

*Informant Testimony Reported in Jesse W. Weik's
The Real Lincoln (1922)*

The following entries report the text of one letter and the substance of several interviews conducted by JWW with Lincoln informants prior to the publication of *Herndon's Lincoln* (1889). The letter and Weik's notes for these interviews, if any, have not been located, and the texts are given as they appear in the narrative of *The Real Lincoln*.

622. *Samuel H. Treat (JWW interview)*

[1883]

In the winter of 1883 I spent a good portion of one afternoon with a gentleman who was present and heard Lincoln's first oral argument before the Supreme Court of Illinois. It was Samuel H. Treat, who had himself been on the Supreme bench and at the time of my visit was serving as Judge of the United States District Court. His recollection of the political campaign of 1846, when Lincoln defeated the redoubtable Peter Cartwright for Congress, was to me an especially interesting chapter. He said he admired Lincoln and he entertained me with several vivid and characteristic episodes in which the latter figured. I tried to draw out his opinion of Mrs. Lincoln, but with poor success, for, beyond the simple admission that he was acquainted with her coupled with the names of three or four other persons who, he claimed, could adequately describe her "if they dared to," he declined to commit himself.

On the afternoon just mentioned when I visited him Judge Treat told me, among other things, that one morning Lincoln came to his office and joined him in a game of chess. The two were enthusiastic chess-players and when the opportunity offered indulged in the game. On the occasion named they were soon deeply absorbed, nor did they realize how near it was to the noon hour until one of Lincoln's boys came running with a message from his mother announcing dinner at the Lincoln home, a few steps away. Lincoln promised to come at once and the boy left; but the game was not entirely out; yet so near the end the players, confident that they would finish in a few moments, lingered a while. Meanwhile almost a half an hour had passed. Presently the boy returned with a second and more