Woodbury & Co

Please let Carless have 1/2 gal of Whiskey (for medicinal purposes) & oblige

Ward H Lamon

(Courtesy of Charles M. Woodbury.)

Order for Whisky from Business Files, Woodbury Drug Co., Danville, Illinois, 1853.

Then having the deed to the children will do no harm—

Better mention this to W. H. Lamon, lest he should, unawares, commit me to the other side—

Yours &c,

A. Lincoln—

(Courtesy of Charles M. Woodbury.)

Part of Lincoln Letter acknowledging Law Partnership with Ward Hill Lamon.

was the home of Judge Davis and Jesse Fell, two of the leaders of the then insipid boom that eventually was to give Lincoln the presidency, may have had a bearing on the matter. At any rate, here he formed a partnership with Harvey Hogg, a young lawyer who later was to be a sacrifice on a Southern battle field. Shortly after his removal to the new location sorrow entered his home and the rejoicing over the birth of a daughter was clouded by the death of the mother. Angeline, the wife, whom he had wooed and won in his boyhood days in Virginia, had paid the penalty of motherhood. During the eight years of their married life she had furnished a drab background to a colorful husband. Hers had been the dreary restricted life that custom demanded of the wives of the '50s. She found no place in the printed records until after death, when the Bloomington Pantagraph of April 20, 1859, said:

"Funeral of Mrs. W. H. Lamon.—The funeral of this lamented lady, who died on Wednesday, the 13th instant, took place Thursday afternoon, and was largely attended. Court adjourned over, and the members of the bar attended the funeral in a body, with Judge Davis at their head. Hon. A. Lincoln was also with them in the procession. Funeral services, were performed at the house by Rev. Mr. Harlow of the Episcopal church, and the burial service at the grave was also read in an impressive manner by the same gentleman, while 'the wind chanted a dirge through the leafless trees' around the last resting place of the departed. *Requiescat in pace.*"

The daughter, who was christened Dorothy, found a home and loving care with her father's sister, Mrs. William Morgan, in Danville, where she grew to womanhood.

In Bloomington as in Danville his law office was a scene of revelry with the same old pitcher in evidence. Here also the Cavalier won new laurels as a wrestler, added to his reputation as a lawyer, set the fashion in men's wearing apparel and did more than his share to keep down the supply in the stocks of the taverns. Yet—so he boasted—never had he imbibed so much that he could not articulate the sentence, "She stood at the gate welcoming him in." Truly, a Virginian who could and did drink them standing.

Busy as he was, however, he still found time to further the cause of his friend Lincoln. He was a press agent of that day and the one product that he exploited was the claims of his friend for the presidency. He was an advocate over the District and even found time to indite endless letters pleading the cause of the Kentuckian. Tradition has many tales of his courage and prowess in physical combat. He never asked for quarter. Nor gave it. He had an opinion on every question and lacked the diplomacy to hide it—sometimes at the expense of his own popularity. But his friendship was an asset to any man—and he loved Lincoln and gave of his loyalty to the full. A great soul, Ward Hill Lamon, who was great only because of his frailties—and his loyalties.

There were busy months ahead for the Cavalier, who must follow the Court from county-seat to county-seat and carry on for the forces of law and order. The buds of Spring gave way to the growing days of Summer—and then the shorter day and the tang in the air that gives to the woodland foliage an Autumn tint, told Lamon that Winter

would come again. Time was precious for the convention that was to nominate a leader for the hosts of the new Republican party was to be held in Chicago the following May.

Then came January, 1860, with only the encouragement that some Eastern newspapers, notably in Pennsylvania, had printed the short biography which Jesse Fell had induced the circuit rider to write, which he had augmented with additional facts, and which had been elaborated into a memoir by the Hon. Joseph J. Lewis, former commissioner of internal revenue, of Chester, Pennsylvania. Small hope there, but Lamon and the others never despaired.

Then back in Illinois came the Eastern newspapers with notices of the Cooper Union speech that had been delivered on February 27. It had been a success and the Nation now knew the Illinois man was of presidential size. William Cullen Bryant had presided at this meeting and the newspapers had been most kind. Lamon took heart and doubtless celebrated the event with many a bumper. That was his habit. Drink when the world looked rosy and drink when the world looked blue. But drink—and drink—and drink—but never to the point where a gentleman could not recite without hesitation, "She stood at the gate welcoming him in."

There was added hope in February for the friends of Lincoln in the action of Norman B. Judd, originally an anti-Douglas Democrat, who, as a member of the Republican national committee, had secured the meeting of the National convention for Chicago.

Judge Davis was busy writing letters to representative leaders over the country; Jesse Fell was traveling in Indiana and Pennsylvania; Joseph Medill was down in Washington button-holing congressmen and writing letters back to the *Chicago Tribune;* Leonard Swett was neglecting his clients and his own boom for the gubernatorial nomination, and Ward Hill Lamon was "doing my damnedest to let the people know just how great Lincoln is." Lincoln, too, was busy with his pen, writing this and that man in the interest of his own candidacy, while up in the metropolis by the lake Gurdon S. Hubbard, Indian trader in the days when Illinois was young, a leader in civic affairs and a militant worker in the new party, as chairman of the Committee of Five, was busy in the erection of the Wigwam which was to house the convention.

CHAPTER VI

The Republican state convention met in Decatur May 9 and Lamon and other friends of the circuit rider had tangible hope when it adjourned. Lincoln was in attendance as a spectator. When, on the request of Richard J. Oglesby, later to be a three-term governor of the state, John Hanks, a relative, entered the hall with two rails which he alleged were from a lot of 3000 made in 1830 by Thomas Hanks and Abe Lincoln, it was easy for John M. Palmer, later a general, a governor, a senator and the presidential candidate of the Gold Democrats, to secure the adoption of a resolution that "Abraham Lincoln is the choice of the Republican party of Illinois for the presi-

dency, and the delegates from this state are instructed to use all honorable means to secure his nomination by the Chicago convention, and to vote as a unit for him."

The battlefield moved to Chicago, where 40,000 strangers gathered for the convention, which began its sessions May 16. New York came with 2,000 Seward shouters, Pennsylvania mustered almost as many with the difference that they had no candidate but were not for the New Yorker, and there were delegations of size from every quarter. Illinois led with more than 10,000. From every nook and corner of the state the old circuit riders had done their work well and had brought earnest souls—not as delegates but as real friends of this boy from a hovel in Kentucky whose most poignant memory of his childhood was when as a lad of nine years, he followed his father, old Tom Lincoln, out into the Indiana wilderness near Gentryville, to help dig the hole in which poor Nancy Hanks Lincoln found her eternal rest. Where, too, her soul must sleep for days before an itinerant preacher came to the neighborhood to breathe a prayer and hold services in her memory.

The headquarters of the Illinois delegation was in the Tremont house, and here Davis, Swett and Medill held mysterious conferences with wavering delegates and in spite of Lincoln's written injunction, "I authorize no bargains and will be bound by none," nailed down the Indiana delegation and were reasonably sure of Pennsylvania. Promises were made in Lincoln's behalf, and when Billy Herndon, he of the alcoholic breath, sought to express a doubt as to its fairness to his friend and law partner, Davis brushed it aside with "Lincoln ain't here and don't know what we have to meet, so we will go ahead as if we hadn't heard from him, and he must ratify it." No longer was he the ponderous judge—he now tipped the beam at 325—who when he presided over the Eighth judicial district was such a stickler for truth and justice, but rather the fledgling lawyer who in his callow days saw but one side to a lawsuit and went in to win.

Wednesday and Thursday were taken up by the organization of the convention and Lincoln's friends thought they were beaten, but with the aid of the Illinois, Indiana and Pennsylvania delegations and a few scattered votes managed to secure an adjournment. This move was fatal to the Seward backers. Thurlow Weed, his manager, saw victory for his choice and was magnanimous—and besides the New York delegation, 2000 strong, headed by Dodworth's band, wanted to do more marching through Chicago's muddy streets. Then, mates, there was dirty work at the crossroads—and Ward Hill Lamon was the instigator of it all. During the two days the Wigwam had been crowded by a howling, shouting mob for Seward, but bright and early Friday morning, the New Yorkers and others from the East wanted to parade—and while they were doing so the Lincoln managers filled the hall to overflowing with leather-lunged shouters for the man from Springfield. The marchers came down Market street only to find the entrance blocked with steaming humanity. The Seward men might have the votes, but the enthusiasm was all for Lincoln. All this was due to the forethought of the Virginian who loved his likker

as he loved his friend. He had spent the previous night supervising a group of young men who forged the names of the convention officials to bogus tickets of admission as fast as the printer man could turn them out. With these carefully distributed the hall was packed with Lincoln shouters before the official visitors arrived.

The nominations were made and on the first ballot Seward had 173½ votes, Lincoln 102 and favorite sons and others the remainder. On the second Lincoln jumped to 181 as against Seward's 184½. On the third Lincoln totaled 231½ while Seward dropped to 180. It was then that old Joe Medill of the *Tribune* took his cue from the promising Davis and whispered to Carter of Ohio, "If you can throw the Ohio delegation for Lincoln, Chase can have anything he wants." "How do you know?" queried the Ohioan. One of the greatest editors of all time looked him squarely in the eye, and answered, "I know, and you know I wouldn't promise if I don't know."

Carter believed and announced a change of four Ohio votes to Lincoln. Then bedlam. Other states fell in line. The official announcement was 354 votes for Lincoln out of a total of 466. It was made unanimous. Judge Stephen T. Logan, erstwhile law partner of the victor, danced on a table and smashed his new silk hat; Thurlow Weed shed tears; Horace Greeley, foe of Seward, grinned; Aaron Goodrich, Minnesota delegate, sought to eulogize the New Yorker, and was howled down; Orville H. Browning, of Quincy,—whose wife, Eliza, it was who was the recipient of one of Lincoln's best known letters in which the young man of twenty-nine reveals his pique and chagrin on being rejected by Mary Owens,—in behalf of Illinois, thanked the convention, and Mark W. Delahay, of Kansas, a consummate scallawag, whose trip to the convention had been financed by Lincoln, caught the first train for Springfield. When the news reached Stephen A. Douglas down in Washington, he smiled, "There won't be a tar barrel left in Illinois tonight." He knew Abe and he knew his Illinois.

The Cavalier spent a hectic night in the taproom of the Richmond hotel—the headquarters of the New Yorkers—where he cared not whether the companion who clinked glasses with him was in time and tune with the occasion or was seeking to drown a sorrow that can come only to the patriot who has backed the wrong political horse at a convention. He took 'em all standing and the next evening found him back in his law office in Bloomington, where he wrote a letter to Hiram Beckwith, of Danville, a former law pupil, and told him all about it.

CHAPTER VII

On the same momentous Friday, Abraham Lincoln, lawyer, down in Springfield, left his home at the usual hour and walked down to the Public Square. Here he turned at the stairway over Chatterton's jewelry store and went to James C. Conkling's office, he having been informed that that gentleman had just returned from the convention. Here there was some discussion and then the candidate announced that he would "return to the office and practice some law." On the street he met E. L. Baker, editor of the *Journal,* who later made

written record of their future movements: "Met Lincoln and we went to a ball alley to play at fives—alley was full—said it was pre-engaged; then went to excellent beer saloon nearby to play game of billiards; table was full and we each drank a glass of beer.... I went to dinner."

Shortly afterward there came a telegram addressed simply "Lincoln," which said, "You are nominated." A crowd gathered and excitement reigned in the capital city of Illinois. The candidate-elect jubilated with them until an afterthought recalled memories of Eighth street, when he said, "I reckon there's a little short woman down at our house that would like to hear the news." He walked down the street alone.

Springfield did him proud. That afternoon a salute of one hundred guns was fired, the church bells were rung from 5 o'clock till sundown and in the evening a monster meeting was held in the state house with speeches by local talkers. Then the crowd followed the Young America brass band to the Lincoln home, where Billy Herndon began his night of celebration with an address. James Matheny—the same Jim who helped Lincoln strip the town cobbler's shirt from his back, tie him to a pump and hand his bruised and bleeding wife a switch with the admonition to "Light in"—also spoke briefly. Shelby M. Cullom—then a member of the legislature and later a congressman, twice governor and five times a senator—who believed in blowing his own horn, also added to the length of the program. Here and there and everywhere in Springfield and over the Illinois prairies there gleamed the bonfires that Douglas had predicted. At midnight the town slumbered—that is, all except Herndon, Matheny, Roland Diller, the druggist, and a few other kindred souls, who made merry at the Chenery house in order to be awake when the morning train got in with the Lincoln delegation.

Up in the city by the lake their crony, Ward Hill Lamon, was with them in spirit. He had missed the train.

The nomination secured, Lamon once more became the district attorney and travelled the circuit until the first of the year, with only occasional speeches in the campaign. The result of the election is a matter of history. As far as Illinois was concerned the battle was between the two old rivals, Lincoln and Douglas, with Bell and Breckinridge, the other presidential candidates, dividing only 7,317 votes. Lincoln was the victor, with a plurality of 11,846. He carried Douglas' home county of Cook by 9,846 but lost Sangamon by 42. "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." Another vote might have been added to his score had it not been for his squeamishness. Before depositing his ballot he showed it to Lamon and Herndon, who had accompanied him to the voting place, to prove that he was voting only for the state and county candidates, as, he said, 'I could not accept the high office if I won it by my own ballot." Elmer Ellsworth of Chicago, the colonel of zouaves, who was an early sacrifice in the War between the States, when he hauled down a Confederate flag from the roof of a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia, also was in the party. He, too, was beloved of Lincoln, and his body lay in state in the East room of the White House while thousands mourned his

untimely fate. Lamon lost his vote by reason of his absence from Bloomington.

But why worry? His friend was the president-elect and he began planning to accept a diplomatic post at some foreign court—preferably in Paris—and he had an abiding faith that Lincoln would not fail him.

CHAPTER VIII

January 1, 1861, Lamon was succeeded as prosecuting attorney of the circuit by a young lawyer, Joseph Guernsey Cannon, of Tuscola. Writing from Danville, where he was holding court, under date of May 10, 1861, Judge Davis said in part: "Dear Hill: Mr. Cannon, the new prosecutor, is a pleasant, unassuming gentleman and will in time make a good prosecutor. He has a bright future. I need not tell you how lonesome it is here, on account of your absence. This is my last court here and no lawyer is practicing here who was practicing here when I held my first court. This is emphatically a world of change." This is the same Cannon who later was to be the Nation's "Uncle Joe," break records for congressional service, be denounced by press and pulpit because of his frankness, called a tsar by his colleagues, get a complimentary mention as a possible presidential nominee and in the waning days earn a record for perfect attendance with the Kiwanis club in the old home town of Danville. When the end came the family doctor told the waiting friends, "There was no illness. Uncle Joe just went to sleep." His age was 91. He remembered the hardships encountered by Lincoln, Lamon, Davis and the others when they rode the old Eighth circuit and he lived to spend hours at the radio and the picture show. Sometimes his afternoon nap was disturbed by the drone of an airplane motor in the heavens.

Being relieved of his court duties Lamon began settling his business affairs, collecting over-due fees and making occasional visits to Springfield at the request of his harrassed friend, whose every moment was taken in preparing his inaugural address, interviewing prominent members of his party regarding the cabinet and in resisting the onslaughts of the horde of office-seekers who dogged his footsteps and bombarded him through the mails. Then there was another matter that demanded attention. That was the designing of a becoming uniform that was to be of a military pattern and yet sufficiently striking to attract attention. It must be no ordinary officer's garb, but one that would look well on a broad-shouldered man, 6 feet 2 in height, and generally regarded as an Adonis. In the designing of this costume he doubtless had the advice of Miss Sally, the winsome daughter of Judge Stephen T. Logan, whom just then he was squiring, to the envy of other Springfield belles, and with whom he was joined in wedlock on November 26. For be it known the Virginia Cavalier now was a "Colonel," having been appointed a member of Governor Richard Yates' staff with that rank. It was a tribute of one drinker to another. He bore his honors bravely. No other man in all Illinois was as well equipped by nature to add dignity to a Governor's entourage when he

Mrs. Ward Hill Lamon (Sally Logan) in 1880.

(Courtesy of Mary Coleman Morrison.)

appeared in public. Doubtless, too, in planning his outfit he had in mind its future wearing when he graced some foreign court as the official representative of these United States. When Lamon gave his friendship he gave all, trusting soul that he was, and he never doubted that Lincoln would pay in kind. He already could see himself in fancy on the boulevards of Paris. "I feel sorry for Hill Lamon," wrote Judge Davis to his friend, William W. Orme, at this time, "and yet, my good friend, when he was in Bloomington with his negro boy, I made up my mind that his head was turned and that he would hereafter do no good. He makes himself ridiculous. I wonder what Judge Logan thinks?"

By the first of February he had his business affairs in shape and was the possessor of $25,000 in cash—a fortune in those days. He was counting the hours until the inauguration when his friend would send to the senate his list of appointees in the diplomatic service, when he received a letter. "Dear Hill," it read, "I need you. I want you to go to Washington with me and be prepared for a long stay." It was the call of friendship. The dream of Paris was a memory.

He boarded an early train for Springfield.

Here he found Lincoln and his family living in the Chenery house, the president-elect having rented the old home to L. Tilton, the New Yorker whom Banker Ridgely had brought West as manager of the Great Western railway when the State of Illinois decided that state ownership of railroads was an economic failure. Here, too, he found the family trunks already roped by Lincoln's own hands, each one bearing a tacked card on which he had written "Lincoln, Executive Mansion, Washington." The man who once lost his mental poise when Ann Rutledge, the belle of Old Salem, went to her eternal sleep, was ready for his greatest adventure. On the morrow the special train would start eastward.

CHAPTER IX

Monday, February 11, 1861, dawned dark, dank and drizzly. It was a day of sorrow in Springfield. Lincoln was leaving for Washington. Gathered at the station of the Great Western railway were more than a thousand of the friends and neighbors to wish him God speed. But one was missing. Billy Herndon, law partner, was a proud man who did not care to shed tears in public. There was, however, a bit of color to the scene, for there, acting the part of a master of ceremonies, was Colonel Ward Hill Lamon, resplendent in his new uniform, flanked by two of the three army officers who had been sent by General Winfield Scott as a guard of honor, and Colonel Elmer Ellsworth of the Chicago zouaves.

It had been intended that Mrs Lincoln and the three boys would leave on the special train but at the last moment it was decided that they take a later train and join the party in Indianapolis. This was done and throughout the trip she was to act as valet extraordinary and see that Abraham was presentable at each of the stops. The three boys, Robert, William and Thomas, were to derive much amusement

during the trip by covertly watching Judge Davis—weight now 25 stone—inflated almost to the bursting point by his own self-importance—whose pounds of flesh shook in unison with the bumping of the car as it traveled over the primitive roadbed. Norman B. Judd of Chicago also was in the party, as was John Hay, afterward the bard who told of the glories of Pike county, and proved his worth as ambassador to Great Britain and as Secretary of State, and John G. Nicolay, who lived to be a recognized authority on Lincolniana. There were others in the party, too, but they were not needed. Hill Lamon was present to lead the singing, Judd was ready to give advice as to the proper procedure at each stop, and after Indianapolis, Col. E. V. Sumner, pompous and vain, who believed his detail from General Scott to accompany the president-elect gave him the authority of a tsar, was prepared to resist all invaders. There, too, was Davis, prone to doze off as fat men will, who was ready to take the helm out of Lincoln's hands and steer the Ship of State if he was called upon.

He wasn't.

Lincoln was on the rear platform of the train. He raised his hand for silence. There stood his friends in the drizzle, with heads bared, while he bade them good bye. Eight o'clock in the morning and the bell clanged on the funny little engine with its brave smokestack, and the special train of two cars—one for the party and one for the baggage—steamed into the Eastern fog.

There stood Lincoln alone, "with the saddest face I ever saw," as the train became a speck in the distance.

It was a great adventure. No longer was it a united country for in seven of the states of the Southland strange flags were floating in the breezes, men were to be seen overhauling rifles of grandfather's day and proud Southern dames, whose boast it had been that their dainty fingers never had been soiled by manual labor, could be found with needle and thread sewing buttons of brass and silver on garments of gray of a military cut. In all of South Carolina, Alabama, Florida. Mississippi, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas but one National emblem might be found flaunting defiance to the secession hosts, and this was on a standard over Fort Sumpter in Charleston harbor, where Major Robert Anderson, who had administered the oath to Abe Lincoln when he appeared as captain of the Clary Grove boys to campaign against Black Hawk and his Sacs in '32, was in charge of a small garrison. That it was an uprising of size he realized for the public prints of that morning had told of the formal organization of the Confederate States of America at Montgomery, Alabama, two days before.

There also were spots in the North that were calculated to give him worry. Even in his own beloved Illinois the people were of two minds and from many of the towns came rumors of blows that had been struck in defense of opinion. Neighbors had become estranged while debating the right of a state to leave the Union. In the section known as "Egypt" there was open and avowed sympathy for the Southern cause. From New York came murmurings of unrest and the reports that came from Maryland caused dire forebodings. "A house

divided against itself cannot stand." On every side rumblings of discord, discontent, disharmony and open rupture. There was reason that he left Springfield "with the saddest face I ever saw."

In a journey of almost two weeks there were scheduled stops at eleven cities where he was to make formal addresses, besides many other pauses where he greeted the people. Always when needed the Cavalier was to be found at the side of his friend. Already he had taken upon his broad shoulders the duties of bodyguard that soon he was to assume under the title of Marshal of the District of Columbia. He was ever faithful at Indianapolis; at Cincinnati, where Lincoln on the 12th celebrated his fifty-second birthday; at Columbus, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Buffalo, where Millard Fillmore, who was chosen to his first elective office on an anti-Masonic ticket, presided; at Albany, where he learned that Jefferson Davis, an old companion in arms in the Black Hawk war, had been inaugurated as president of the newly-Confederated States; at New York, where a carefully-planned boycott had cast a chill; at Trenton, where he referred to the impression on his youthful mind when he read the story of Washington's crossing the Delaware that fateful Christmas night. Then on to Philadelphia, where on the twenty-second—Washington's birthday—he hoisted over Independence hall the new official flag, whose thirty-fourth star marked the admission of Kansas as a state. Then Harrisburg, where comedy and drama intermingled. Before leaving Springfield Lincoln had completed his inaugural address, which he took to the *Journal* office, and under pledge of secrecy, it was set in type and copies were printed that he might submit to friends before delivery. This address he carried in a satchel, which was mislaid in that city. Lincoln was worried—alarmed—angry. With Lamon he began searching and found a bag which looked all right and which his key fitted, but on being opened was found to contain a soiled shirt, some paper collars, a deck of cards and a bottle partly filled with whisky. "I never saw Mr. Lincoln more angry than on this occasion," related the Cavalier, "but the liquor was of exceeding quality. I returned the shirt." Later the missing satchel was found and it reminded the president-elect of a story about an old fellow down Charleston way.

CHAPTER X

The drama, of which the thrilling climax was reached in Harrisburg, really began when the Lincoln party stopped in Cincinnati, where Norman B. Judd received a letter from Allan Pinkerton, dated at Baltimore. The latter was an old friend of the President-elect and for ten years had been conducting a detective agency in Chicago. In January the detective had been engaged by S. M. Felton, president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore railroad, to investigate rumors that secessionists had in mind the destruction of certain parts of the road in order to cut communication between Washington and the North. Pinkerton went East, accompanied by seven men and two women operatives. He established his headquarters at Baltimore and soon became convinced that there was a conspiracy to assassinate the