

# Town of Lincoln

The Town of Lincoln, founded in 1829, was named for an ambitious and talented young lawyer who was known for his character, scholarly pursuits, oration skills, and strong opposition to slavery. If the reader believes that our town was named for the 16th president, consider the fact that Abraham did not become president until 1861. President Lincoln was, however, a descendent of the same Lincoln family of Massachusetts that earlier had brought forth Enoch, born December 28, 1788. The Lincoln name was already gaining fame due to Enoch's father, General Levi Lincoln, and brother, Levi, Jr., both having become governors of their home state.

Enoch began attending Harvard in 1806, was admitted to the bar in 1811, and moved to Maine shortly thereafter. He became Maine's first poet when his 2000 line poem, "The Village" was published in 1816. The descriptive poem exemplifies his appreciation of nature and exhibits Enoch's strong sentiments suggestive of social reforms. His verses included commentary on diverse topics such as mountains, animals, American Indians, lumbering, freedom, women, education, law, intemperance, and political party spirit. His literary attainments earned him an honorary Master of Arts degree from Bowdoin College in 1821.

From 1819 until 1826, Enoch lived in Paris Hill where he became closely associated with other men who were influential in the early years of Maine's statehood. He served as one of the first representatives to Congress from 1820 until 1827. In 1823, he belonged to a partnership of seven men who purchased Township Number Three, which is now part of our town. Enoch later became a mentor to the young Hannibal Hamlin, and gave him special access to his private library. It was considered to be one of the best in Maine, and Enoch was known to encourage many other youth by generously lending his treasures.

Enoch's suave and entertaining manner made him popular at social gatherings. He had an uncommonly high regard for the education of women yet remained single. He was gentle but firm, occasionally obstinate, and could be roused to anger by any act of aggression toward the poor and humble. His messages were suggestive yet brief, and delivered in good taste, thus making him a frequent public speaker. His childlike faith and inexperience were in contrast to his comprehensive views of society and considerable use of satire.

In 1827, the 37-year-old of "fine, clear eye, pleasant mouth, sanguine complexion, and golden hair" was elected governor of the State of Maine. Although they were one year terms, he was twice more elected, always by an overwhelming majority. During his term, Enoch had influential involvement in three notable matters. Maine's Northeastern Boundary issue was settled, and a location in Augusta was chosen on which to build the new State House. Thirdly, he approved a charter for the Town of Lincoln on January 30, 1829. Though slightly below average in stature, he was highly regarded for his management of practical affairs, devotion to public interests, and sparks of genius.

## Town of Lincoln History

The cornerstone for our new State House was set on July 4th, 1829. Enoch was able to take great pleasure in the ceremony, but never enjoyed its completion. His health failed, and he died on October 8th. He was sincerely mourned and received military honors at his burial, which took place on the new capital's grounds. A granite monument was erected; its simple inscription bears tribute to a unique and complex man.

We would do well to heed a line from his poem: "...learn to love your country and its laws."

Lincoln Memorial Library Sources: Maine: a History, Portland City Guide, Just Maine Folks, Modern Maine, The Maine Book, Sprague's Journal of Maine History, History of Lincoln, Maine.

Compiled by D. Murchison and L. Parlee, 1998.