

THE FOUNDING OF LINCOLN INSTITUTE

BY GEORGE C. WRIGHT*

Louisville, Kentucky

Berea College was founded in 1855 by John Fee and Cassius M. Clay. Both were opposed to the institution of slavery. They wanted their school to have a Christian background open to any honest student; especially in mind were the mountain whites of Eastern Kentucky. In the antebellum South, education for the Negro was illegal. However, Clay and Fee were sure that if slavery ever ended, the Negro too could be educated at Berea.

In 1863 two soldiers from the Union Army, who had learned to read, were admitted to Berea as the first two Negroes. This experience in race relations was a success until July 1, 1904 when it was abolished with the passing of the Day Law by the Kentucky Legislature.¹

The two races had spent thirty-nine years together and without compulsion maintained their separate lines of social life and met with mutual respect in the competition of the classroom and the athletic field.² Berea had demonstrated that with Christian surroundings and due safeguard as to the character of the students admitted, it was not necessary to draw the color line in higher education in the South any more than elsewhere in the Christian world.³

However, there was much opposition to Berea College and to the "mixing of the races." Men from other Southern states, who heard of Berea, would observe that Kentucky could never rank as a true Southern state until Berea College was abolished.

Carl Day, a state representative from Breathitt County, visited the Berea campus in November 1903 and was shocked at the sight of blacks and whites "living together." He immediately introduced a bill in the state legislature in January 1904. It imposed a \$1,000 fine with \$100 per day penalty for continuance upon any institution which admitted both white and colored students and any instructor who taught in such institution, with lesser fines for students who attended the classes.⁴

Support for the passing of the Day Bill was quickly forthcoming. Politicians in Frankfort assured President William G. Frost and the

*GEORGE C. WRIGHT is a Ph.D. candidate at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. He is the recipient of the Haggin fellowship at U. K. (1973-74), and the Oral History fellowship at Duke University.

¹ William G. Frost, "The Southern Problem," pamphlet, June, 1905, Berea College Archives, William Frost Papers; hereinafter cited as Frost Papers.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Day Law File, p. 1. Berea College Library has a collection called the Day Law. Hereinafter, I will refer to information from the collection as the Day Law File.

Board of Trustees of Berea that they were not in favor of the bill, but were helpless to do anything to prevent its passing. One member of the Legislature took pains to tell Frost:

We understand that this proposed law is an outrage. The state has never contributed to the support of Berea College and it has no right to interfere in its affairs. I want you to understand that I have no sympathy with this law; but the facts are these: the law is going to pass. Now for me to oppose it would make it necessary for me to discuss the Nigger question in every political speech as long as I live. It would wreck my political future and so I shall be obliged to stay away when the matter comes up, or vote for the bill.⁵

The bill passed July 1, 1904. The trustees of Berea fought it all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States where it was upheld on November 12, 1908 as constitutional.⁶ The trustees of Berea, though they disliked the decision, recognized that it had to be abided by till the Supreme Court, at some future date, reversed itself. The trustees felt a moral and legal obligation to the black students in accord with Berea's historic position of opposition to slaveholding as a caste system. Frost and others wanted within the restrictions imposed to continue working for both mountaineers and freemen.⁷

At the annual meeting of Berea's board of trustees in July 1904, it was voted to reserve the institution of Berea for mountain students and to help the blacks go elsewhere.⁸ The action of the trustees on the separation of the races was not unanimous.⁹ The board, in the words of Dr. A. E. Thomson, justified its decision by the fact that (1) Berea was founded in 1855 before it was legal to educate Negroes in Kentucky; (2) in 1904 5/6ths of the students were white (this was a result of the efforts of Dr. William Frost who believed that the percentage of Negroes at Berea should be equal to its percentage in the state);¹⁰ (3) 9/11ths of the endowments and fixed properties had been given for education of whites and only 2/11ths or \$200,000 for Negroes; (4) Berea was located at the Eastern part of the state, a good spot for a mountain school; Negroes west of Louisville had not even heard of Berea.¹¹

Discussed during this board meeting was the fact that both races needed the guidance of Berea College leaders. Since none of the trustees agreed to give money to Negro students to attend schools like Fisk,

⁵ Frost, "The Southern Problem," Frost Papers.

⁶ Dr. A. E. Thomson wrote many notes about Lincoln Institute. Hereinafter I will refer to them as the Thomson notes. His papers can be found in Dr. Whitney Young's Collection of papers on Lincoln Institute.

⁷ Letter from Dr. Frost to Berea's Trustees May 28, 1904, Frost Papers.

⁸ Thomson notes, p. 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Letter from Frost to Harvey Fisk, December 31, 1906, Frost Papers.

¹¹ Letter from Frost to Berea Trustees, May 4, 1904, Frost Papers.

Hampton Institute and Howard, the idea of a new corporation, identical in spirit with Berea and largely with the same board, was presented by Frost. He said that the new corporation should receive appropriations from Berea and that it would have the same relationship as Harvard and Radcliffe.¹² This approach, Frost believed, would set the example of a white and colored school treating each other in a Christian way.¹³

With Frost taking the lead, the Berea board of trustees accepted the following proposal which was to become the framework of Lincoln Institute:

Proposal: A Department for Colored Youths (as described by the Day Law 25 miles from Berea) and shall give prominence to Normal and Industrial work.

1. Its main work will be to train teachers, who through the public schools and otherwise may lift the masses of the freedman.
2. We should make definite provision for the higher education of such graduates of this department as show special character and ability for leadership, by means of scholarship, which will assist them in further study at Berea when the law shall have been abrogated, or other institutions we may select in view of needs and plans.
3. We should endeavor to unite with us in this enterprise, any small colored schools, which may exist, so as to have one institution of commanding influence, Christian spirit, and freedom from political control.
4. We should appeal for special gifts for this work so that the full obligations of Berea to the colored race may be met without permanently impairing the work for the mountaineers.¹⁴

These points indicated the direction that the Berea board of trustees wished to take with regard to Negro education. The idea of a Normal and Industrial Education reflected the views of the most prominent Negro leader of the day, Booker T. Washington. Frost and others felt that the Negro needed a thorough industrial training. All the trustees thought a smattering of an education was likely to ruin the Negro, making him think that he was educated when he was not. They thought he would consider himself above the level of menial labor, while not trained for anything better.¹⁵ As Dr. Frost put it, "some such training as was given by masters and mistresses in the old days must be supplied now through the industrially trained teacher in the public school for the Negro."¹⁶

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ These proposals were introduced by Frost at the Board Meeting in May, 1904. The majority of members supported Frost and these were accepted with very little discussion. Only record of these proposals and other meeting notes can be found at the State Archives in Frankfort under Lincoln Institute, Box 18.

¹⁵ The idea of a normal and industrial education had also been established at Berea College for those students who desired an education in a trade. See William G. Frost, *For the Mountains* (New York: F. H. Revell Company, 1937), pp. 207-218.

¹⁶ *Courier-Journal*, December 5, 1908.

The proposed idea of uniting with other schools was carried through when the Eckstein Norton School for Girls in Cane Spring, Kentucky, became part of the new incorporation, which was to be named Lincoln Institute.¹⁷ The name was chosen when it was realized that the birth state of Lincoln had no education institution which bore his name. The Berea Board also recognized that Kentucky had done nothing for Negro education.

The work of setting up the new school rested chiefly with Frost, A. E. Thomson, James and Kirke Smith. Thomson had been a tutor at Oberlin College and was pastor of Union Church at Berea College. He was to become the dominant figure because Frost was overworked with other responsibilities. Thomson visited leading black schools of the South including Washington's Tuskegee, and conferred with Negro educators in Washington, D.C.¹⁸ Thomson ultimately was named the first principal of Lincoln Institute on May 17, 1911. He really wanted to remain in the pulpit but felt that it came to a choice of leaving the new enterprise to disaster or taking it into his own hands.¹⁹

James Bond played a very important role in the launching of Lincoln Institute. He was a black graduate of Berea and a member of its board of trustees. When called upon to help, by William Frost, he gave up his pastorate in Nashville, Tennessee.²⁰ After Lincoln was established, Bond became its first financial agent.

Kirke Smith was also instrumental in establishing Lincoln Institute. He, like Bond, was a black graduate of Berea and for twenty years had been the principal of a colored high school in Lebanon, Kentucky and was very active in the black community of Lebanon.²¹ He became the first dean of education at Lincoln Institute.

In November 1906, the trustees of Berea authorized the raising of an adjustment fund of \$400,000 for Lincoln Institute.²² Initially they were going to take \$200,000 of the Berea endowment (the amount given with the idea of educating Negroes) and set aside funds year by year until another \$200,000 was collected. However, this idea was dropped when the trustees were advised by their lawyers that it was unlawful to turn over capital to another institution.²³ So the adjustment fund of \$400,000 was set up to relieve Berea of the necessity of diverting part of its income, and also of providing a sum large enough to establish a creditable school for Negroes.

¹⁷ Thomson notes, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁰ Interview, Dr. Whitney Young, Sr. Hereinafter cited as Young Interview. He was the fifth President of Lincoln and the only black to hold that office. Dr. Young is still active in many projects relating to education and other organizations.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Frost, *For the Mountains*, p. 179.

²³ Thomson notes, p. 8.

Andrew Carnegie, a member of Berea's board of trustees, in 1908 helped the new venture by pledging \$200,000 if that same amount could be raised.²⁴

It was at this time that Frost became ill and went to England for a rest. Thomson now sought to raise money and went among the black people of Kentucky to inform them of what was taking place.²⁵

Thomson and the Berea trustees had no problem in securing pledges from wealthy individuals. However, most of them in their pledge put in the stipulation that the last \$50,000 must be raised in Kentucky. Mrs. Henry Pickering, of Boston, Massachusetts, left \$25,000 in her will to Lincoln Institute; Mrs. John Mather, also of Boston, gave \$25,000; Mr. and Mrs. Morris Belknap of Louisville, contributed \$22,500; Mrs. Russell Sage of New York, \$25,000; Dr. John Canfield of New York City, \$50,000. One of the earliest gifts was \$1,000 from the estate of Josephine Shaw Lowell, the sister of Colonel Leonard Shaw, who died while leading his Negro troops in the assault of Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863.²⁶

The Berea trustees set as their goal the receipt of all pledges and contributions before Abraham Lincoln's 100th birthday. If this could be done and a site selected, President Theodore Roosevelt promised to stop on his way to Hodgenville, where he would dedicate a monument to Lincoln, and dedicate the Negro School.²⁷ Thus the Berea board, with help from many others, sought to rapidly raise the last fifty thousand dollars. Businessmen connected with the Louisville Board of Trade came forward to help. They endorsed the movement for establishing Lincoln Institute as follows:

1. We feel that proper industrial training for the colored race is essential.
2. We feel this kind of institution should have been established long ago, so it must not be delayed.
3. We feel the institution should be close to Louisville and we will raise money by February 12, without hesitation or much difficulty.²⁸

Frost also received contributions as a result of two speeches. In the first one he told how Carnegie and others had promised \$350,000 on the condition that \$50,000 be raised in Kentucky. He informed his audience that Kentucky Negroes had raised \$7,000 and the rest must be raised or the Commonwealth would lose a great opportunity to

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ A complete list of all donors can be found at the State Archives under Lincoln Institute Donation Vouchers, Box 10. I have excluded from listing all of the donors for there were a couple hundred names.

²⁷ Thomson notes, p. 13.

²⁸ Minutes from meeting of Louisville Board of Trade, February, 1909. Can be found in Dr. Young's Collection.

educate Negroes who then could teach and uplift the moral character of the race.²⁹

His second speech was to the Ministerial Association in Louisville. Frost asked the assembled clergymen to mention to their respective congregations the project of the colored school and requested that they give it their endorsement.³⁰ He added:

The colored people miss the training that some of them received in our best homes in the olden times, and in many cases they are not yet able to give adequate parental care to their children. We shall touch the seat of trouble if we can raise up a small army of colored teachers who shall be imbued with the industrial idea and who will teach the fundamental virtues of cleanliness, promptness, and desire to excell in skill and thriftiness.³¹

Another source of help was J. G. Crabbe, Superintendent of the Kentucky Department of Education. In a letter to Frost, Crabbe said that the work being done by Berea was very important, not only for the colored race, but for the whole state and that he would help and lend the prestige of his position to the Lincoln Institute.³²

By February 12, 1909, the money had been raised. The total was \$400,204.00, after expenses.³³ Of this amount, \$43,000 was from whites in Kentucky and \$18,000 was from Negroes.³⁴ The board decided to set aside \$200,000 for endowments so that Lincoln Institute would have an assured income.³⁵ Also \$80,000 was set aside to purchase land which would provide for the agricultural work.³⁶ Estimates for the building were:

School building with office and chapel	\$50,000
Women's building with dining room and baths	35,000
Men's building with baths	25,000
Men's industrial and training building	20,000
Women's industrial and laundry building	20,000
Power and heat	10,000
Barns, fences, and walks	10,000
	<hr/>
	\$170,000 ³⁷

Obtaining a site was a primary problem, since no community approached wanted a Negro school near their residential areas. The

²⁹ *Courier-Journal*, December 5, 1908.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, February 2, 1909.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Letter from J. G. Crabbe to Frost February 6, 1909. Can be found in the Young Collection.

³³ Lincoln Institute file. There are numerous papers that are in the Young Collection that were records of the school. Hereinafter these will be cited as the Lincoln Papers.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

original site was Anchorage, Kentucky. However, the white citizens objected so strongly that the Berea board dropped all plans of moving to Anchorage.³⁸ The next site selected was Simpsonville in Shelby County, 22 miles east of Louisville. This was an acceptable site for the school. It was near the center of the black population of the state in Louisville. An interurban ran close by, resolving the problem of transportation. But, as in Anchorage, the white people of Shelbyville were opposed to Lincoln Institute. However, this time the Berea trustees decided to stay and fight.³⁹ On April 26, 1909, the Berea board bought three farms, totaling four hundred forty-four and four-tenths (444.4) acres, which would be the original site of Lincoln Institute. The entire cost was \$44,331.⁴⁰

The citizens of Shelby County were convinced that a Negro school would ruin their homes and lower the value of land. A meeting was held at the Masonic Hall where the people condemned the selection of Simpsonville as the future site of Lincoln Institute.⁴¹ It was voted unanimously to use all legal means to remove the school. The assembled citizens condemned the people of Louisville, who contributed, and the members of Louisville Board of Trade, who wanted the school close to Louisville. They recommended that Lincoln Institute move to Louisville, concluding that, "as we love our homes, our community and our country, so do not bring Lincoln here."⁴²

Citizens of Shelbyville wrote complaining to Frost. Letters also were written to the Shelbyville newspaper saying that the same thing would happen in Shelbyville that happened in Brownsville, Texas, where Negro troops were stationed.⁴³ Frost tried to counter by getting citizens of Berea to write people in Shelbyville telling them that the Negro would not harm their community. He offered to send a group of Shelbyville residents to Tuskegee at Lincoln's expense to see for themselves that racial harmony could exist.⁴⁴

In direct opposition to Lincoln Institute, John Holland, a member of the state legislature from Shelbyville, introduced a bill making it mandatory for three-fourths of the voters of a county to approve the location of any school in the county.⁴⁵ Holland's bill on March 14, 1910 became law despite Governor A. G. Willson's veto.⁴⁶ Opponents of the

³⁸ Young Interview.

³⁹ Thomson notes, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Frost, *For the Mountains*, p. 184.

⁴¹ *Shelbyville News*, May 27, 1909.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Letter written to editor of *Shelby Record*, June 8, 1909. In 1906 three companies of the black 25th Regiment had been discharged on unproved charges of rioting in Brownsville, Texas. For more information see any history book dealing with race riots in the South.

⁴⁴ *Shelby Record*, June 11, 1909.

⁴⁵ *Louisville Defender*, April 30, 1949.

⁴⁶ Lincoln notes, p. 14.

law rushed it to the state appellate court where it was declared unconstitutional on June 6, 1910.⁴⁷ Now Berea was able to build Lincoln Institute which had been incorporated January 17, 1910. (See Appendix for the Articles of Incorporation.)

The Lincoln board of trustees was to be composed of no more than twenty-four persons, each selected for a six-year term. Some of the members of the first board were Dr. William Frost, president of Berea, A. Y. Ford, vice-president of Columbia Trust Company in Louisville and also a member of the Georgetown College board of trustees, Guy Ward Mallon, lawyer in Cincinnati and a member of its school board, Joe Marvin, head of the Medical Department of the University of Kentucky, John G. Crabbe, state superintendent of public schools and chairman of the Board of Regents at both Eastern and Western Kentucky Normal Schools, John Rogers, inventor who held numerous patents on typesetting machines, Morris Belknap, merchant in Louisville and unsuccessful Republican candidate for governor in 1903, Edward Powell, a Louisville clergyman and educator, George W. Norton, newspaperman as well as a teacher, William Barton, trustee at Berea and a professor of theology at the University of Chicago, A. E. Thomson, pastor at Berea College, and two Negro members, Rev. James Bond, pastor in Nashville, and Charles Parrish of Louisville, a graduate of Oberlin and the foremost Negro leader of Louisville.⁴⁸

These men came from diverse backgrounds; all had demonstrated an interest in education for Negroes.⁴⁹ They were to establish the educational philosophy of Lincoln Institute. Their main idea was that while vocational emphasis must be stressed, cultural values should not be neglected.⁵⁰ The board believed that few men are more helpless than those who know "one school" and nothing else. They felt that the times called for a man who had a vocation he could call his own, but who also had the alertness of mind and ability to adapt himself swiftly and effectively into such employment as might be offered.⁵¹

The board of trustees at Lincoln was sure that the Kentucky Negro's greatest need was for adequate leadership in both schools and churches. The half trained, unprepared man, whether black or white, was sure to be a victim of the first blatant panderer who came his way. The role of Lincoln Institute was to help provide the leadership which would effectively bring about greater security and better race relations.⁵²

⁴⁷ *Louisville Defender*, April 30, 1910.

⁴⁸ Information on all of the white board members was from *Who's Who* (Chicago: Albert Nelson Marquis, 1905-10). Information on the black members was from the Young interview.

⁴⁹ Thomson notes, p. 14.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² William G. Frost, speech, "Lincoln Institute," to Woman's Club in Lexington. (No date given). Can be found in Frost Collection at Berea College.

With this need in mind, the board of trustees set up the courses and outlined the programs that were to be offered at Lincoln Institute. For the girls, a course in home economics was essential. A model rural home would be erected as a practice home. Here girls would get experience in such things as planning a budget, preparing meals, interior decorating, making clothes, caring for the baby, and keeping the house clean.⁵³ The primary purpose was to dignify for future home managers the science of homemaking and to help prepare those who would seek jobs in more specialized branches of home arts.⁵⁴ A girl could also take a pre-nurse training course. After passing the course she could enroll in a nurse training school or perhaps find employment in a hospital.

The vocations offered boys were in agriculture, building trades, industrial arts, business administration, steam and maintenance engineering.⁵⁵ All involved in setting up these programs felt the land held the future promise for the Negro and was a "way out for him."⁵⁶ Planting crops and care of the dairy were to be done by the students. It was believed that this work would give them experience and knowledge of farm management plus confidence in the land.⁵⁷ However, Kentucky's chief cash crop, tobacco, was not to be raised because students were not permitted to use it.⁵⁸ In the words of Thomson, "we believe that the Kentucky farmer needs to be taught the diversification and rotations of crops, rather than dependence on one crop, however profitable, temporarily that may be."⁵⁹

Lincoln Institute was the first institution in the nation to offer a course in maintenance engineering. This was done to dignify this type of work as an occupation in which an unproportionately high number of Negroes received jobs.⁶⁰ The courses and vocations fitted in with the aim of the institution that quality rather than quantity and thoroughness rather than classification was most desirable.⁶¹ Lincoln Institute sought to offer as thorough training as possible, as good as could be had in any school in the state.

Securing a faculty would be a difficult task since the board of trustees wanted dedicated people, who believed in the goals and aims of the institution. Seven of the first fifteen instructors had a Berea back-

⁵³ Thomson notes, p. 16.

⁵⁴ Young Interview. This is similar to the work being done at Tuskegee Institute. See Booker T. Washington, *The Story of My Life and Work* (Toronto: J. L. Nichols and Company, 1900).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Thomson notes, p. 17.

⁵⁷ Young Interview.

⁵⁸ Letter written from Dr. Thomson to American Seeding Machine Company, Springfield, Ohio, February 9, 1910. Can be found in the Young Collection.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Young Interview.

⁶¹ Thomson notes, p. 16.

ground, while Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee was represented by the industrial arts instructor and the engineering instructor.⁶² With this faculty, Lincoln Institute was prepared to offer four to six years of normal training after the eighth grade. (In 1922 it was recognized by the state of Kentucky that all graduates from the six-year normal course were automatically given state high school teacher's certificates.)⁶³

At the outset there were hundreds of blacks who wanted to attend Lincoln Institute. However, there were accommodations for about one hundred students for the first year.⁶⁴ All who wished to attend were told to apply early. As stated in Article IV of the Charter of Incorporation, all entering students had to present certificates from responsible persons attesting to their good moral character.⁶⁵ The trustees also decided not to offer direct financial aid to students because they hoped to produce a spirit of independence and self-reliance and wished to educate only those students willing to work.⁶⁶ With a fee of \$17 a month, a student could pay part of this sum and work the rest of it out at 15¢ an hour.⁶⁷ Moreover, all students were required to work one hour a day without pay to contribute to the upkeep of the school.⁶⁸

The fact that the founding fathers of Lincoln Institute were religious men was evident when they decided that while no one Christian body would dominate, the school would be religious in nature. Students were required to attend church on Sunday and mid-week prayer meeting.⁶⁹ Teachers and workers were selected with a view of their aiding in this work and students were encouraged to set up vigorous YMCA's and YWCA's.

The trustees of Lincoln exhibited great foresight by securing the services of the Olmstead Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts, prominent landscape experts, to prepare a campus plan locating buildings so that enlargement would not be impeded by wrongly placed structures.⁷⁰ Since the trustees wanted the buildings to be living evidence of the ability of Negro architects, the firm of Tandy and Foster of New York was selected. W. V. Tandy was a graduate of Cornell and G. W. Foster had been employed for twenty years by a prominent New York firm.⁷¹ Both were interested in the project and said they would give 1% of their commission as contribution to Lincoln.⁷²

⁶² Young Interview.

⁶³ *Courier-Journal*, March 22, 1923.

⁶⁴ Thomson notes, p. 18.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Young Interview. Dr. Young was one of the original students of Lincoln Institute. He would pay \$15.00 each term and work the rest out doing odd jobs.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Thomson notes, p. 16.

⁷¹ *Lexington Leader*, January 24, 1912.

⁷² Letter written from V. W. Tandy to Dr. A. E. Thomson, May 2, 1910. This letter is located in the State Archives in Frankfort.

Bids covering a wide range of construction activities were entered and a Louisville contractor received the bid. However, after the contract was signed, pleading fear of mob violence, he lost courage and resigned.⁷³ The mayor of Shelbyville, Lynn Gruber, then was awarded the contract. He died before the work was completed but his widow made a satisfactory settlement.⁷⁴ The buildings were completed with lights, water, heat and sewer systems. All were of brick or stone. Including construction and the price of the land, the total cost was \$250,000 or \$100,000 more than planned. Of this additional sum, \$50,000 was raised through pledges and contributions; the rest was borrowed.⁷⁵

An unexpected source of opposition to Lincoln Institute was the Negro in different parts of the state. Many blacks believed Frost had been behind the passing of the Day Law.⁷⁶ Others said Berea would not build a school exclusively for Negroes. Frost, however, was sincere in his desire that Lincoln Institute serve the Negro in Kentucky. On December 22, 1904, he wrote his wife, "Nellie, if I die while the colored people are exiled from Berea, I want you to have my heart placed in some kind of casket by itself so that it may be finally buried in whatever place is secured for the education of the colored people of Kentucky. I want to make a lasting testimony to my devotion to their interest."⁷⁷

On September 1, 1911 an excursion party of about twenty-five Negroes led by Rev. James Bond went to Simpsonville at the expense of Lincoln and Berea. Full of enthusiasm they reported "a city is being built."⁷⁸ Their trip quieted most Negro criticism. There remained, however, a small group of black intellectuals who were opposed to the industrial training philosophy. One such individual was J. Sohmers Young, editor and manager of *The Kentucky Standard*, a Negro weekly published every Saturday in Louisville. Young said Frost and the other trustees were very cunning and were attempting to set the Negro back with industrial education.⁷⁹ He appealed to Negroes throughout the state to demand that other things be emphasized at Lincoln, saying "are we to forever tamely submit to the prevailing idea that the Negro now must be educated as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' for the more favored race, or shall we make a plea for the same kind of education every other race enjoys, telling those among us who elect,

⁷³ Thomson notes, p. 10. The name of the contractor is never mentioned in any papers or records of Lincoln Institute.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Lincoln notes, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Thomson notes, p. 8.

⁷⁷ Letter written from Boston by William to Mrs. Frost, December 22, 1905. This letter is in the Frost Collection at Berea College.

⁷⁸ Thomson notes, p. 8.

⁷⁹ *The Kentucky Standard*, February 14, 1909.

and whose minds so incline, to hew wood and draw water to their heart's content."⁸⁰

Thomson and the others on the Lincoln board had to address themselves to the argument of Young and others who were critical of the Lincoln program. The board believed favorable public support essential to the school's success. First they had to win the support of those citizens of Shelby County, who were still bitter over the State Appeals Court decision on the Holland Law. One of their fears was that Negroes would move into Shelby County in large numbers. The board quickly decreed that only students who would reside on the premises be admitted.⁸¹ There would be no day pupils and no inducements for Negroes to move to Shelby County. Before his death, Mayor Lynn Gruber of Shelbyville, once he became involved with the promoters and the plans of the school, caused a shift in sentiments of the people of Shelby County.⁸²

Drs. Thomson and Frost helped to rally people of Kentucky behind Lincoln Institute just as they had done earlier in securing contributions. Thomson explained that from 1900-1910, 23,050 Negroes had left Kentucky because of a lack of educational opportunities.⁸³ Their departure had lost the state's economy an estimated \$2,500,000 a year.⁸⁴ Thomson also noted that education would cut the rising Negro crime rate. In a study of 7,769 black graduates from ten colored schools in the south, he reported the conclusion that only ten had ever been convicted of a crime.⁸⁵

Thomson's points about helping reduce the Negro crime rate and putting more money into the state's economy were quickly picked up by newspapers throughout the state. Many agreed that Kentucky must encourage and commend the work that was underway at Lincoln for the state previously had done nothing to assist the Negro.⁸⁶ Meanwhile Frost relieved citizens' fears. At a speech to a woman's club at the Lexington Phoenix Hotel he told the assembled ladies not to be frightened by the bug-bear of social equality, stating that "social separation" is a fixed fact and education fixes it all the more firmly.⁸⁷

Amid much excitement and controversy, Lincoln Institute opened its doors October 1, 1912 to eighty-five students. There had been many long and hard battles for the Berea people since the passing of the

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Lincoln notes, p. 4.

⁸² Thomson notes, p. 12.

⁸³ *Lexington Leader*, January 24, 1912.

⁸⁴ Lincoln notes, p. 7.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ William G. Frost, speech, "Lincoln Institute," Lexington Phoenix Hotel, March 2, 1909. This speech is located in the Frost Collection.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Day Law in 1904, not the least of which was getting white citizens to support education for blacks. The people involved with establishing Lincoln Institute had learned from Booker T. Washington that southern whites accepted the concept of industrial training education for Negroes more readily than education that emphasized humanities, mathematics, and pure science. Since many southern whites already accepted the notion that industrial training was essential for the Negro, it was easier for Frost and others to convince white Kentuckians of the necessity of this type of education for Kentucky's Negroes. There were many blacks, most notably W. E. B. Dubois, who felt that this approach kept the Negro on the bottom of the economic ladder by teaching him things that were fast becoming outdated. Whether this view was correct or not, industrial training at Lincoln Institute gave Negro education in Kentucky a beginning that would be used to build a foundation for other types of education.

APPENDIX A

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

Article I—Name. Shall be called Lincoln Institute of Kentucky located in Shelby County near Simpsonville.

Article II—The object of this Institute shall be to furnish through Christian education in as many departments as resources permit with special attention to the training of teachers and instruction in industrial pursuits and with all possible adaptation to the education needs of colored people of this state.

Article III—Christian Character. No one Christian body shall have an undue influence on the teachers or trustees of the school.

Article IV—Moral Standards. All students upon entrance present certificates from responsible persons showing their good moral character and all students while in attendance shall be required to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and tobacco and from attendance upon secret societies; also to observe in the strictest manner all proprieties between the sexes.

Article V—Financial Character. Shall have no capital stock.

Article VI—Life of the Corporation. Shall continue perpetually.

Article VII — Board of Trustees. Principal shall be a board of trustee ex officio during his continuance in office. Other trustees, who may number twenty-four, shall be elected in six classes. The regular terms shall be six years. New members elected shall be qualified when they have assented to the purpose and principles of the Institute by signing this constitution.

Article VIII — Indebtedness. No indebtedness shall be incurred exceeding 1/10 part of the endowment and fixed properties.

Article IX — Power of the Board. Shall have power to fill vacancies in its own body. The Board of Trustees shall have sole power to elect and remove the principal, secretary and treasurer of the Institute, the teachers and other officers; fix their duties, terms of service and salaries, prescribe courses of study, confer diplomas and degrees, make contracts, etc.

Article X — Amendments. Constitution may be amended by a 3/4 vote of trustees present at the annual meeting.