

# THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

## *Inside the Vault: Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection*

November 12, 2020

*The session will start shortly. Please note:*

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email [firstfriday@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:firstfriday@gilderlehrman.org) so we can assist you.

# *Gilder Lehrman Staff*

## Panelists

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Christopher Henry Young - Swing in the And Peggy Company of *Hamilton*
- Keisha Rembert - Assistant Professor of Teacher Preparation at National Louis University
- Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator

## *During the Session*



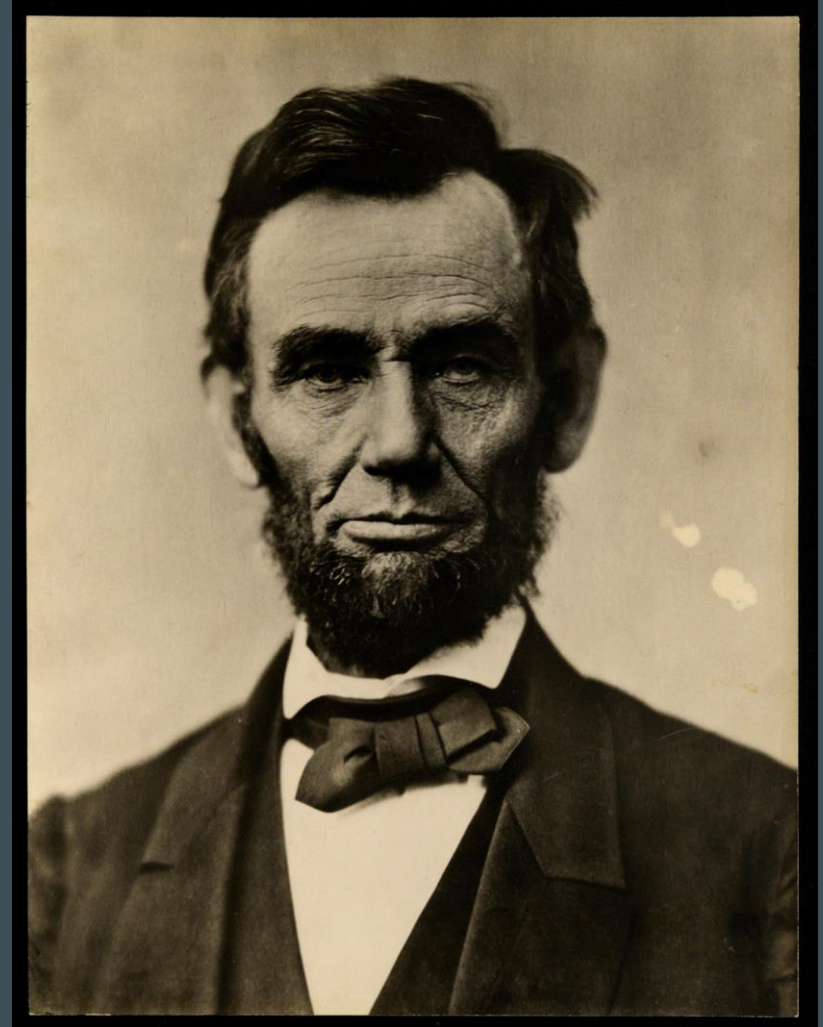
- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature**, which is at the bottom of your screen.
- **Viewing in full screen** is recommended to see the presenters and the presentation at the same time.

### **For Security and Privacy**

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

## *Today's Documents*

- A personal letter from Abraham Lincoln to Mary Owens
- Two speech fragments from Lincoln's 1857 US Senate campaign
- The Gettysburg Address
- 13th Amendment



# Abraham Lincoln to Mary Owens, May 7, 1837

Springfield, May 7. 1837

Friend Mary,

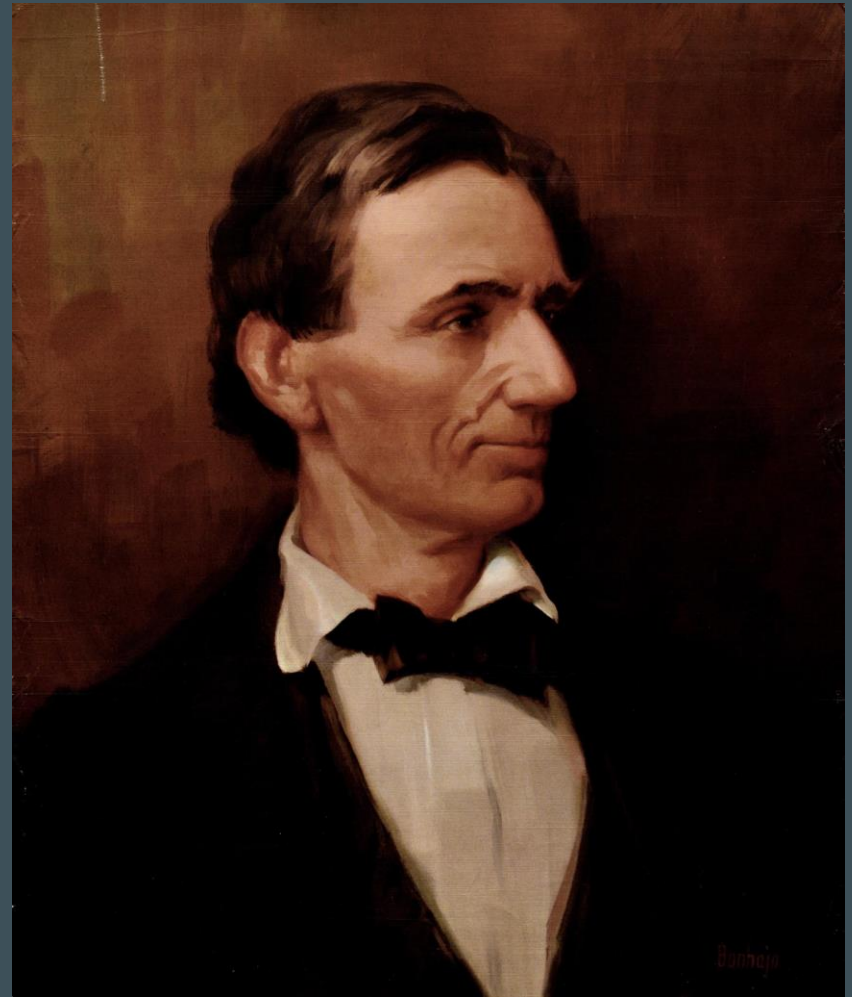
I have commenced two letters to send you before this, both of which disappeared now before I got half done; and so I tow them up. The first I thought was it knows enough, and the second was on the other extreme. I shall send this, turn out as it may.

This thing of living in Springfield is rather a dull business after all, at least it is so to me. I am quite as lonesome here as ever was anywhere in my life. I have been spoken to by but one woman since I've been here, and should not have been by her, if she could have avoided it. I've never been to church yet, nor probably shall not be soon. I stay away because I am conscious I should not know how to behave myself.

I am often thinking about what we said of your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here, which it would be your doom to stand see without sharing in it. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently? Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine should any ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented; and there is nothing I can imagine that would make me now unhappy than to fail in this effort. I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in you. What

# *The Early Life of Abraham Lincoln*

- 1809: Born in Kentucky
- Fall 1816: Moved to Indiana
- 1830: Moved to Illinois
- April 1837: Moved to Springfield, Illinois
- During the 1830s, he worked as a
  - Shopkeeper
  - Surveyor
  - Postmaster
  - Lawyer
  - Politician



Gilder Lehrman Collection



*Abraham Lincoln to Mary Owens, May 7, 1837*

Springfield, May 7. 1837

Friend Mary,

I have commenced two letters to send you before this, both of which displeased me before I got half done, and so I tore them up. The first I thought wasn't serious enough, and the second was on the other extreme. I shall send this, third out as it may —

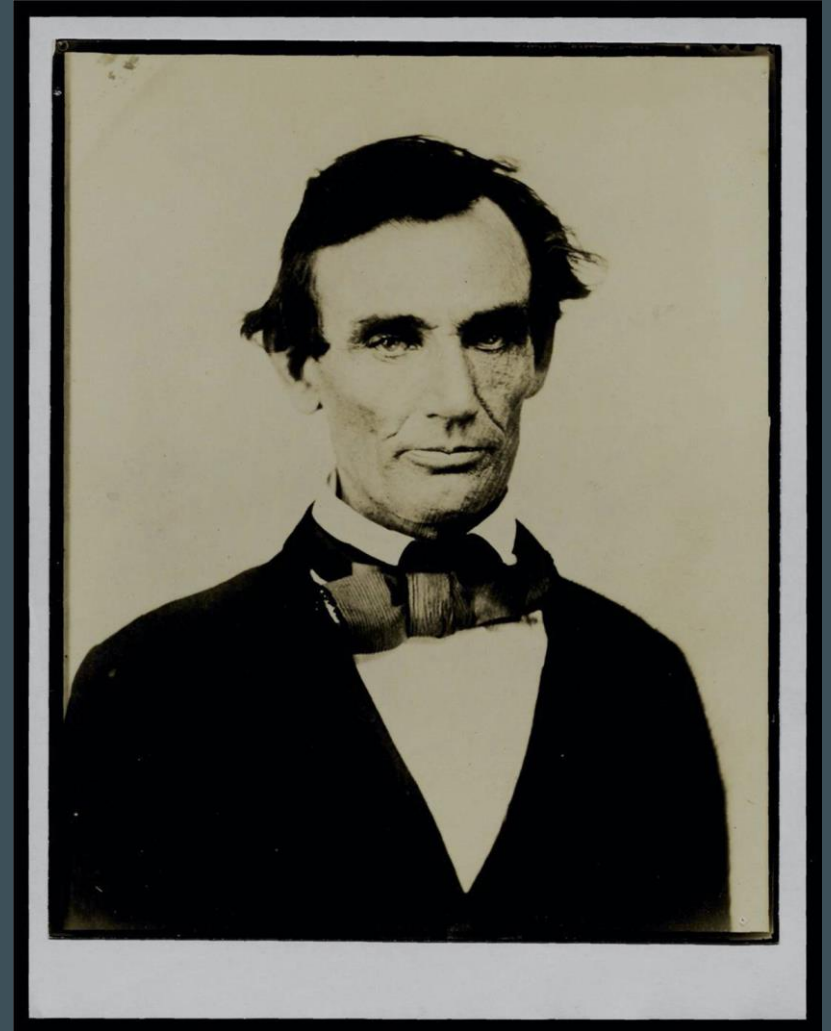
This thing of living in Springfield is rather a queer business after all, at least it is so to me. I am quite as lonesome here as ever was anywhere in my life. I have been spoken to by but one woman since I've been here, and should not have been by her, if she could have avoided it. I've never been to church yet, nor probably shall not be soon. I stay away because I am conscious I should not know how to behave myself —

I am often thinking about what we said of your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here, which it would be your doom to stand see without sharing in it. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe you could bear that patiently? Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine should any ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented; and there is nothing I can imagine that would make me now unhappy than to fail in the effort. I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in you. What

- Written shortly after Lincoln moves to Springfield
- He is 28 years old.
- Mary lives in New Salem, Illinois.
- Tries to convince Mary of all the reasons why she wouldn't want to be married to him

# *The Courtship of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Owens*

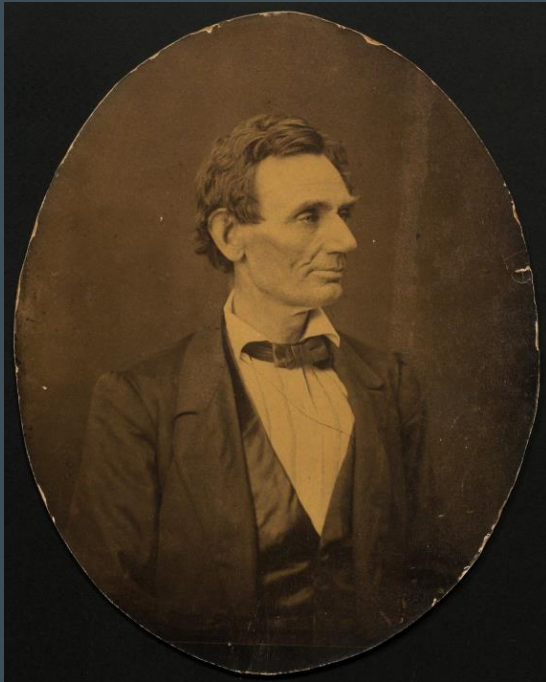
- Lincoln befriends Elizabeth “Betsy” Owens while living in New Salem, IL.
- Fall of 1836: Betsy persuades Lincoln that her sister Mary would be a good match.
  - Lincoln agrees to become engaged to her.
- April 1837: Lincoln moves to Springfield, IL to practice law.



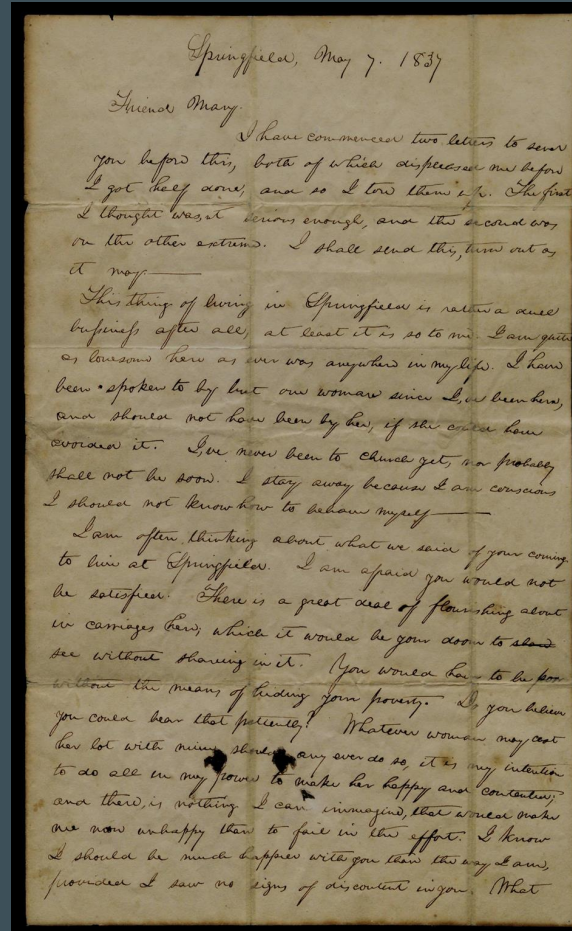
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# First Impressions



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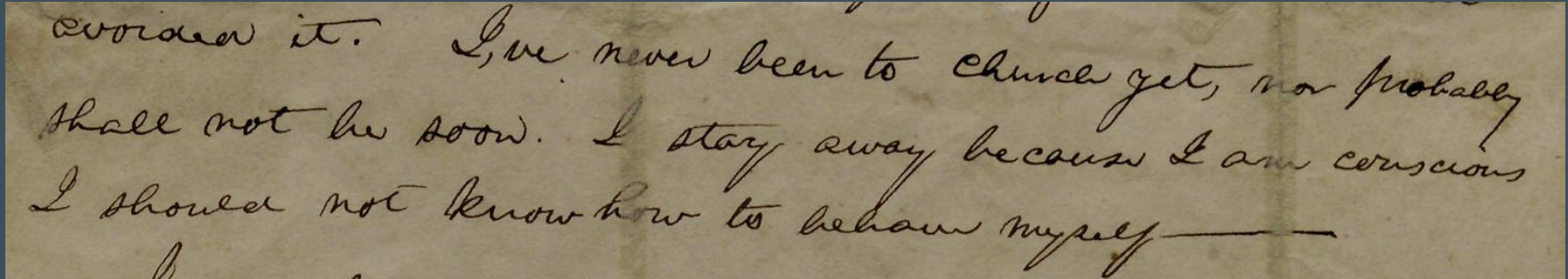
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MARY S. OWENS

Library of Congress

# *He doesn't go to church...*

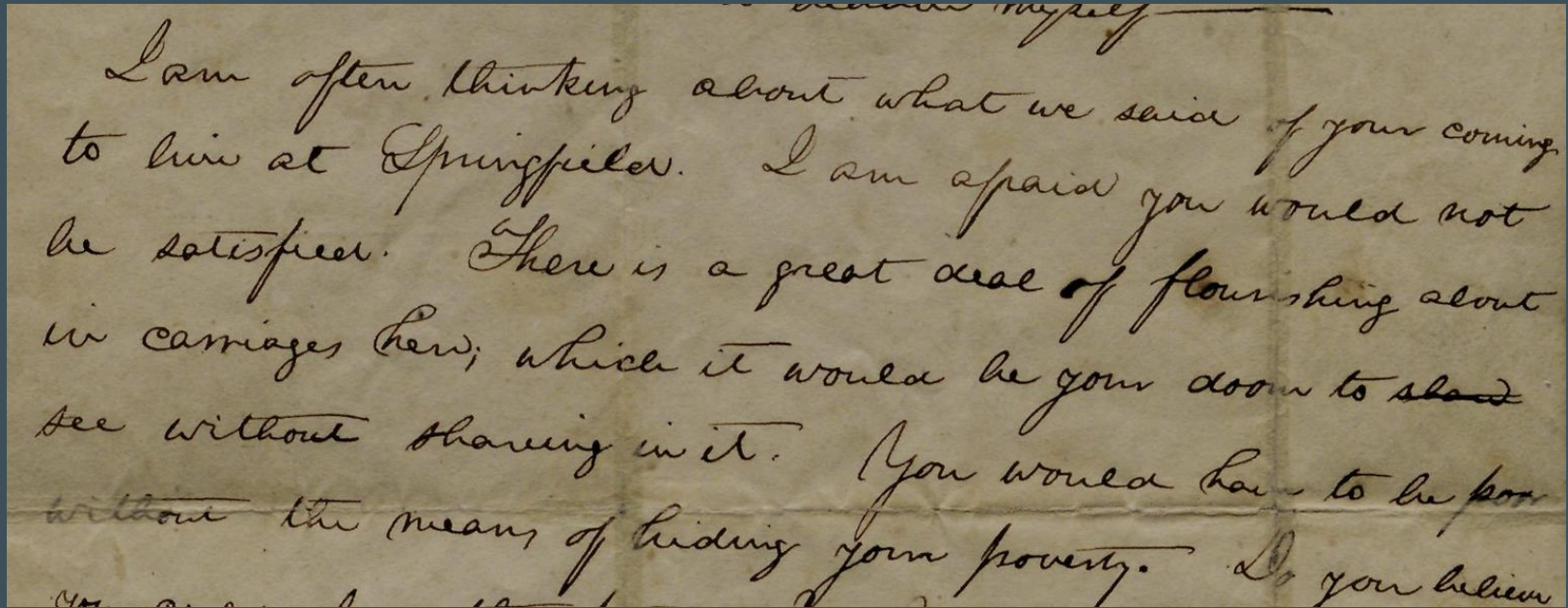
A photograph of a handwritten note on a piece of aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive and matches the text of the quote below. The paper has some creases and a slightly textured appearance.

avoided it. I've never been to church yet, nor probably  
shall not be soon. I stay away because I am conscious  
I should not know how to behave myself—

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“I,ve never been to church yet, nor probably  
shall not be soon. I stay away because I am  
conscious I should not know how to behave  
myself—”

# *He's not wealthy...*



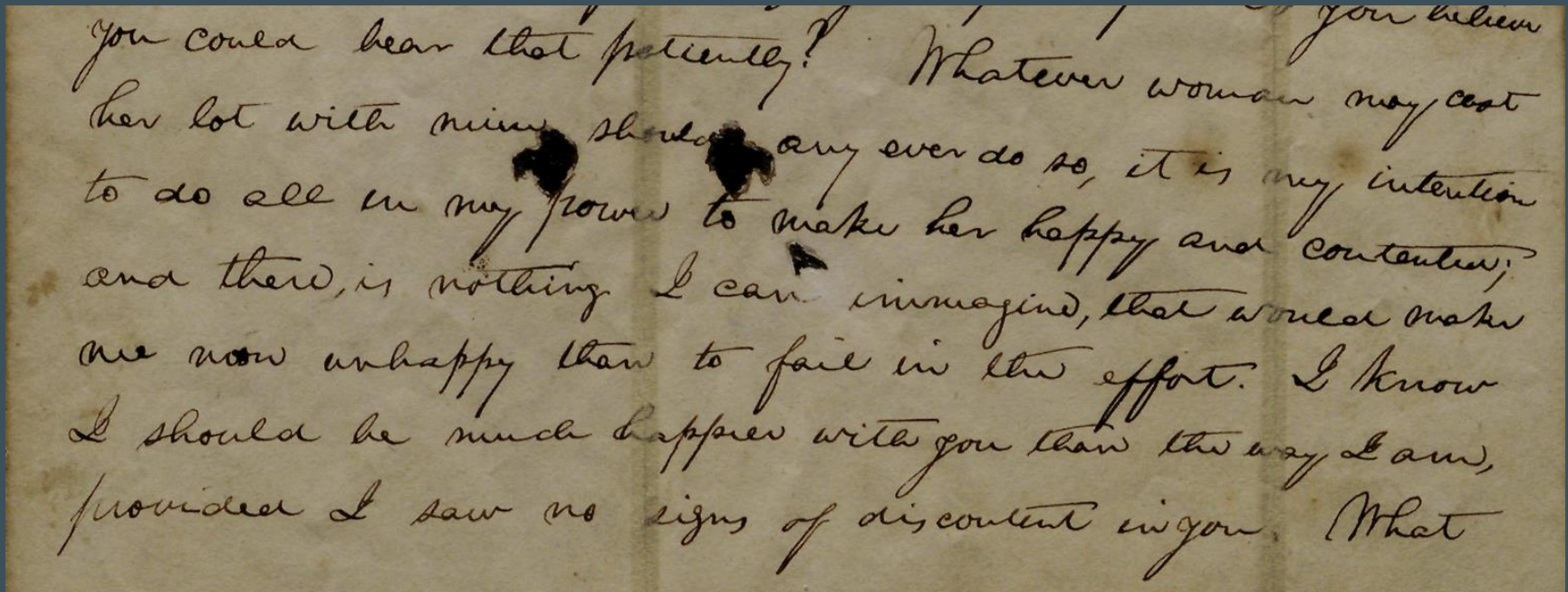
I am often thinking about what we said of your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here; which it would be your doom to ~~stand~~ see without sharing in it. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty. Do you believe

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“I am often thinking about what we said of your coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here; which it would be your doom to see without sharing in it. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty.”



## *But he'll try to make her happy*

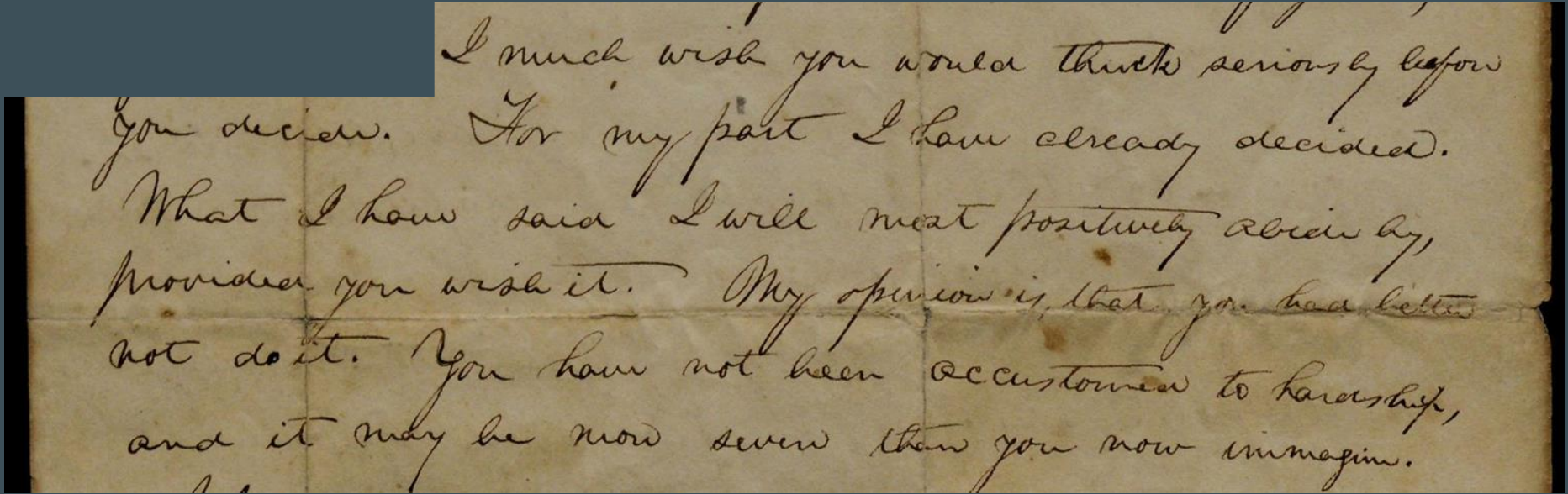
A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive, written in dark ink. The text is a portion of a larger letter, starting with a question and followed by a declaration of intent. There are some dark spots and stains on the paper, particularly in the middle section.

you could bear that patiently? Whatever woman may cast  
her lot with mine should any ever do so, it is my intention  
to do all in my power to make her happy and contented;  
and there is nothing I can imagine, that would make  
me now unhappy than to fail in the effort. I know  
I should be much happier with you than the way I am,  
provided I saw no signs of discontent in you. What

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“Whatever woman may cast her lot with mine should any ever do so, it is my intention to do all in my power to make her happy and contented; and there is nothing I can imagine, that would make me more unhappy than to fail in the effort. I know I should be much happier with you than the way I am, provided I saw no signs of discontent in you.”

## *Lincoln thinks she shouldn't go through with it*

A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive, written in dark ink. The paper shows signs of wear, including creases and some staining. The text is written in several lines, with some words underlined. The letter is addressed to "My dear Mary" (partially visible on the left).

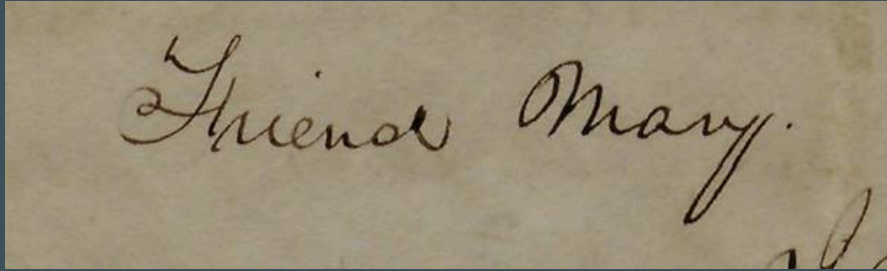
I much wish you would think seriously before  
you decide. For my part I have already decided.  
What I have said I will most positively abide by,  
provided you wish it. My opinion is, that you had better  
not do it. You have not been accustomed to hardship,  
and it may be more severe than you now imagine.

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“I much wish you would think seriously before you decide. For my part I have already decided. What I have said I will most positively abide by, provided you wish it. My opinion is, that you had better not do it. You have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may be more severe than you now imagine.”



# Friendzoned

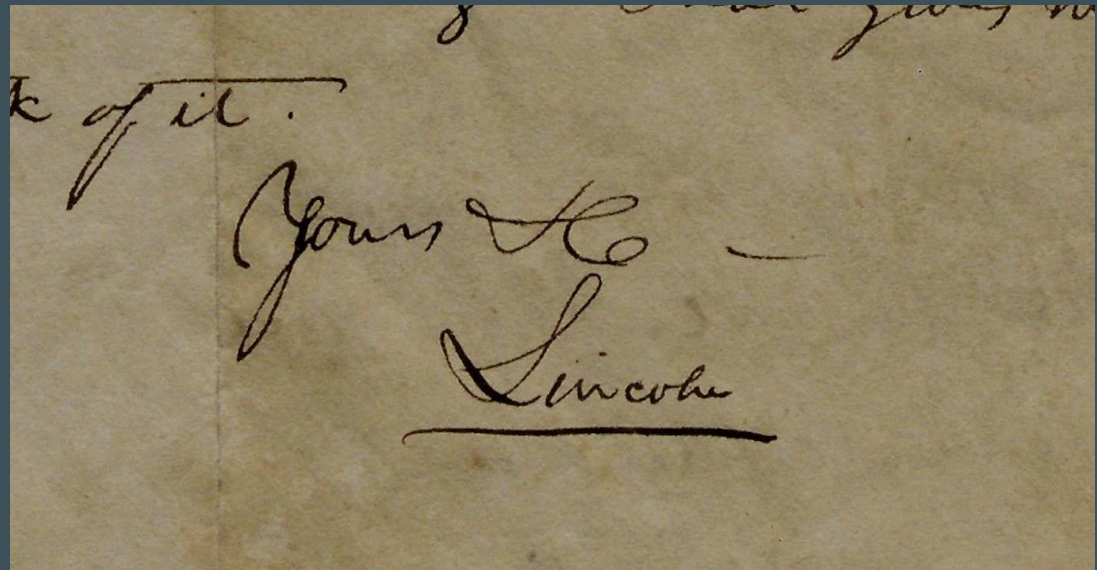
A close-up photograph of a handwritten note on aged, yellowed paper. The words "Friend Mary." are written in a cursive script.

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“Friend Mary.”

“Yours & c. -

Lincoln”

A photograph of a handwritten signature on aged paper. The signature reads "Yours & c. -" followed by "Lincoln" which is underlined. Above the signature, the words "k of it." are partially visible.

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# *What happened to Mary?*

- Lincoln formally proposed marriage to Mary in Fall 1837.
  - She declined.
- She moved back to Kentucky, got married, and had children.
- In 1866 Lincoln's law partner William Herndon interviewed Mary for a book about Lincoln.





# Lincoln speech fragments, 1857-1858

dent truth— Made so plain by our good Father  
in Heaven, that all free and understanding it, even  
down to brutes and creeping insects— The ant, who has  
toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest, will furiously  
defend the fruit of his labor, against whatever robber  
assails him— So plain, that the most dumb and  
stupid slave that ever toiled for a master, does  
constantly know that he is wronged— So plain that  
no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in  
a plainly perverse way; for although volumes upon  
volumes is written to prove slavery a very good  
thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take  
the good of it, by being a slave himself—

Most governments have been based, practically, on  
the denial of the equal rights of men, as I have, in  
part, stated them; thus began, by affirming those  
rights— They say, some men are too ignorant, and  
vicious, to share in government— Possibly so, said  
we; and, by your system, you would always keep  
them ignorant, and vicious— We proposed to give  
all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow  
stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and  
happier together—

We made the experiment; and the fruit is before  
us— Look at it— Think of it— Look at it, in its  
aggregated grandeur, of extent of country, and numbers  
of population— of ship, and steamboat, and rail—

Why, Kansas is neither the whole, nor a  
bit of the real question—  
"A house divided against itself can not  
stand"

I believe this government can not endure  
permanently, half slave, and half free—

I expressed this belief a year ago; and  
subsequent developments have but confirmed me.

I do not expect the Union to be dissolved  
now— 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— Either  
the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread  
of it, and put it in course of ultimate extinction; or  
its advocates will push it forward till it shall be  
completely lawful in all the states, old, as well  
as new— Do you doubt it? Study the Dred Scott  
decision, and then see, how little, even now remains  
to be done—

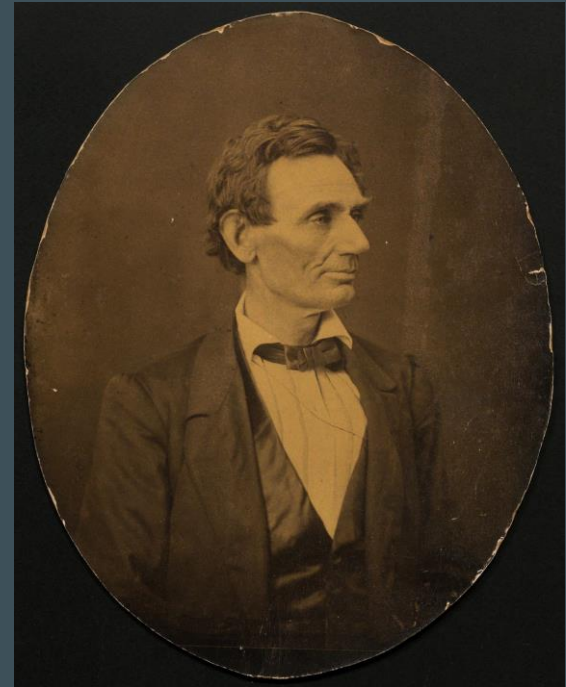
That decision may be reduced to three points—  
The first is, that a negro can not be a citizen—  
That point is made in order to deprive the negro  
in every possible event, of the benefit of that provision  
of the U. S. Constitution which declares that:  
"The citizens of each state shall be entitled to  
all privileges and immunities of citizens in the  
several states."

The second point is, that the U. S. Constitution pro-  
tects slavery, as property, in all the U. S. territories, and  
that neither Congress, nor the people of the territories,  
nor any other power, can prohibit it, at any time prior  
to the formation of state constitutions—

This point is made, in order that the territories may  
safely be filled up with slaves, before the formation of  
state constitutions, and thereby to embarrass the free states

# *Lincoln and slavery*

- Lincoln believed the founding fathers set slavery on a course to extinction.
  - Ended the international slave trade
  - The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery in the territory north of the Ohio River.
- Changes in the 1850s prompted him to reenter politics.
  - Compromise of 1850
  - Kansas-Nebraska Act
  - *Dred Scott* Decision

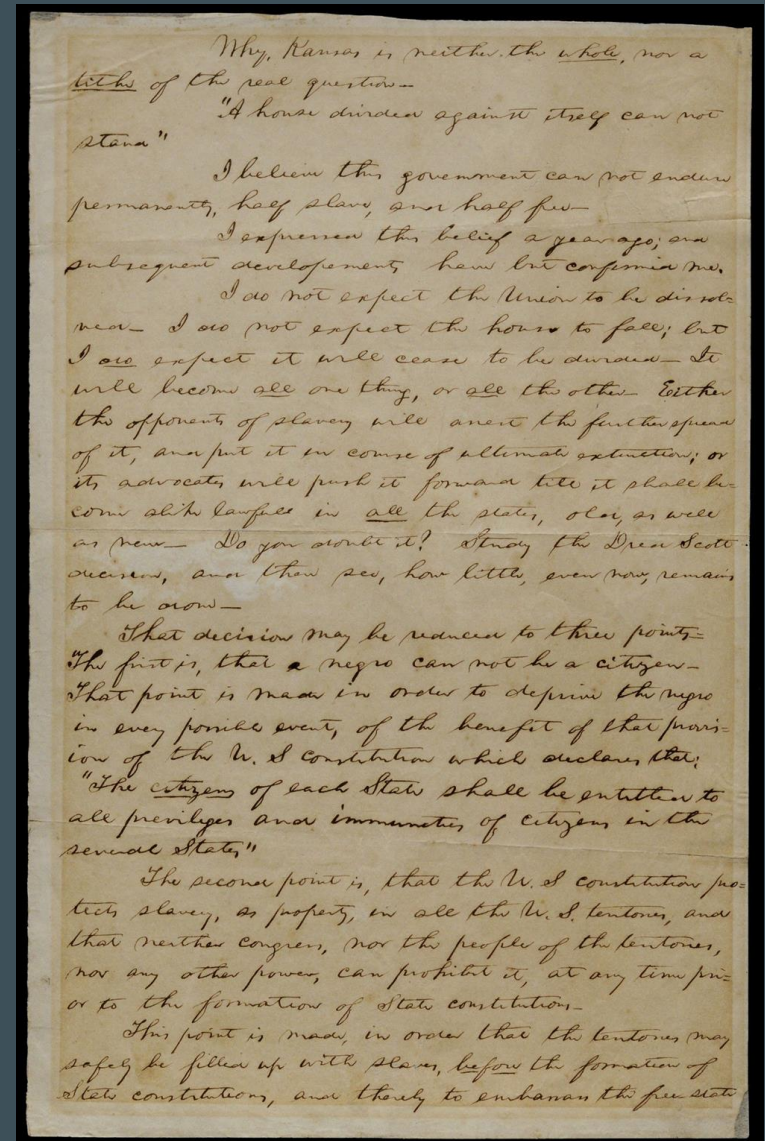


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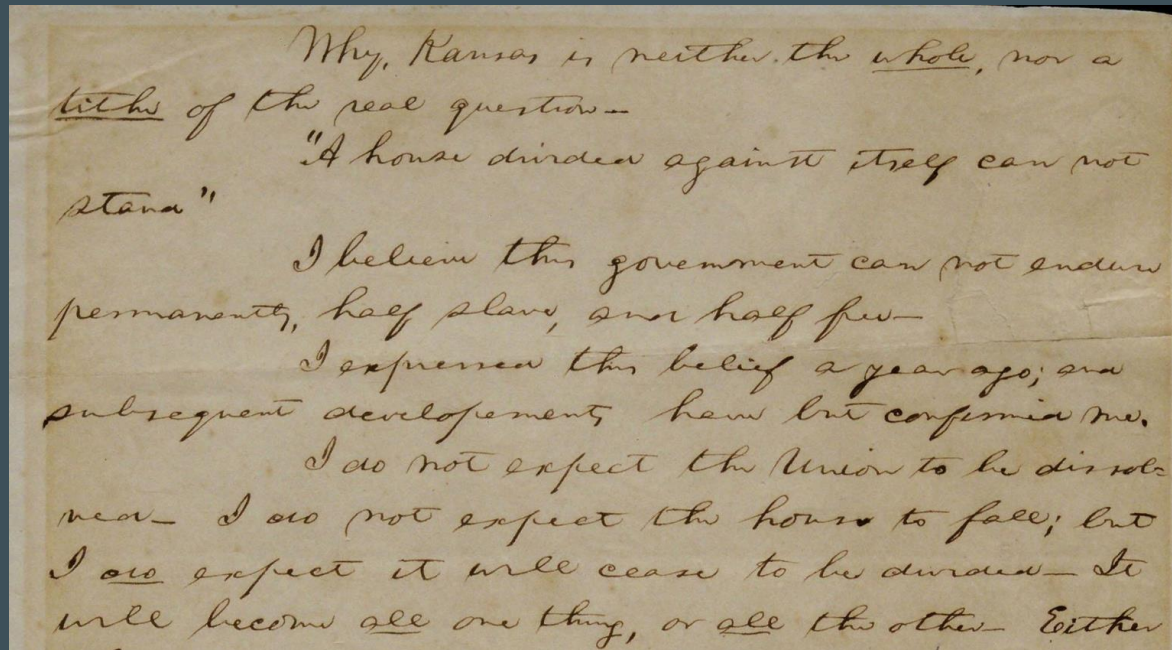
# Lincoln's "House Divided" Speech

- Early draft of the speech
  - Historian Don Fehrenbacher dated it as December 1857.
- The "House Divided" Speech was delivered on June 16, 1858.
  - NOT part of the Lincoln-Douglas debates
- Lincoln identifies slavery as a moral and political issue that threatens the survival of the United States.





# *"A house divided against itself can not stand"*



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"Why, Kansas is neither the whole, nor a tithe of the real question.

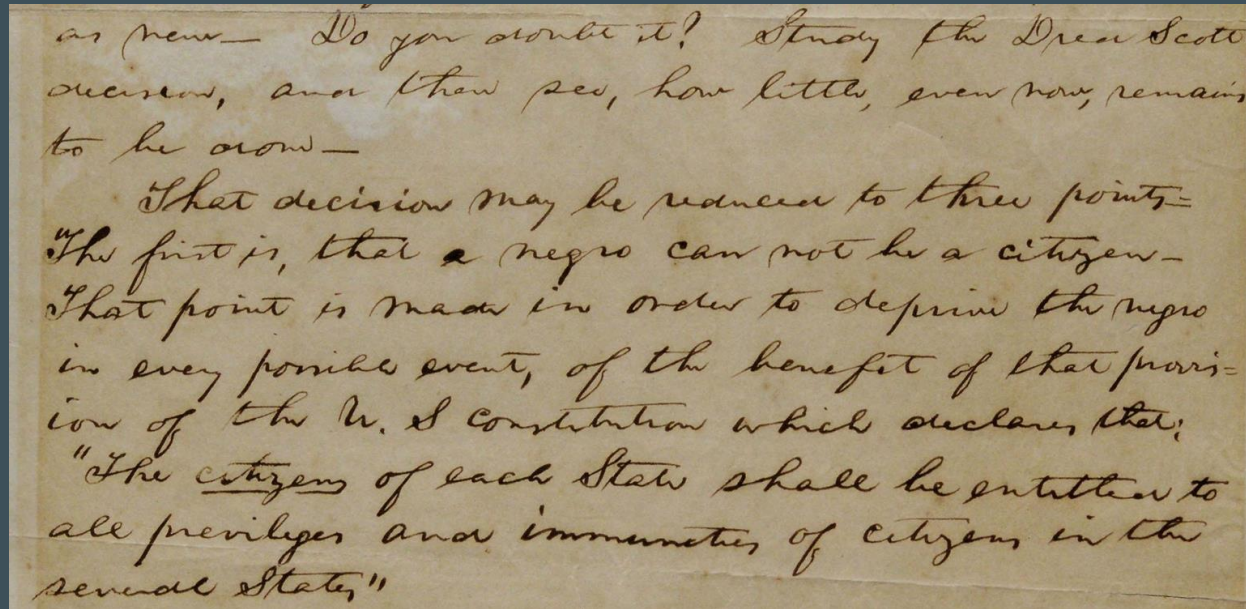
'A house divided against itself can not stand.'

I believe this government can not 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."

# *"Do you doubt it? Study the Dred Scott decision"*

THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript on aged, yellowed paper. The text is written in a cursive script. The first paragraph reads: "as new— Do you doubt it? Study the Dred Scott decision, and then see, how little, even now, remains to be done—". The second paragraph reads: "That decision may be reduced to three points— The first is, that a negro can not be a citizen— That point is made in order to deprive the negro in every possible event, of the benefit of that provision of the U. S Constitution which declares, that: 'The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States,'".

as new— Do you doubt it? Study the Dred Scott decision, and then see, how little, even now, remains to be done—

That decision may be reduced to three points—  
The first is, that a negro can not be a citizen—  
That point is made in order to deprive the negro in every possible event, of the benefit of that provision of the U. S Constitution which declares, that:  
"The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States,"

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"Do you doubt it? Study the Dred Scott decision, and then see, how little, even now, remains to be done....

"[T]hat a negro can not be a citizen — That point is made in order to deprive the negro in every possible event, of the benefit of that provision of the U. S Constitution which declares that: 'The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States'"

## *How did you get that?*

- “The Grimsley Trunk”
  - Lincoln left his non-essential writings with Elizabeth Todd Grimsley in Springfield.
- After Lincoln’s death, Elizabeth gave pages to friends or autograph collectors.
- Years later, a servant burned many of the papers in the trunk, thinking they were trash.
- The trunk itself was sold in 1967 and is currently in private ownership.
- The Grimsley family retained the “House Divided” page until 1992.

# Speech Fragment, circa 1858

dent truth— Made so plain by our good Walter  
in Hesperus, that all feel and understand it, even  
down to brutes and creeping insects— The ant, who has  
toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest, will furiously  
defend the fruit of his labor, against whatever robber  
snails him— So plain, that the most dumb and  
stupid slave that ever toiled for a master, does  
constantly know that he is wronged— So plain that  
no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in  
a plain, perfect way; for although volumes upon  
volumes is written to prove slavery a very good  
thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take  
the good of it, by being a slave himself—

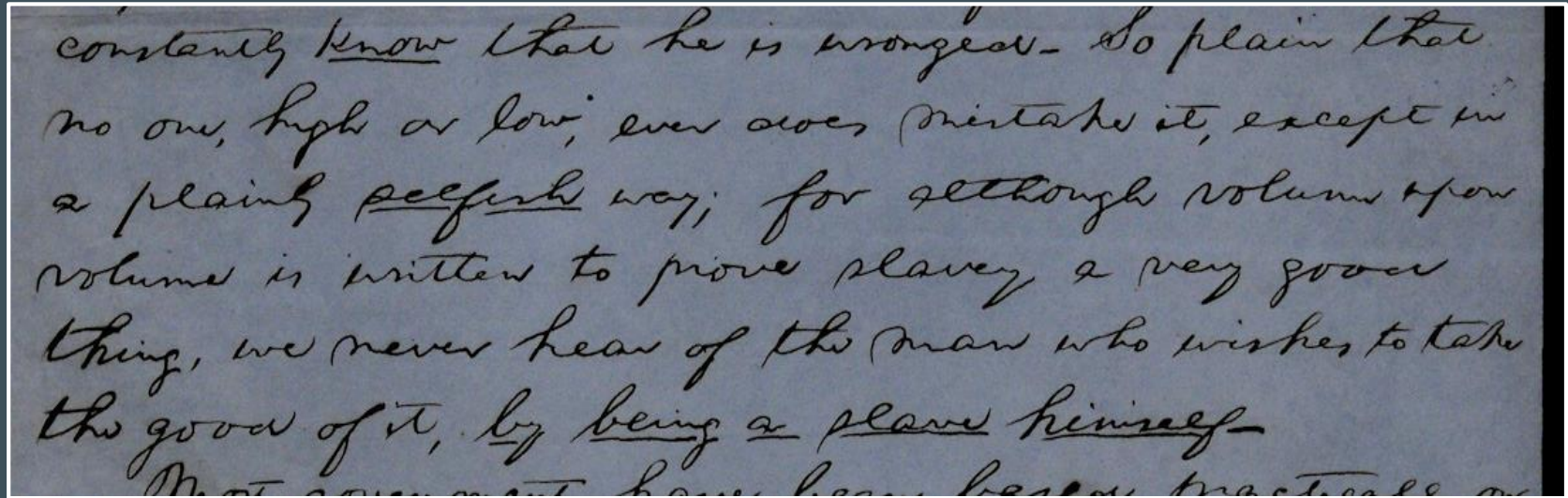
Most governments have been based, practically, on  
the denial of the equal rights of men, as I have, in  
part, stated them; ~~then~~ began by affirming those  
rights— They said, some men are too ignorant, and  
vicious, to share in government— Possibly so, said  
we; and, by your system, you would always keep  
them ignorant, and vicious— We proposed to give  
all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow  
stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and  
happier together—

We made the experiment; and the fruit is before  
us— Look at it— think of it— Look at it, in its  
aggregate grandeur, of extent of country, and numbers  
of population— of ship, and steamboat, and sailor

- John G. Nicolay and John Hay date the speech to 1858.
- The rest of the speech is lost.
- Provides valuable insight into Lincoln's thought process.



## Argument against slavery, 1858

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript snippet on aged, slightly discolored paper. The handwriting is in a cursive script, characteristic of the mid-19th century. The text is written in dark ink and is partially obscured by a white border at the bottom. The visible text reads: "constantly know that he is wronged. So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly selfish way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself." The words "selfish" and "being a slave himself" are underlined in the original manuscript. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and a slightly uneven texture.

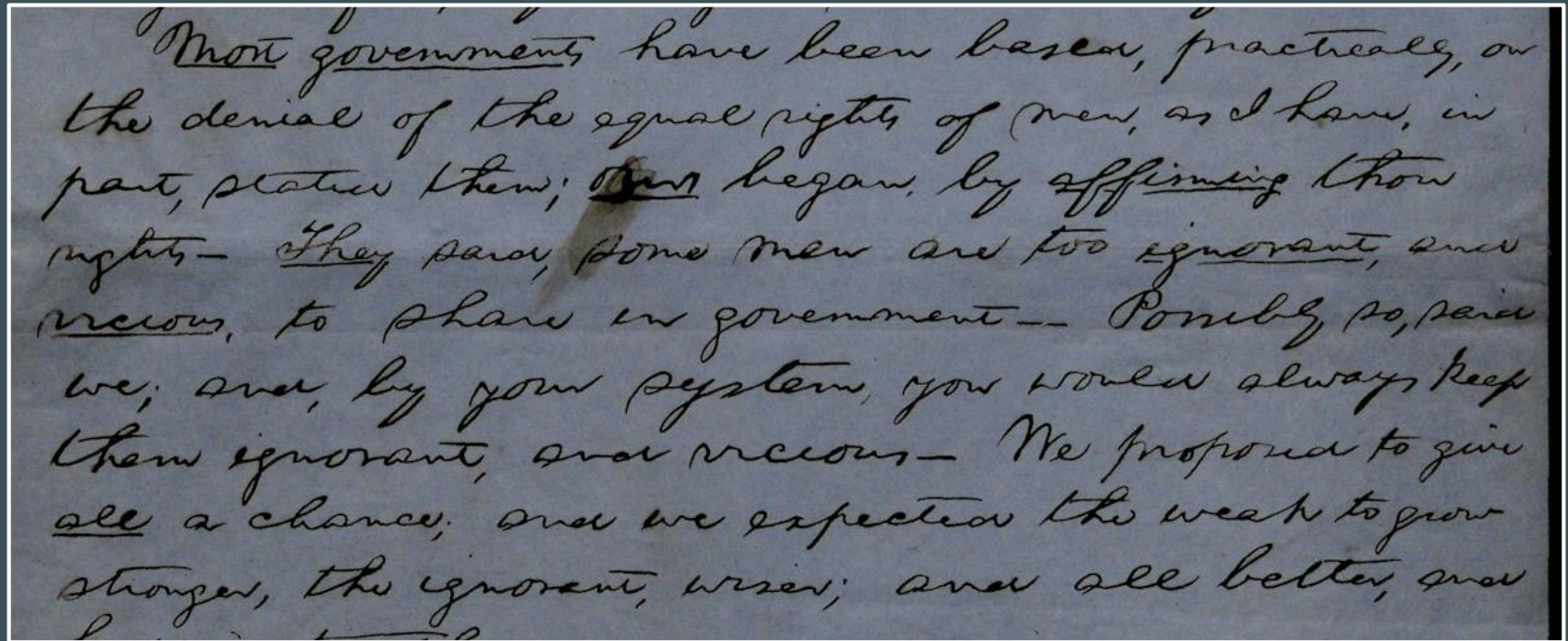
constantly know that he is wronged. So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly selfish way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself.

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“So plain that no one, high or low, ever does mistake it, except in a plainly selfish way; for although volume upon volume is written to prove slavery a very good thing, we never hear of the man who wishes to take the good of it, by being a slave himself.”



# *"We proposed to give all a chance," 1858*

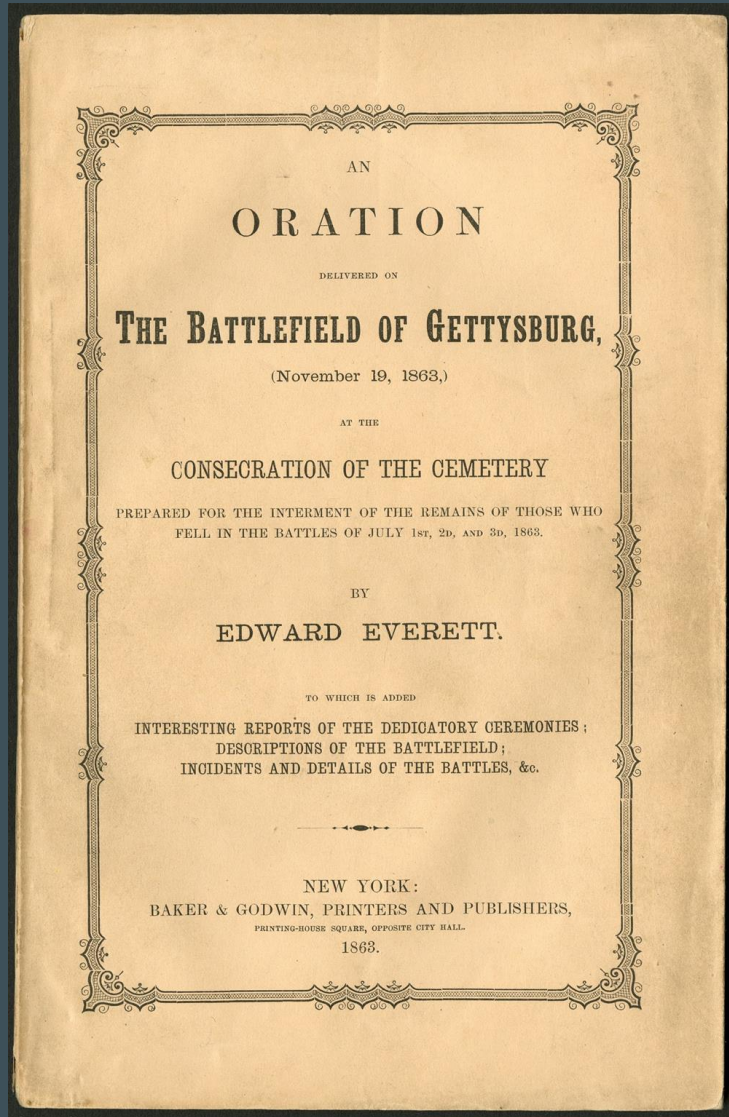
A photograph of a handwritten manuscript on aged, slightly stained paper. The handwriting is in a cursive script, characteristic of the mid-19th century. The text is written in dark ink and is somewhat faded in places. The paper has a yellowish-brown tint. The text is a single paragraph, starting with 'Most governments' and ending with 'and all better, and happier together.' The words 'Most governments', 'ours', 'affirming', 'They', 'ignorant', 'vicious', 'all', and 'stronger' are underlined in the original image.

Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of the equal rights of men, as I have, in part, stated them; ours began, by affirming those rights— They said, some men are too ignorant, and vicious, to share in government— Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant, and vicious— We proposed to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and happier together.

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"Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of the equal rights of men, as I have, in part, stated them; ours began, by affirming those rights. They said, some men are too ignorant, and vicious, to share in government. Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant and vicious. We proposed to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant, wiser; and all better, and happier together."

# *The Gettysburg Address, 1863*

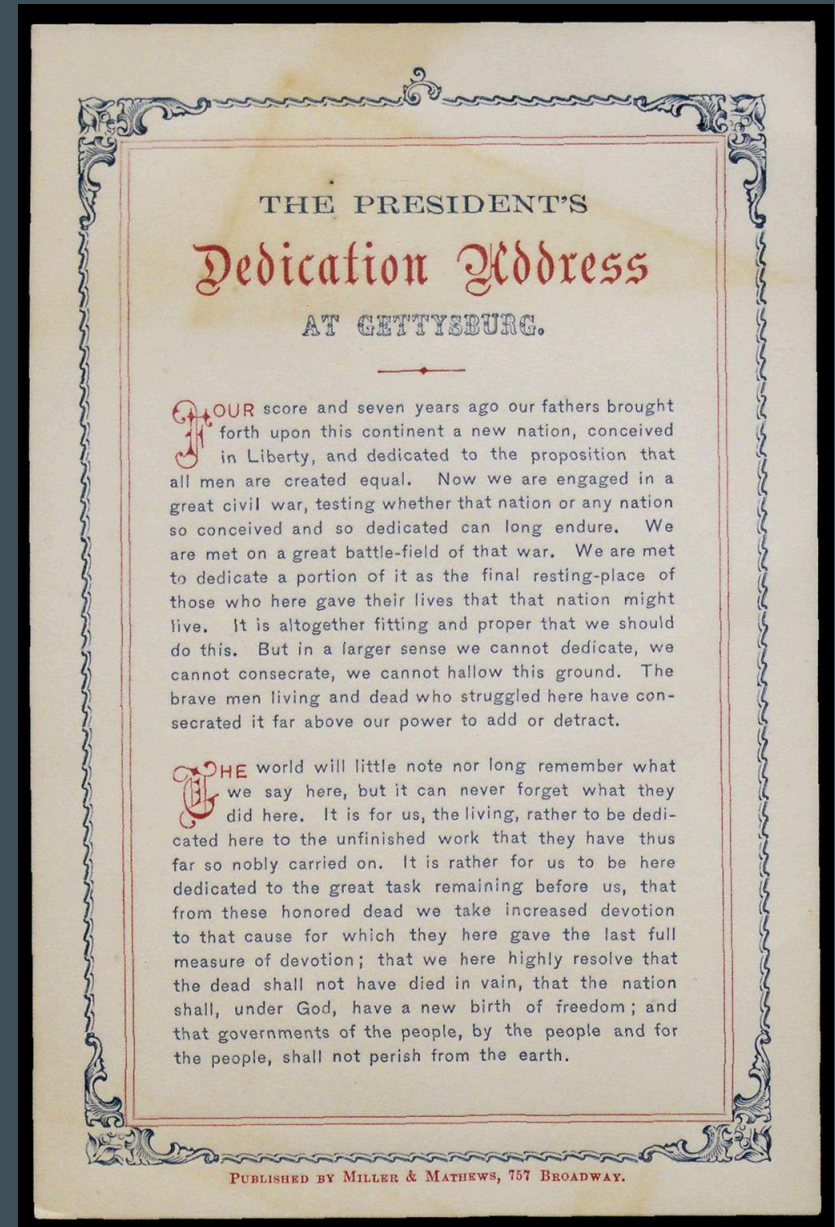


- Battle of Gettysburg: July 1-3, 1863
- Approximately 23,000 Union casualties and 23,000 Confederate
  - 8,000 killed
  - 27,000 wounded
- November 19, 1863: Ceremony to dedicate a cemetery for the Union dead
- The main speaker was Edward Everett.
- Lincoln is not mentioned on the cover of this pamphlet.



# *The Gettysburg Address*

- Edward Everett spoke for two hours.
- President Lincoln had been invited to make a “few appropriate remarks.”
  - He spoke 275 words in approximately 3 minutes.
- About 15,000 people heard his speech.
- It wasn't very well-received at first.

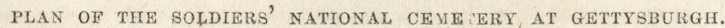


# *The Gettysburg Address*

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, **conceived** in Liberty, and **dedicated** to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation **so conceived and so dedicated** can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to **dedicate** a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense **we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground.** The brave men living and dead **who struggled here have consecrated it** far above our power to add or detract.

The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather **to be dedicated here** to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather **for us to be here dedicated** to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead **we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion;** that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain, that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that governments of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



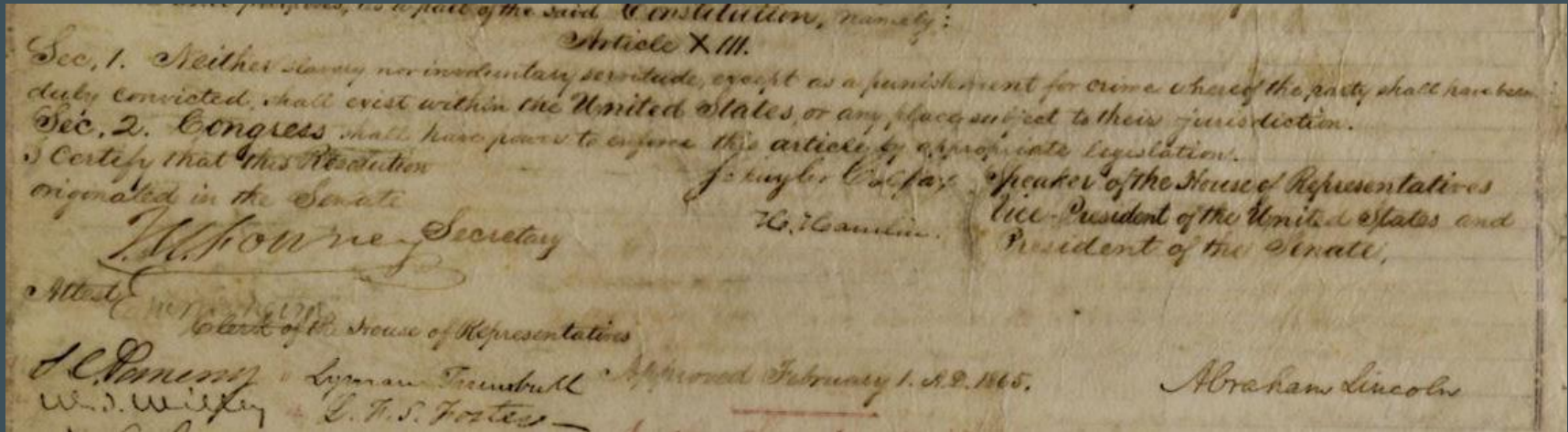


Maine.....	17	Indiana.....	31
New-Hampshire.....	4	Illinois.....	3
Vermont.....	19	Michigan.....	48
Rhode Island.....	4	Wisconsin.....	21
Massachusetts.....	139	Minnesota.....	24
Connecticut.....	12	Virginia.....	2
New-York.....	158	U. S. Infantry (Regulars).....	19
New-Jersey.....	22		<hr/>
Pennsylvania.....	100		606
Delaware.....	14	Unknown.....	582
Maryland.....	15		<hr/>
Ohio.....	24	Total.....	1,188

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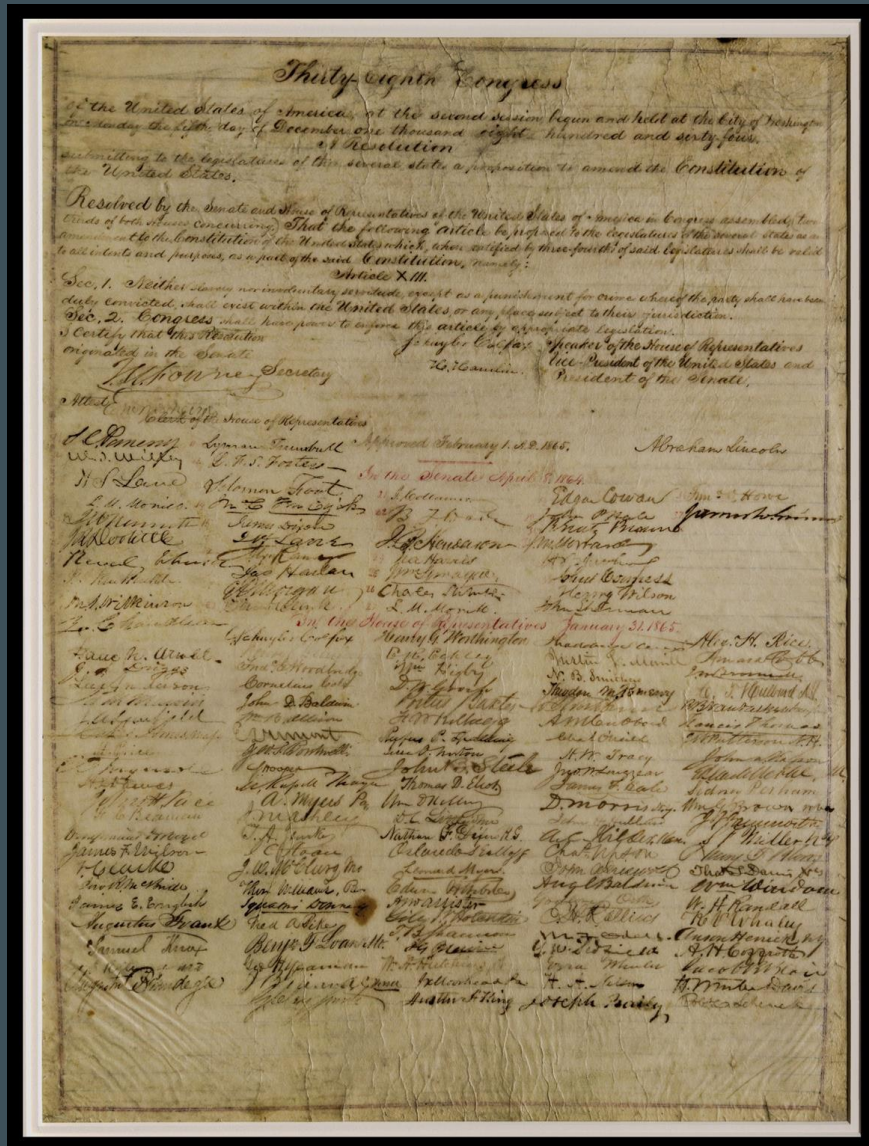


# Article 13th



- April 1864: Passed by the Senate
- January 1865: Passed by the House of Representatives
- December 1865: Officially ratified as the 13th Amendment

# The 13th Amendment



- Written on vellum
- One of six existing “Congressional” copies of the 13th Amendment
  - President Abraham Lincoln
  - Hannibal Hamlin
  - Schuyler Colfax
  - 37 Senators
  - 111 Congressmen

## *The 13th Amendment*

“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”



Q&A

# *Upcoming Programs*

- *Inside the Vault*, Thursday, December 3 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
  - Featuring letters, and photographs from the attack on Pearl Harbor during WWII
- *Book Breaks*, November 15 at 12 pm ET (9 am PT).
  - David S. Reynolds discusses his book *Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times*.
- Visit [gilderlehrman.org](http://gilderlehrman.org) for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.