Beyond the Moon

Abraham Lincoln and the Almanac Trial

Samuel Wheeler, Ph.D.
Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission
The Almanac Trial

People v. William “Duff” Armstrong
The Crime
Neck Yoke
Indictment for Murder
People v. James Norris
Mason County Circuit Court
November 5-7, 1857

Prosecution
Hugh Fullerton (State’s Attorney)

Defense
William Walker (Public Defender)

Key Witnesses
• Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson
• Charles Allen

Verdict
Guilty of Manslaughter
Sentenced to 8 years hard labor
we the jury agree to find the defendant John D. Luthman, the defendant and tory, the daughter of the defendant, guilty, as charged, for conveying, obtaining, and delivering, as manner the accused, the accused, Henry, and as penalty, the accused, guilty, as charged, for conveying, obtaining, and delivering, as manner as manner, and as penalty, eight years' service in the state penitentiary.

John Davis
Jacob W. Williams
J. S. Luthman
Robert Anderson
H. C. Kent
Jacob S. Keas
Eliza S. Keas
W. H. Stack
W. M. Jones
C. W. Jones
E. B. Lane
People v. William “Duff” Armstrong
Cass County Circuit Court
May 7, 1858

Prosecution

Hugh Fullerton (State’s Attorney)

Prosecution’s Witnesses

Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson
Charles Allen

Defense

Caleb Dilworth, William Walker, Abraham Lincoln

Defense’s Witnesses

Dr. Charles Parker
Nelson Watkins
The court instruct the jury:

That if they have any reasonable doubt as to whether Metzger came to his death by the blow on the eye, or by the blow on the back of the head, they are to find the defendant "not guilty" unless they also believe from the evidence beyond reasonable doubt that Armstrong and nominated actors by concert, against Metzger, gave that blow on the back of the head.

That if they believe from the evidence that Homer killed Metzger, they are to acquit Armstrong, unless they also believe beyond reasonable doubt that Armstrong acted in concert with Homer in the killing, or purposed to kill or hurt Metzger.
We the Jury acquit the Defendant from all charges preferred against him in the Indictment.

Milton Logan, Foreman
Creating a Courtroom

The room utilized for the mock trial should be arranged, as closely as possible, to resemble a real courtroom. The diagram below depicts the layout of an actual courtroom. Please consider these when arranging seating, tables, and placement of the participants for the mock trial at your school. The photos on the following pages are examples of courtroom set-up from past Law Day events.

DIAGRAM NUMBER GUIDE
1. Judge
2. Court Clerk
3. Plaintiff
4. Attorney for Plaintiff
5. Attorney for Defendant
6. Defendant
7. Witness
8. Audience
9. Jury
Thrilling Episode in the Life of
“Abe Lincoln.”

As a Western man, I wish space to
give vent to my enthusiasm over the nom-
ination of Hon. Abraham Lincoln for
President of the United States. Mr. Lin-
colin, or “Old Abe,” as his friends familiarly call him, is a self-made man. A
Kentuckian by birth, he emigrated to Ill-
inois in his boyhood, where he earned his
living at the anvil, devoting his leisure
hours to study. Having choose the law
as his future calling, he devoted himself
assiduously to its mastery, contending at
every step with adverse fortune. During
this period of study, he for some time
found a home under the hospitable
roof of one Armstrong, a farmer who
lived in a log house some eight miles
from the village of Petersburg Men-
ard county. Here, clad in home-spun,
with elbows out, and knees covered with
patches, young Lincoln would master his
lessons by the firelight of the cabin, and
then walk to town for the purpose of rec-
itation. This man Armstrong was him-
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