



Stephen C. Abbott  
Manuscript, 1902

Collection 346

## Champaign County Historical Archives

**Compiled by:** Sherrie Bowser, May 2022

**Creator/Corporate Name:** Stephen C. Abbott

**Inclusive Dates:** 1902

**Physical Description:** 1 box, (0.25 linear ft.)

**Language:** English

**Provenance:**

The Stephen C. Abbott manuscript was donated to the Champaign County Historical Archives.

**Access:**

These records are accessible to the public within applicable copyright restrictions and limited to use at the Champaign County Historical Archives of The Urbana Free Library.

**Biographical Note:**

Stephen C. Abbott was born May 25, 1825, in Rockaway, NJ, to Abijah and Elizabeth (Conger) Abbott. One of eleven children, he left home to learn the blacksmith trade when he was 17 years old (1842). After his apprenticeship, he plied his trade up and down the east coast. In November 1849, he learned that gold was discovered in California, and Abbott decided to try his luck in San Francisco. Initially, he was going to travel around Cape Horn, but when his ship was declared unsafe, he settled on the overland route leaving Independence, MO, on April 4, 1850. He spent three years in California engaged in mining, trading, and working as a teamster.

In 1853, he settled in Mahomet, IL, and bought some farmland. He married Mary E. Rea of Mahomet on February 21, 1854. The Abbotts purchased several farm plots over the years until eventually purchasing property in the town of Mahomet, where he opened a blacksmith shop in 1858. Abbott served in the Civil War, company H, 125<sup>th</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry, until he was mustered out in January 1865 due to being severely wounded by a minnie ball to the hip. His injury forced him to be on crutches for several years after the war.

Stephen Abbott was a well-known figure in Mahomet, serving as school treasurer, postmaster, and town supervisor. He was a devout Presbyterian and taught Sunday school during his pioneer days, and even rode the circuit as a preacher after attending Evanston Theological Seminary in the late-1850s. Stephen and Mary had three children Byron D., Laura, and Abijah Conger. Stephen Abbott died on September 9, 1906, at the age of 81.

**Scope and Content Note:**

This collection contains a 34-page handwritten manuscript by Stephen C. Abbott. The manuscript was written in 1902 when Abbott was seventy-seven years old and recounts his major life events, including his childhood in New Jersey, his apprenticeship in the blacksmith trade, and his journey westward to seek his fortune. Abbott settled in Middletown, IL (now Mahomet) permanently in 1853. The document



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includes information about the town of Mahomet, Abbott's various land purchases within the town and the surrounding countryside. He also lists the names of individuals he bought and sold property to and those he hired to work on his properties. Abbott's manuscript is meticulous about documenting prices and includes wages he received throughout his life, beginning as a child of nine, prices for passage to the West (overland and boat), and land prices. The manuscript briefly touches on his service in the Civil War. A typed transcript is also available.

**Subject Terms:**

California--Gold discoveries.  
Frontier and pioneer life.  
Mahomet (Ill.)  
Mendham (N.J.)  
Morristown (N.J.)  
Rockaway (N.J.)  
United States--Army--Illinois Infantry Regiment, 125<sup>th</sup> (1861-1865)  
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865  
Urbana (Ill.)

**Name Terms:**

Abbott, Abijah Conger  
Abbott, Ann  
Abbott, Barnabas  
Abbott, Byron D.  
Abbott, David  
Abbott, Ezra  
Abbott, Ira  
Abbott, John  
Abbott, Laura E.  
Abbott, Mary E.  
Abbott, Phebe  
Abbott, Stephen C.  
Abbott, Theodore  
Beckett, Isaac  
Bolinger, Mattie  
Boyer, George  
Brewer Tavern (Urbana, Ill.)  
Conger, John  
Conger, Stephen  
Cowen, Sarah Pearl  
Crabtree, Peter  
Gulick, Richard  
John Linsey Tavern (Hensley Township, Ill.)  
Johnson, Matthew



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Manuscript, 1902

Collection 346

Lindsay, John  
Matthew Johnson Tavern (Mahomet, Ill.)  
McWilliams, Gabriel  
Morehouse, H.J.  
Rea, John  
Rea, Mary E.  
Rutan, Manning  
Scott, James  
Steward, Richard  
Stoddard, William  
Wilson, H. L.

**Container List**

**Box #1**

Folder 1: Pages 1-6  
Folder 2: Pages 7-12  
Folder 3: Pages 13-18  
Folder 4: Pages 19-24  
Folder 5: Pages 25-29  
Folder 6: Pages 30 – Appendix Page 2  
Folder 7: Transcript of manuscript