Beginning with Chapter Sixteen, "Beyond the Sabine," the author adopts a bolder, more sweeping style. With splashing strokes, he hurries the frontier waves across the plains and prairies over the Rockies into the Oregon country and into the Spanish Southwest. Chapters dealing with the "Santa Fé Trail," "Men Against the Mountains," "The Frontier in Oregon," and "The Long Arm of Manifest Destiny" recapture the actual happenings in all their naked, stark tragedy. "The Indians’ Last Stand" and "Rounding Out a Continent" conclude the text.

Few authors—if any—have made use of such a vast amount of material. A glance at Clark’s list of references reveals the extent of the collection of data dealing with Frontier History that have been assembled over the last half century. Textbooks, reference books, monographs, diaries, journals, memoirs, legal documents, personal correspondence, biographies and autobiographies, have appeared in such profusion that it is no longer possible for one individual to examine all of them. And yet, one has the feeling that Professor Clark, through a lifetime of research, has examined and used the most important of these collections. His illustrations will add much to the students’ interest. If this reviewer were still teaching a course in “The History of the American Frontier” he would adopt this text.

Professor Emeritus in History
University of Pittsburgh

John W. Oliver


Back in 1926, the Lincoln Centennial Association made a pioneer effort to establish the events of Abraham Lincoln’s life day by day by publishing a slim pamphlet entitled Lincoln in the Year 1858. Six other pamphlets setting forth in chronological order the events of Lincoln’s life in the eighteen-fifties appeared subsequently at regular intervals: 1859 and 1860 in 1927, and 1854 in 1928, 1855 in 1929, 1856 and 1857 in 1930. These pamphlets represented a cooperative effort on the part of Lincoln scholars. In 1933, Paul
M. Angle of the Illinois Historical Society brought them together in one volume, and during the next eight years other Lincoln experts carried the chronology back to Lincoln's birth in three more volumes.

With the opening of the important manuscript collection of Robert Todd Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress in 1947 and the publication in 1953 of the Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln under the editorship of Roy P. Basler, new material came to light which made it possible to diminish the number of blank entries in the Lincoln chronology. Revising and reprinting the chronology to take these findings into account was too large an undertaking for the original Lincoln Centennial Association. However, the establishment by Congress of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission in 1957 made it possible for this to happen in the form of the work under review. In compiling this material, Editor-in-Chief Miers, author of two books on the Civil War, had the assistance of the Lincoln scholar, William E. Baringer. Based as it is in part on recent investigation in Springfield newspapers, court files, and other sources not available in the nineteen-thirties, this chronology contains roughly twice as much material as appeared in the original.

Librarians and Lincoln fans will find much that will prove grist to their mills in these first two volumes of the chronology. The material on Lincoln's part in the Black Hawk War has been completely revised and considerably extended, and there is much new information about Lincoln's law practice. Probably the general reader will prefer skimming these volumes to reading them from cover to cover, since much of their contents is repetitive.

One of the more interesting chapters of Lincoln's career as a prairie lawyer as it unfolds in this chronology has to do with his experiences as a railroad lawyer in general and as counsel for the Illinois Central Railroad in particular. Lincoln was not a corporation lawyer in the sense of specializing in corporate practice. He handled, in fact, a wide range of cases, civil and criminal, including murder, rape, forgery, larceny, divorce, perjury, slander, and trespass. In a runaway slave case he represented the slave's Kentucky master and lost both case and retainer when his disgruntled client left for Kentucky immediately after the trial. First employed by the Illinois Central as a lobbyist to help it obtain its charter from the Illinois legislature, Lincoln received from it the largest fee
($5,000) that he ever earned. Some of the proceeds went into a pleasure trip to Niagara Falls on which Lincoln took his wife during the year of the Dred Scott Decision.

Apparently Lincoln first entered Pennsylvania when he went east to serve one term (1847-9) as a Whig congressman. From then on evidences of Pennsylvania influence in Lincoln's life and of Lincoln's interest in Pennsylvania politics multiply. One reads of personal contacts with James Buchanan (then Polk's Secretary of State), Simon Cameron, David Wilmot, and Jasper E. Brady, a Pittsburgh lawyer, whom Lincoln had met in Washington in his congressional days and to whom Lincoln wrote in 1860, saying that "your kind remembrance of me gratifies me, as well as the flattering prospect which you give me of the old 'Key State'." For December 22, 1860 there is a piquant entry, quoting Lincoln as exclaiming, on the basis of a rumor that President Buchanan had instructed Major Anderson to surrender Fort Sumter if attacked, "If that is true they ought to hang him!"

This chronology is remarkably free of the small mistakes that furrow editorial brows. Some question arises as to Lincoln's whereabouts during the sessions of the Republican National Convention that met at LaFayette Hall in Pittsburgh, February 22-24, 1856. According to the chronology, Lincoln attended a dinner meeting at Decatur, Illinois, on the 22nd, at which he spoke briefly in response to a toast. In the Pittsburgh Gazette of February 22, 1856, however, Lincoln is listed as a member of the Illinois delegation to the Convention which arrived in Pittsburgh the day before. Whether Lincoln really was in Pittsburgh at this time is problematical as there is no other reference in contemporary sources to his being present at the 1856 Republican convention in Pittsburgh.

It is too much to expect that this represents the final word on the chronological events of Lincoln's life. Almost certainly continuing research, whetted by the Civil War Centennial which is almost upon us, will supply information about Lincoln activities on some of the blank days in this chronology. Nevertheless, the editors and the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission are to be congratulated on a task well done. It is to be hoped that in the third volume still to appear there will be sufficient space to provide a somewhat greater number of explanatory notes than were afforded in the volumes already published.

Chatham College, Pittsburgh

J. Cutler Andrews