



## Lincoln the Lawyer

By Brian R. Dirck



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This fascinating history explores Abraham Lincoln's legal career, investigating the origins of his desire to practice law, his legal education, his partnerships with John Stuart, Stephen Logan, and William Herndon, and the maturation of his far-flung practice in the 1840s and 1850s. Brian Dirck also examines Lincoln's clientele, how he charged his clients, and how he addressed judge and jury, as well as his views on legal ethics and the supposition that he never defended a client he knew to be guilty.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This meticulous study of Lincoln leaves aside his well-covered presidency to spotlight his rather pedestrian career as an Illinois lawyer. Lincoln spent roughly 25 years practicing law, and most studies of this period cast it in terms of his later accomplishments: "admirers have done what they can to inject a little excitement into his legal life." Using the recently completed Lincoln Legal Papers Project, fourteen years of "unearthing every available primary source on Lincoln's law practice," history professor and author Dirck (Lincoln and Davis) applies the corrections, unearthing a more mundane, and more human, Lincoln. The vast majority of his nearly 4,000 cases were run-of-the-mill debt litigation, fairly standard for the growing credit economy. And although he had a few high-profile cases (murders, railroad lawsuits), Dirck's technique is to show more about Lincoln through everyday details—the masculine squalor of his Springfield office, the rough-and-tumble camaraderie of the circuit courts, and the quiet exactitude of his paperwork—than more sensational (and largely apocryphal) stories. Historians, legal scholars and practicing lawyers will find a sophisticated, thoughtful treatment of Lincoln and 19th century law practice, but Dirck's command of legal theory and straightforward prose make this book appropriate even for those without prior knowledge of the law or Lincoln's life.

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From [Booklist](#)

From the several thousand cases Abraham Lincoln litigated at the bar, historian Dirck delineates the categories of Lincoln's practice. He does so as a means of modulating the adulation for Lincoln-the-lawyer that he detects in memoirists and early biographers. Although a few of Lincoln's cases wend their way into modern biographies, most do not, and for good reason: they were dreary instances of debt. On the cash-poor frontier of 1830s Illinois, promissory notes proliferated. Consequently, overextensions, with which Lincoln was personally familiar as a formerly indebted storeowner, were chronic on the legal landscape. With the advent of railroads, Lincoln diversified into defending them against liability, his chief area of historical legal significance, but credit and debt were his daily grind. Dirck also relates the custom of "riding the circuit" by way of developing the regard in which Lincoln was held by his colleagues: an amiable but remote companion, an able speaker in the courtroom. Dirck's is a readably nontechnical study, searchable for hints of the presidential persona in that of the practicing lawyer. *Gilbert Taylor*  
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Review

"There is nothing in or out of print that comes close to the originality, breadth, and documentation of this welcome study of Lincoln's legal career."

--**Cullom Davis**, former director, *Lincoln Legal Papers*

"Brian Dirck's excellent *Lincoln the Lawyer* complements and adds to the much needed resurgent study of Abraham Lincoln's legal skills and helps us understand why Lincoln became the lawyer in the White House."--Frank J. Williams, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court and founding Chair of The Lincoln Forum

"Dirck sheds light on how the original Great Commoner would become one of America's greatest lawyers in the presidential mansion. Readable and insightful, this volume deserves a place on every library shelf."--*Journal of American History*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Allison Stiffler:**

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children till adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for us. The book Lincoln the Lawyer has been making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The e-book Lincoln the Lawyer is not only giving you more new information but also being your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship with all the book Lincoln the Lawyer. You never truly feel lose out for everything if you read some books.

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