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The Lincoln Legal Papers

A Documentary History of the Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, 1836-1861

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July 7, 1997

Miss Kathryn Owen
423 East Broadway
Winchester, KY 40391

Dear Miss Owen:

Several months ago my friends Professor and Mrs. Richard Current told me of a conversation with you. Evidently you are either part of the Cullom clan or have done genealogical research on the Culloms. In any event, I wanted to contact you about our mutual interests and possible kinship.

I am a professional historian, but I must confess not an active genealogist. My paternal grandmother Julia Mabel Cullom, was a niece of Shelby M. Cullom. Naturally, I have been interested in that side of the family and over the years have corresponded with a few people who had done genealogical work on their respective branches.

I therefore am writing to introduce myself and report that I would be interested in any general information you may have.

Sincerely,



Cullom Davis
Director and Senior Editor

CD/cm



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Illinois Historic

Preservation Agency

1 Old State Capitol Plaza • Springfield, IL 62701-1507
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Wayne County Native Became Governor Of Illinois In 1876

Editor's Note: Nora Hickman of Sunset Beach, North Carolina, was born and reared in Wayne County, Kentucky, and her homeplace remains very close to her heart. She continues to research many families of that area and is a member of the DAR, Colonial Dames 17th Century, and 1812 Society. She has submitted the following article concerning Shelby Moore Cullom, who was born in Wayne County in 1829 and was elected governor of the state of Illinois in 1876.

By Nora Hickam - 2003

For many years I have researched the Dick Family of Wayne County, Kentucky. John R. Dick was the son of John Dick, Jr., and Elizabeth Chrisman, and he married Sarah Rogers (daughter of Revolutionary War soldier, George Rogers) in Wayne County in 1836, and together they had 11 children.

One of these children was Rhoda Jane Dick, who married John Sidney Cullom Gregory. Cullom was in the Civil War, and in his pension papers he writes to correct the spelling of his name "Cullom." In fact, he was quite emphatic about it. I just had to know why he seemed that way.

I learned that his mother was Harriet Caroline Cullom, who married Fleming Gregory. Her parents were Francis Tillmon Cullom and Mary McConkey. Never one to let it go at that, I just had to find out more on this Cullom family. It was a great surprise in what I found.

Francis Cullom (in the War of 1812) and his brother, William, were sons of Francis Cullom, Sr. William had a son, Richard Northcraft Cullom, who married Betsy Coffey in Wayne County, on March 16, 1819. I believe they had nine children.

One of these nine children was a son, Shelby Moore Cullom, who was born in Wayne County on November 22, 1829. His family moved to Tazewell, Illinois, in 1830. He attended regular schools, then Rock River Seminary in Morris for two years. He became ill, and after recovering he decided to go to Springfield to study law with Abraham Lincoln.

In 1853 he entered the law office of Stuart and Edwards. In 1854 he became ill once again and was told to give up his pursuit of law. He returned to the farm where he recovered. In 1855 he was admitted to the bar and was elected city attorney. In 1856 he was one of the presidential electors on the Whig ticket and was elected to the legislature. He was re-elected in 1860 on the Republican ticket and was chosen speaker of the house. In 1862 he ran for the state senate but lost. That same year he was appointed by President Lincoln as a member of the War of Claims in Cairo, Illinois. In 1864

he was elected to Congress being re-elected in 1866 and 1868.

He was a delegate to the NRC of 1872, and he placed Grant in nomination for the presidency. That year he was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives, and in 1874 he was chosen speaker for a second time. He was the unanimous choice in 1875.

In 1876 he was elected governor of the state of Illinois and was reelected in 1880. In 1883 he was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served until 1913. Of his many duties he investigated the condition of the Hawaiian Islands, helped create the Interstate Commerce Commission, and was Chairman of Foreign Affairs. At the time he served in the senate there had not been any other man in history who served the senate so frequently. He made the resolution that provided for the Lincoln Memorial and supervised as the commissioner for its construction. He was also regent for the Smithsonian Institute. He was senior member of Cullom, Scholes, and Mather, and president of the State National Bank.

His uncle, Alvan Cullom, born in Wayne County, Kentucky, in 1797, was a representative from Tennessee. Another uncle, William Cullom, born in Wayne County in 1810, was also a representative from Tennessee. Both of them served in other areas of government.

Edward Cullom was the first judge in Wayne County. I believe this Edward, from War of 1812, was an uncle to Richard Cullom. Edward N. Cullom was a delegate to the Illinois Constitution Convention in 1818. So, it really appears the Cullom family was intellectual, practical, solid, gifted, and served their country well.

Shelby Moore Cullom married twice, first to Hannah Fisher and had Ella; Catherine; and a baby, who died in 1861. After Hannah's death he married Julia Fisher, and they had two children, Richard and Elizabeth.

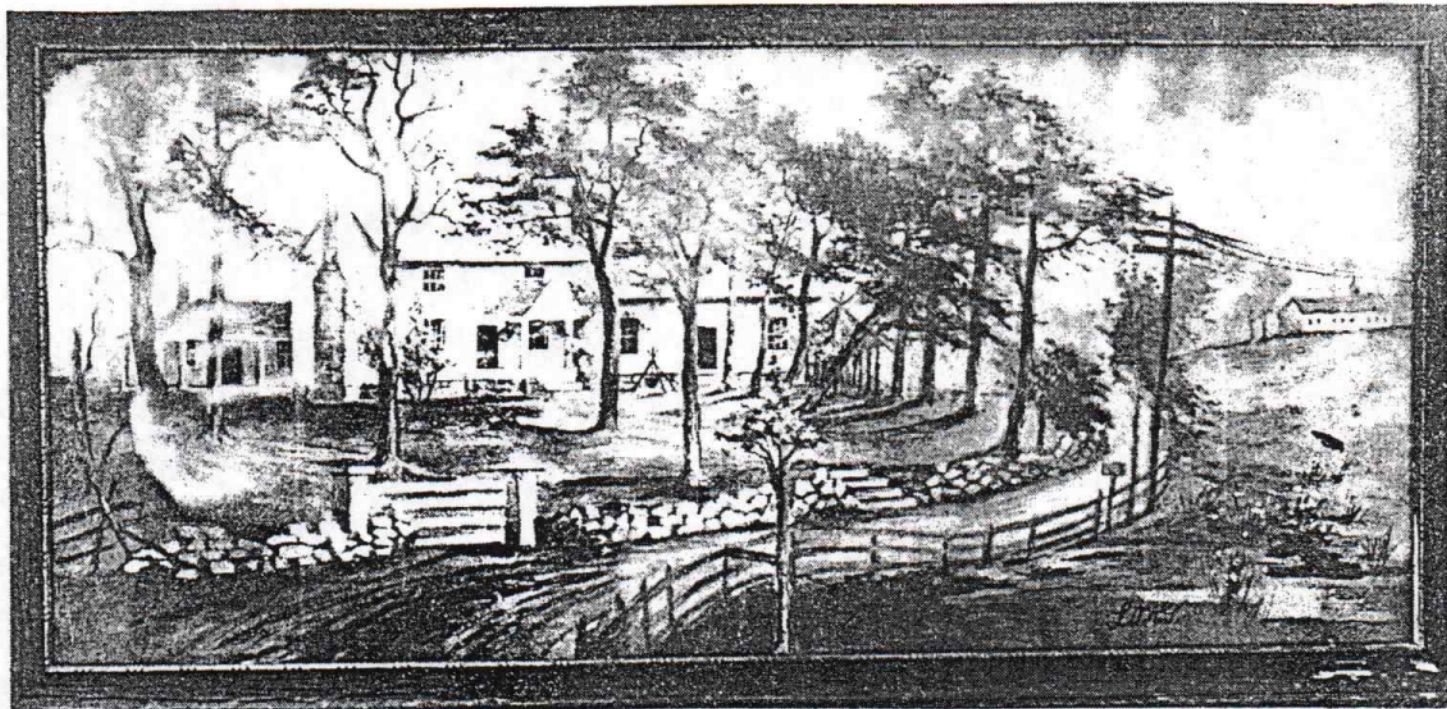
Shelby was admired so much that the well-deserved title "Mr. Republican" was given to him. He was in Washington, D.C., when he died on January 28, 1914. His body was taken to Springfield, Illinois, and is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery near his dear friend, President Lincoln. His large monument states that he was born in Wayne County, Kentucky.

A giant sandstone boulder towers over the Elk Ridge area of Wayne County. Shelby Cullom was born near this pinnacle, and today that boulder is called "Cullom Rock," a very fitting name for a man who was a rock in his life's work for the United States.

Nora Hickam, 107 Planter's Ridge Drive, Sunset Beach, NC 28468; 910/575-9987; BigSinking@aol.com, shares this article with our readers.



Shelby Moore Cullom
Governor of Illinois 1876-1884
(Library of Congress photo.)



Comparison

A PAINTING, above, in the possession of Miss Kathryn Owen, whose ancestors built the house, shows the dwelling as it was many years ago, including a doorway in the 1812 addition to the side of the original 1792 cabin. A photograph of the house as it is today, shows that doorway as a window and a brick chimney replacing the stone one at left.



Home of Francis Cullom, Sr.
1792-1812