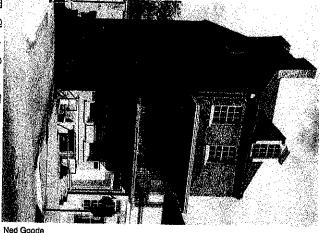
## COLLECTION HIGHLIGHT: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE CHESTER COUNTY TIMES



contributed to Lincoln's election as president that Abraham Lincoln to many Pennsylvanians and An 1860 article in the newspaper introduced building at 28 West Market Street in West Chester The Chester County Times

in CCHS' collection tell the story. presidential election of 1860. Documents County figured in Lincoln's success in the familiar is the story of how Chester achievement in American history. Less one of the great stories of personal is a story familiar to every American and Abraham Lincoln's life and presidency

egy was successful: Lincoln won the tive, candidate in the hope that he would Chase, and Pennsylvania's Simon
Cameron had strong support. Seward
appeared to be the front-runner. Lincoln Republican nomination on the third could not win the nomination. The stratbe an acceptable second choice if.Seward trayed him as a moderate, even conservalarge-scale publicity campaign that porto Lincoln. Lincoln's backers conducted a required turning support from Cameron would be a key state in the win, but this supporters knew that Pennsylvania such as William H. Seward, of his party. Better known candidates he was not tavored to win the nomination midwest than in the populous east, and vention met in Chicago in May 1860, Lincoln was more widely known in the When the Republican nominating con-Salmon P.

Chester County Times, a weekly newspaper published in the brick building at 14 E. on the life of Lincoln appeared in the played a critical role in introducing incoln to the people of Pennsylvania. On ebruary 11, 1860, a two-column article Joseph J. Lewis of Chester County

> information. delegates to the Republican convention answer to Fell's request for background information about Lincoln to appear in Although unsigned, it was written by Lewis and was the first biographical Lincoln wrote to Jesse W. Fell in 1859 in print. Lewis' article was based on a letter (now 28 W.) Market St., West Chester. Lewis and Fell were both

sion began to form, that by judicious efforts, he could be made the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1860." tion to the Senate. At length ... an imprescome of this discussion ... than his elecing at first that anything further would satisfy so laudable a curiosity, not thinkapplied to for information in reference to the slavery question ... I was frequently as the whole country was then agitated by to visit the Middle and Eastern States and during the discussions between Senator Douglas and Mr. Lincoln, I had occasion role in the campaign: "In the fall of 1858, correspondence with his old friends back Chester County and maintained an active ington, Illinois, lawyer, was a native of and avid Lincoln supporters.

Jesse W. Fell, then a prominent Bloom-Lincoln. I did what little I could to In 1872 he reminisced about his

an opponent of slavery, with no radical asked him to give details that could be used to build Lincoln's image as a man of popular origin, of acknowledged ability. ideas to offend voters much about Lincoln's background and He went on to say that he didn't know this state, but elsewhere and thus help in manufacturing sentiment in your favor." well-written newspaper article, telling the people who you are, and what you have done, that it may be circulated not only in his idea to "get up a well-considered, Later that year Fell told Lincoln about

other marks or brands recollected. with coarse black hair, and grey eyes, no weighing on the average, one hundred any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, and eighty pounds, dark complexion, six feet, four inches, nearly, lean in flesh, education, his legal career, and ended with a description of his appearance: "If told of Lincoln's simple life and country to Kentucky where they settled. The letter Indians. From Virginia the family moved to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylva-nia" about 1781 and was killed there by to relate how his paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, "who was quaker, went in Hardin County, Kentucky." It went on account began, "I was born Feb. 12, 1809, three-page letter. His straightforward Lincoln answered Fell's request with a

own account and forwarded it to his pay," made some additions to Lincoln's Fell, believing that the letter would

> home," "farmer," "flatboat in Ohio,"
> "hard work, axe, plow, rifle," "friend of
> Clay 1844," "1846 to cong," "1858 debate
> between Dug. [Douglas] & L.," and
> "Honest Old Abe." birthday. Lewis' notes list the points he wanted to emphasize: "his person — hi it to the Times to coincide with Lincoln's friend Joseph J. Lewis, an influential Lewis rewrote the account and submitted lawyer and politician in Chester County.

other states. widely distributed to influential editors in same day. Copies of the article were Greeley's influential New York Tribune the taking over my editorial practically entire." It was printed in Horace can candidate, they picked up Lewis' article. On May 19, the day after Lincoln's nomination, Lewis told Fell, "The Chicago papers have paid me the compliment of as political biographers and newspapers Lincoln supplied in his letter into a potent publicity device. Throughout the country, looked for information about the Republi-Lewis turned the information that

up from the South to dissolve the Union make short work of these men who come say that "if Old Abe, as they all call him, should chance to get elected President another West Chester newspaper, The Village Record, announced: THE LINCOLNS IN CHESTER COUNTY RELATED TO 'OLD ABE' and went on to and has the courage and pluck of his Chester County name-sake, he would support, and the point was not lost on Chester County readers. On June 5, his Pennsylvania ancestors would win Lewis hoped that Lincoln's mention of , 1860,

resigned to return to West Chester. Lewis held the post until 1865 when he administer the new federal income tax. to Lewis and, in March 1863, appointed him commissioner of internal revenue to President Lincoln was aware of his debt

this fascinating story. One of Joseph J. Lewis' original Chester County Times articles along with his handwritten notes, a copy of Lincoln's letter to Jesse Fell, and Fell's 1872 account of the letter were given to the Society so that the details told here Adlai E. Stevenson Democratic great-grandsons was the 1952 and 1956 Jesse Fell. Congress in 1947 by a great-grandson of original letter was given to the Library of tions of Chester Countians, Lincoln's would be preserved for future genera-CCHS has several documents that tell Incidentally, party candidate for president another of Fell's

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