

**THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF  
HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
BEING INVITED TO GIVE AN  
ADDRESS IN COOPER INSTITUTE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649191406

The authentic account of Hon. Abraham Lincoln being invited to give an address in Cooper institute by James A. Briggs & Abraham Lincoln

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JAMES A. BRIGGS & ABRAHAM LINCOLN**

**THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF  
HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
BEING INVITED TO GIVE AN  
ADDRESS IN COOPER INSTITUTE**



# **An Authentic Account**

OF

## **Hon. Abraham Lincoln**

Being Invited to give an Address in  
Cooper Institute, N. Y.

February 27, 1860

Together with Mr. Bryant's Introduction and  
Mr. Lincoln's Speech

PRIVATELY PRINTED  
PUTNAM, CONN.  
1915

# NARRATIVE

OF

JAMES A. BRIGGS, Esq.

(From The New York Evening Post, August 16, 1867)

*To the Editor of The Evening Post:*

In October, 1859, Messrs. Joseph H. Richards, J. M. Pettingill, and S. W. Tubbs called on me at the office of the Ohio State Agency, 25 William Street, and requested me to write to the Hon. Thomas Corwin of Ohio, and the Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, and invite them to lecture in a course of lectures these young gentlemen proposed for the winter in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn.

I wrote the letters as requested, and offered as compensation for each lecture, as I was authorized, the sum of \$200. The proposition to lecture was accepted by Messrs. Corwin and Lincoln. Mr. Corwin delivered his lecture in Plymouth Church, as he was on his way to Washington to attend Congress; Mr. Lincoln could not lecture until late in the season, and the proposition was agreed to by the gentlemen named, and accepted by Mr. Lincoln, as the following letter will show:

*Narrative of James A. Briggs, Esq.*

Danville, Illinois, November 13, 1859.

“JAMES A. BRIGGS, Esq.

“DEAR SIR: Yours of the 1st inst., closing with my proposition for compromise, was duly received. I will be on hand, and in due time will notify you of the exact day. I believe, after all, I shall make a political speech of it. You have no objection?”

“I would like to know in advance, whether I am also to speak in New York.

“Very, very glad your election went right.

“Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

“P. S.—I am here at court, but my address is still at Springfield, Ill.”

In due time Mr. Lincoln wrote me that he would deliver the lecture, a political one, on the evening of the 27th of February, 1860. This was rather late in the season for a lecture, and the young gentlemen who were responsible were doubtful about its success, as the expenses were large. It was stipulated that the lecture was to be in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn; I requested and urged that the lecture should be delivered at the Cooper Institute. They were fearful it would not pay expenses—\$350. I thought it would.

In order to relieve Messrs. Richards, Pettingill, and Tubbs of all responsibility, I called upon some of the officers of “The Young Men’s Republican Union,” and proposed that they should take Mr. Lincoln, and that the lecture should be delivered under their auspices. They respectfully declined.

I next called upon Mr. Simeon Draper, then president of “The Draper Republican Union Club of New York,” and proposed to him that his “Union” take Mr. Lincoln and the lecture, and assume the responsibility of the expenses. Mr. Draper and his friends

*Narrative of James A. Briggs, Esq.*

declined, and Mr. Lincoln was left on the hands of "the original Jacobs."

After considerable discussion, it was agreed on the part of the young gentlemen that the lecture should be delivered in the Cooper Institute, if I would agree to share one-fourth of the expenses, if the sale of the tickets (25 cents) for the lecture did not meet the outlay. To this I assented, and the lecture was advertised to be delivered in the Cooper Institute, on the evening of the 27th of February.

Mr. Lincoln read the notice of the lecture in the papers, and, without any knowledge of the arrangement, was somewhat surprised to learn that he was first to make his appearance before a New York audience, instead of a Plymouth Church audience. A notice of the proposed lecture appeared in the New York papers, and the *Times* spoke of him "as a lawyer who had some local reputation in Illinois."

At my personal solicitation MR. WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT presided as chairman of the meeting, and introduced Mr. Lincoln for the first time to a New York audience.

The lecture was a wonderful success; it has become a part of the history of the country. Its remarkable ability was everywhere acknowledged, and after the 27th of February the name of Mr. Lincoln was a familiar one to all the people of the East. After Mr. Lincoln closed his lecture, Mr. David Dudley Field, Mr. James W. Nye, Mr. Horace Greeley, and myself were called out by the audience and made short speeches. I remember of saying then, "One of three gentlemen will be our standard-bearer in the presidential contest of this year: the distinguished Senator of New York, Mr. Seward; the late able and accomplished Governor of Ohio, Mr. Chase; or the 'Unknown Knight' who entered the political lists against the Bois Guilbert of Democracy on the prairies of Illinois in



*Narrative of James A. Briggs, Esq.*

1858, and unhorsed him—Abraham Lincoln.” Some friends joked me after the meeting as not being a “good prophet.” The lecture was over—all the expenses were paid, and I was handed by the gentlemen interested the sum of \$4.25 as my share of the profits, as they would have called on me if there had been a deficiency in the receipts to meet the expenses.

Immediately after the lecture, Mr. Lincoln went to Exeter, N. H., to visit his son Robert, then at school there, and I sent him a check for \$200. Mr. Tubbs informed me a few weeks ago that after the check was paid at the Park Bank he tore it up; but that he would give \$200 for the check if it could be restored with the endorsement of “A. Lincoln,” as it was made payable to the order of Mr. Lincoln.

After the return of Mr. Lincoln to New York from the East, where he had made several speeches, he said to me, “I have seen what all the New York papers said about that thing of mine in the Cooper Institute, with the exception of the *New York Evening Post*, and I would like to know what Mr. Bryant thought of it;” and he then added, “It is worth a visit from Springfield, Illinois, to New York to make the acquaintance of such a man as WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.” At Mr. Lincoln’s request, I sent him a copy of the *Evening Post* with a notice of his lecture.

On returning from Mr. Beecher’s Church, on Sunday, in company with Mr. Lincoln, as we were passing the post-office, I remarked to him, “Mr. Lincoln, I wish you would take particular notice of what a dark and dismal place we have here for a post-office, and I do it for this reason: I think your chance for being the next President is equal to that of any man in the country. When you are President will you recommend an appropriation of a million of dollars for a suitable location for a post-office in this city?” With a signifi-

*Narrative of James A. Briggs, Esq.*

cant gesture Mr. Lincoln remarked, "I will make a note of that."

On going up Broadway with Mr. Lincoln in the evening, from the Astor House, to hear the Rev. Dr. E. H. Chapin, he said to me, "When I was East several gentlemen made about the same remarks to me that you did to-day about the Presidency; they thought my chances were about equal to the best."

JAMES A. BRIGGS.

P. S.—The writers of Mr. Lincoln's Biography have things considerably mixed about Mr. Lincoln going to the Five Points Mission School, at the Five Points, in New York, that he found his way there alone, etc., etc. Mr. Lincoln went there in the afternoon with his old friend, Hiram Barney, Esq., and after Mr. B. had informed Mr. Barlow, the Superintendent, who the stranger with him was, Mr. Barlow requested Mr. Lincoln to speak to the children, which he did. I met Mr. Lincoln at Mr. Barney's at tea, just after this pleasant, and to him strange, visit at the Five Points Mission School.

J. A. B.

# INTRODUCTION

BY

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

THE EMINENT POET

---

(From The New York Tribune, February 28, 1860)

Mr. Bryant on taking the chair said:

“My friends, it is a grateful office that I perform in introducing to you at this time an eminent citizen of the West, whom you know, or whom you have known hitherto only by fame, but who has consented to address a New York assemblage this evening. The Great West, my friends, is a potent auxiliary in the battle we are fighting for Freedom against Slavery; in behalf of civilization against barbarism; for the occupation of some of the finest regions of our continent, on which the settlers are now building their cabins. I see a higher and a wiser agency than that of man in the causes that have filled with a hardy population the vast and fertile region which forms the western parts of the valley of the Mississippi, a race of men who are not ashamed to till their acres with their own hands, and who would be ashamed to subsist by the labor of the slave. (Cheers). These children of the West, my friends, form a living bulwark against the advances of Slavery, and from them is recruited the vanguard of the armies of Liberty. (Applause). One of them will appear before you this