

LINCOLN LORE

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THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT—1847

Abraham Lincoln marked out with red lines, on a map published in 1843, the route which he traveled over the Eighth Judicial District of Illinois in 1847. He used the blank reverse side of the map for notations with reference to the counties then comprising the Eighth Judicial District and also a plat with explanation about the Division of Gallatin County which was finally consummated that same year.

The map, ten by seventeen inches, with the original writing is one of the most valuable Lincoln manuscripts which has come to light in recent years. It has been acquired by the Speed Museum at Louisville, Kentucky, and could hardly have been placed in a more beautiful depository or in the hands of a family more appreciative of its value than the Speed family. It is now securely kept in a vault with the famous Lincoln photographs which Lincoln presented to Lucy G. Speed.

This interesting map, which Lincoln used to trace his way over the circuit, was published by William C. Woodbridge and is called the "Political Map of the Northwest Division of the United States." That portion of it which gives the route Lincoln traveled is reproduced in this copy of Lincoln Lore through the kindness of the Speed Museum.

That part of Lincoln's memorandum which deals with the Eighth Judicial District is copied here verbatim.

"By act of the General Assembly—June 1847, the county of Gallatin was divided to form what is now the counties of Gallatin and Saline and a new county seat has been established at Raleigh in the new county of Saline. The division was made from north to south and the county seat of Gallatin County remains Equality. Saline is not in the 8th judicial district; it is in the 12th judicial district. The 8th circuit is composed of Sangamon, Logan, Tazewell, Woodford, DeWitt, Piatt, Champaign, Vermilion, Edgar, Shelby, Moultrie, and Christian. Starting at Sangamon at the June term the usual line of travel was from Springfield in Sangamon to Postville in Logan; Postville to Fremont in Tazewell; Fremont to Metamora in Woodford; Metamora to Bloomington in McLean; here we usually stopped though it is not in the 8th J. D. Bloomington to Dewitt in Clinton; DeWitt to Monticello in Piatt; Monticello to Urbana in Champaign; Urbana to Danville in Vermilion; Danville to Paris in Edgar; Paris to Sullivan (through Coles) in Moultrie; Sullivan to Shelbyville in Shelby; Shelbyville to Taylorville in Christian; and from Christian to Sanga-

mon. In response to your inquiry, I have marked in red on this map the 8th Circuit. The new county of Saline will of course change the map, but there is no other one available at the present time.

"Springfield
"Sept. 2nd. 1847

A. Lincoln"

It will be observed that Lincoln did not include the counties of McLean and Macon in his list and specifically states in reference to McLean, that "it is not in the eighth J. D." It is generally understood, however that previous to 1853, there were fourteen counties in the district and they are listed by Whitney in his "Life on the Circuit." He includes McLean and Macon along with the twelve named by Lincoln.

The fact that the boundary of the Eighth Judicial District was changed in 1853 and again in 1857 has caused much confusion among Lincoln students as the number of counties was first reduced from twelve or fourteen to eight and then to five. The District in 1853 consisted of Sangamon, Logan, McLean, Woodford, Tazewell, DeWitt, Champaign, and Vermilion. In 1857 it was reduced to DeWitt, Logan, McLean, Champaign, and Vermilion.

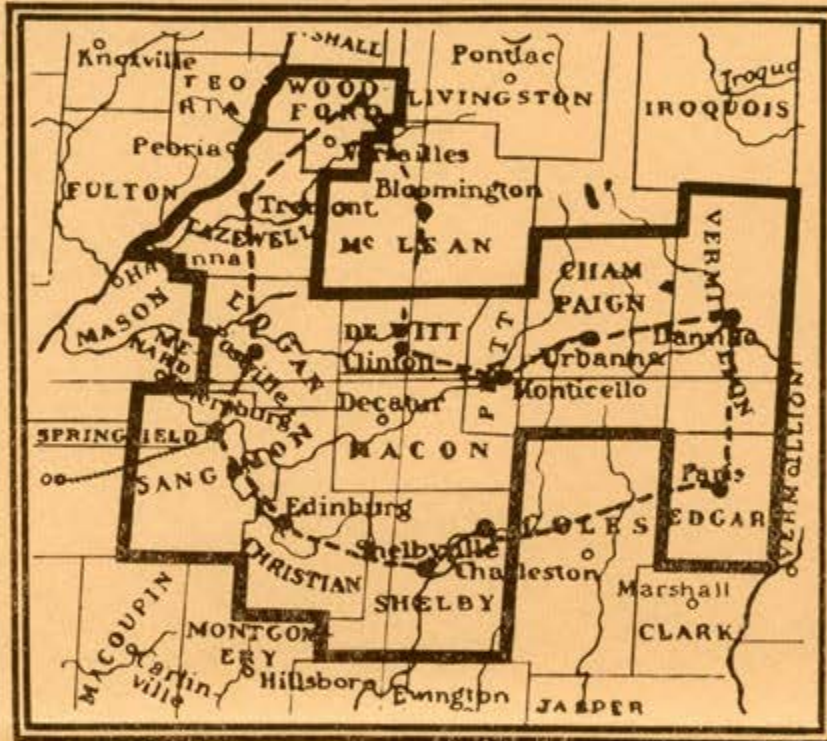
It appears as if the information, written down on the back of an old map, was done at the request of William Herndon, whose name appears in his own hand and is dated

also in his hand, September 2, 1847. This is the same date which Abraham Lincoln placed under his own signature on another memorandum on the map. It was shortly after this date that Lincoln left Springfield for Washington for his term in Congress and it is likely that he was reviewing for Herndon, his law partner, the course he usually followed on the circuit.

The question of the division of Gallatin County had also been under discussion as it was divided in June, 1847, and a portion of the manuscript is utilized to show the part which Lincoln had in the original survey made in 1835 as deputy surveyor under J. Calhoun.

A general observation which Lincoln made, with reference to the division of the county of Gallatin, is of interest in that he mentioned that there were more slaves in the western part of the county than at Shawneetown and that half of the 355 slaves in Illinois were in Gallatin County.

One by one, these valuable manuscripts are discovered which assist greatly in giving a more detailed story of Abraham Lincoln's life and works.



THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT, ILLINOIS—1847

Dotted line—Route traveled by Lincoln