

Lincoln Law Office Restored to Appearance of 125 Years Ago
A Sesquicentennial Feature



Illinois Bar Journal, October 1968

By the time Illinois' reconstructed old State Capitol is rededicated December 3, 1968 as a Lincoln shrine, another Lincoln landmark will be restored across the street.

Plans have been announced for reconstruction of the building at the southwest corner of Sixth and Adams Streets where Lincoln had his law office from 1843 to 1852, a longer period than he occupied any other address.

The building is a three-story brick structure with a full attic. Its simple design is called "Prairie Classic" and it fronts 20 feet on Adams Street and extends 107 feet south on Sixth Street. It was built in 1840 by Seth M. Tinsley, a Springfield merchant, lumber dealer, and banker.

The restoration has been undertaken by a Springfield group of history enthusiasts—Mr. and Mrs. James E. Myers, Attorney and Mrs. Robert Oxtoby and Mrs. H.B. Bartholf. They plan to restore the building as it appeared when Lincoln was a tenant. For 128 years the property was known as the Tinsley Building but the name has now been changed to the Lincoln-Herndon Building.

When Lincoln and his law partner, Stephen T. Logan, moved into the building in 1843, they occupied third-floor front offices. Four years later the Logan-Lincoln firm was

dissolved so that Logan could take his son as a partner; Lincoln then formed a partnership with young William H. Herndon, who had just been admitted to the bar. The Logans retained the front office and Lincoln and Herndon moved into a third-floor rear office.

During this period Tinsley operated a store at the front of the first floor, and the Springfield Post Office was in a small back room on Sixth Street. The federal government rented the second floor. The front room served as the federal district courtroom, and back of that were the judge's chambers and the United States marshal's office. The rest of the building was occupied principally by lawyers.

Restoration of the store, post office, courtroom and offices is scheduled for completion this fall. Most of the original floors and walls and many of the original ceilings remain. The first floor has undergone the greatest change and the exterior walls there will be replaced.

The same architects who are in charge of the reconstruction of the old State Capitol, Ferry and Henderson of Springfield, are also supervising restoration of the Lincoln-Herndon Building. James T. Hickey, curator of the Lincoln Collection of the Illinois State Historical Library, is the historical consultant for both projects.

In addition to Lincoln, Herndon and the Logans, the building had a number of other historically noteworthy tenants. One of them, Edward D. Baker, an attorney and political ally, was such a close friend of the Lincolns that they named their second son Edward Baker Lincoln. Little Eddie died in 1850 before his fourth birthday. Baker served in the state Senate and House of Representatives, was a Congressman from

Illinois and a U.S. Senator from Oregon, and was killed in the Civil War battle of Ball's Bluff.

The tenant with the most spectacular career was James Shields who served as U.S. Senator from three states—Illinois, Minnesota and Missouri. He was also a justice of the Illinois Supreme Court. While state auditor, he challenged Lincoln to a duel over letters published in a Springfield newspaper. Not until they reached the dueling ground in Missouri did the two men call off the contest and become friends again.

James E. Myers, one of the group restoring the Lincoln-Herndon Building, recently wrote a booklet about this incident titled "The astonishing Saber Duel of Abraham Lincoln."

Lincoln's second in the dueling episode was Albert T. Bledsoe, another tenant of the building. He was a West Point graduate, an attorney, and a minister. At that time he was a close friend of Lincoln's but during the Civil War he served as under-secretary of war for the Confederate States.

Another link between the old State Capitol and the Lincoln-Herndon Building is that, for many years around the turn of the century, the former Logan-Lincoln office was occupied by Springfield Architect Samuel J. Hanes at whose suggestion the Capitol was raised and a new first floor inserted in 1901.

Copyright, Illinois State Bar Association



**ILLINOIS STATE
BAR ASSOCIATION**