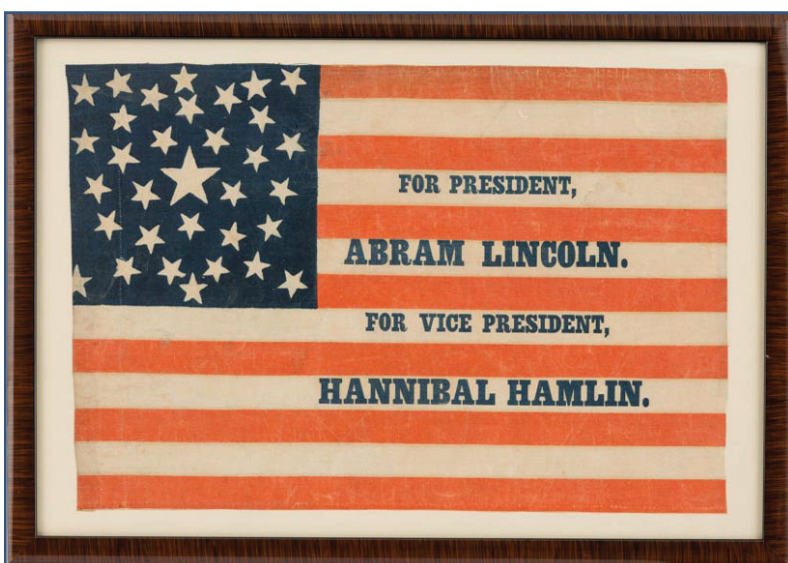


"Proemie des Hochwächters," German campaign portraits of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin's 1860 election

On April 8, 1879, President Abraham Lincoln's Chief White House Secretary, John Nicolay, met with Hamlin to discuss his recollections of Lincoln. Hamlin recalled, *"It is a source of great satisfaction to me that my relations with Mr. Lincoln were not only those of uninterrupted friendship, but those of entire harmony and intimate and unreserved cordiality."*

Speaking frankly of his time as Vice President under Lincoln, Hamlin told Nicolay, *"I saw very soon, that the V.P. was a nullity in [Washington] and recognizing that fact I abstained from any effort to absorb duties or functions not my own. I did not obtrude upon or interfere with the Presidential duties, though I always gave Mr. [Lincoln] my views, and when asked, my advice."*

He died on July 4, 1891 at the Tarratine Club, a card club he founded in Bangor, becoming the third American Vice President to die on Independence Day, following the famous deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on that date in 1826. Hamlin is remembered for his commitment to abolition.



Lincoln-Hamlin campaign flag, 2018 Watchorn Lincoln Dinner Sponsorship Acquisition

THE TRIAL OF JOEL GOUCH, A FREE PERSON OF COLOR

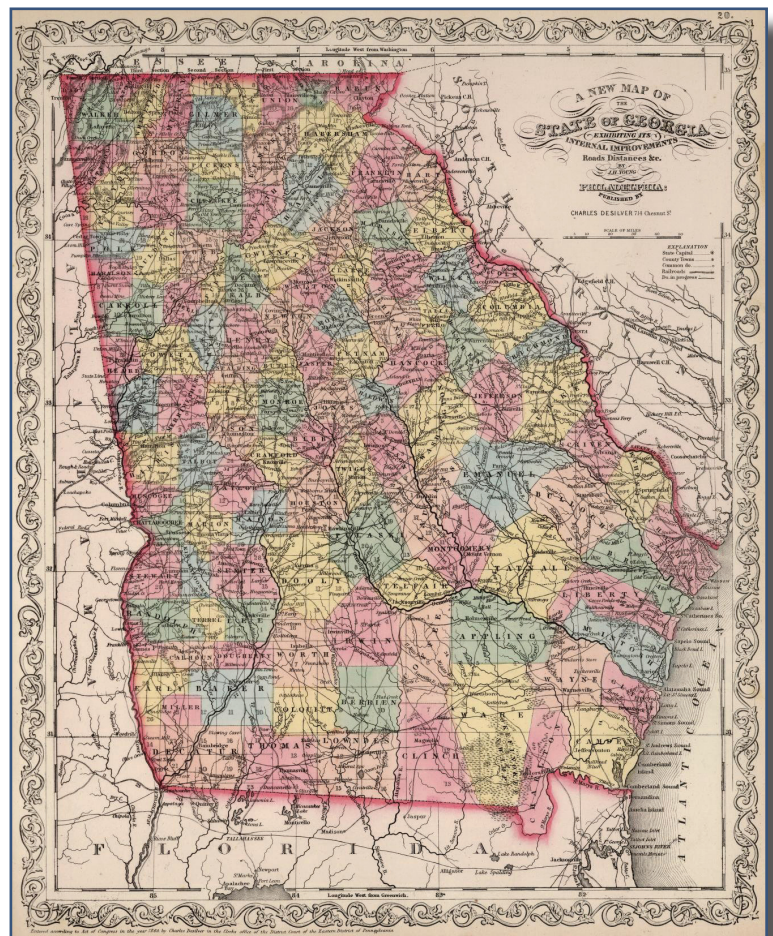
Antebellum Georgia had the strictest slave laws in the South. Starting with the British Parliament in 1750 and continuing with the state government after the American Revolution, laws were passed which made true liberty untenable for Black Georgians. Manumission was banned, except for special circumstances; free Blacks had to register each year with the local inferior court; enslaved and free Blacks could not work on the construction of buildings and roads; it was illegal to teach Blacks to read and write; and free Blacks were prohibited from entering the state.

In 1840, there were only 2,753 free Blacks in Georgia, a figure that only increased to 2,931 by 1850. The total population of free Blacks never exceeded one half of one percent of the total population of the state before the conclusion of the Civil War. Described as “Free Persons of Color,” these Georgians were considered to be slightly superior to their enslaved counterparts. They were held in low repute, being viewed as an injurious byproduct of slavery. Enslavers took extreme measures to restrict free Blacks out of fear of rebellion by the enslaved population and prosecution served as a means of keeping them under conditions of servitude and control.

Georgia law regarding African Americans, both enslaved and free persons of color, was extensive. In 1845, Georgia’s Hotchkiss’ criminal law codified the state’s statute laws, including the earlier English statutes of force.

Titled “Slaves and Free Persons of Color,” Part Four, Section II of the statutes details issues related to enslaved and free persons of color, including one section that specifies that free Blacks were to be tried in the same manner as enslaved Georgians for criminal offences.

As part of its “American Slavery Collection,” the Lincoln Memorial Shrine acquired documents



“A New Map of the State of Georgia” by Samuel A. Mitchell, 1860

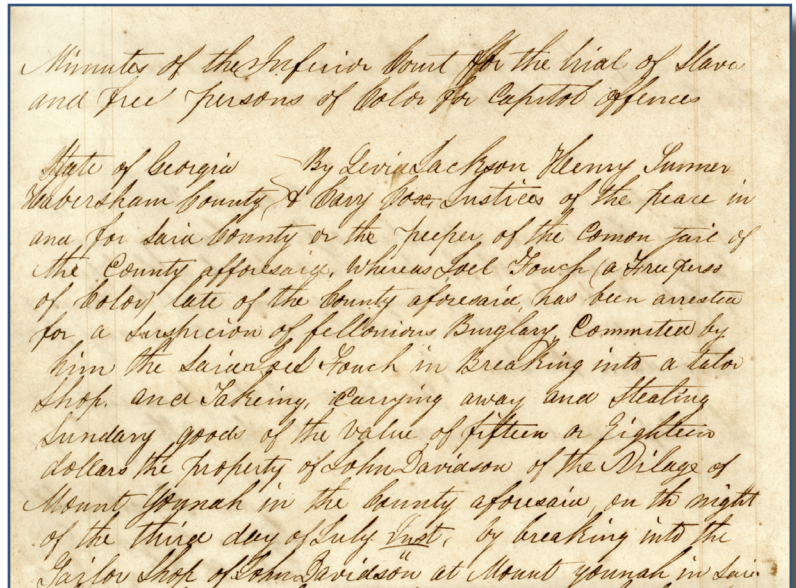
that demonstrate the use of prosecution as a means of exerting control over free persons of color in the antebellum period, including one related to a freeman named Joel Gouch of Habersham County, Georgia.

A mostly mountainous region, much of Habersham was not suitable for the crops cultivated by enslaved laborers, specifically cotton, tobacco, sugarcane, and rice. By the late-1840s, less than 7% of families in Habersham were enslavers. Only twenty-six of the nearly 1,000 Black residents were free, including Joel Gouch.

On July 3, 1848, Gouch (whose surname is spelled as both Gouch and Fouch in court documents) was arrested for burglarizing a tailor named John B. Davidson in the village of Mount Younah in Habersham County. The only evidence of the burglary was Davidson's accusation that he observed that his building had been broken into and that he found clothes valued at between \$15-\$18 missing. With that, he swore out a warrant specifically for Joel Gouch.

Beginning on July 19, 1848, Gouch was tried by a court presided over by White men, including twelve jurors, none of whom were enslavers. Several unidentified witnesses were called, many of which provided damning statements that placed Gouch at the scene of the crime, and others that placed the blame on another enslaved person named Maje.

The accusation was that Gouch entered the shop and took clothing that he then hid between two nearby buildings owned by Mr. Grotter and Mr. Caltham. One witness testified that Gouch sought to obtain the key to the tailor's shop, while another claimed to have seen him near the shop on the night of the robbery. A third witness claimed to have seen both Gouch and Maje removing clothing from the shop through a window that opened into an adjoining garden. An additional witness stated that Gouch found the goods covered with leaves and sticks after looking for some time.



Portion of the transcripts of the trial of Joel Gouch, 1848

Others doubted Gouch's involvement and named Maje as the thief, including a resident named Edward Olallaghan and Grotter, the building owner. Maje stated he knew nothing of the robbery and cited the distance between himself and the building in which the clothes were kept as a reason for why the accusation was improbable.

After a one-day trial, the jury delivered a guilty verdict. The tribunal of three judges declared that Gouch would be taken by the County Sheriff to a public place in the vicinity of Clarksville, Georgia where he would receive a punishment of thirty-nine lashes to the back with a cow skin or cow hide. The sentence was carried out that day. In addition, Gouch was fined the cost of all the proceedings, which amounted to \$29.37 1/2, and was given until the second Monday of the following year to pay that amount or forfeit all of his property and belongings. By law, if he did not provide the cash, he could be returned to slavery.

To learn more about the 12-page transcript of Joel Gouch's 1848 trial, contact the Heritage Room.

--Mark Radeleff is a volunteer researcher in the Heritage Room of A.K. Smiley Public Library.

Did You Know?

Did you know that Robert and Alma Watchorn gave property valued at nearly \$10,000 to the City of Redlands for an endowment on the Lincoln Memorial Shrine's opening day? The gift came as a surprise to the city's Mayor, N. Leo Lelean, during the formal dedication ceremonies for the building on February 12, 1932. The couple presented deeds to two properties overlooking Redlands Country Club, with the suggestion that their sale could help cover the costs of maintenance to the Shrine. Received during the Great Depression, the properties were eventually sold to benefit the city in other ways in the midst of the economic crisis. As a result, the Watchorns established the Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association in 1937 and initiated a new endowment to be overseen by the WLMA Board of Trustees. The Board continues to steward the endowment today.

THE WATCHORN SOCIETY

Have you included the Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association in your estate planning? If so, let the Shrine know so you may be recognized as a member of The Watchorn Society. For more information, please contact the Shrine at (909) 798-7565 or admin@akspl.org.

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATED

As is an annual tradition, the Lincoln Memorial Shrine participated in the City of Redlands's Juneteenth celebration on Saturday, June 21. Taking place at the city's historic Sylvan Park, the event included the participation of local civic and religious leaders as well as residents with deep roots in the area. Among the participants was Angela Wilkinson, an Assembly District Delegate for Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes of California's 29th Senate District, and a descendant of Redlands pioneer Israel Beal and his wife, Martha Embers Beal. Martha was a descendant of Hannah Embers, an enslaved resident of the Mormon Colony of San Bernardino who won her freedom in a famous court case in 1856. Wilkinson discussed her ancestors' legacy.

The Shrine was represented by staff and the four students interning in the Division of Special Collections over the summer.



Special Collections summer interns Danielle Holtz and Bela Macharelli at the Redlands Juneteenth celebration



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