

Donner Party was carrying documents from President Lincoln

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Researchers in Illinois, Utah, and California have confirmed that an original Abraham Lincoln document from the 1830s was carried by one of Lincoln's militia buddies on the ill-fated Donner Party expedition to California in the 1840s.

The researchers said the document, an 1832 list of the men in a company of Illinois volunteers during the Black Hawk War, was carried on a 2,000-mile journey across the continent among the papers of James Frazier Reed, one of the founders of the Donner Party of 1846-47.

The list is now in the California State Library in Sacramento, where experts recently determined it contains Lincoln's original handwriting.

"We often find documents that detail fascinating stories about Abraham Lincoln's life and times, but it is rare indeed for the document to have such an intriguing history after it was written," said Daniel W. Stowell, director of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. "That these documents detail part of Lincoln's military service and that they accompanied the Donner Party to California makes them doubly significant."

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