

## Letter to President Abraham Lincoln Written by James Birney in 1865



### Brief background on James Birney:

James Birney, was born June 7, 1817 in Danville, Ky. His is the first child of James G. and Agatha (McDowell) Birney. James' father was an abolitionist leader, a presidential candidate and one of the founders of Lower Saginaw (now Bay City) in the early 1840s. James, the son, was drawn to the community around 1850 to be near his parents. Prior to this he lived in Connecticut, where he met and married his wife, Amanda S. Moulton on June 1, 1841.

James was educated in the field of law at Centre College in Kentucky and Miami University in Ohio, where he graduated from, and where he was a professor for two years teaching Greek and Latin languages. He next moved to Cincinnati, OH, where he set up a law office before moving onto Connecticut where he met his wife, Amanda Mouton.

James and Amanda had four children: James G. Birney IV, born 1844, New Haven, CT; Sophia Hull Birney, born 1848, New Haven, CT; Alice A. Birney, born abt. 1851/52, Cincinnati, OH; and Arthur Birney.

During his years in Bay City, James established himself as one of the most prominent men in Michigan. He served as a city alderman, state senator, lieutenant governor, circuit judge of Bay County; and was appointed minister to The Hague in the Netherlands by President Grant in 1876. Other significant contributions he made were: Founded Pine Ridge cemetery, the first formal cemetery on Bay City's east side of the Saginaw River; He organized Bay County's first fair in 1865; and founded the Bay City Chronicle newspaper.

James died on May 8, 1888, and is buried at Pine Ridge Cemetery in Bay City, in a family burial where lays his wife Amanda who died in 1886, several of their children and a brother.

### About the Letters:

James Birney was a member of the Republican Party and an active politician. In 1865 he wrote the following letters to President Abraham Lincoln in hopes that he might be chosen to serve his country at a national level.

Washington Feb. 1865

To the President  
Of the United States

Sir:

As I may not have another interview with you, I submit in writing the following statement.

Since I saw you, Messrs. Chanler, Beaman, Upson, Longyear, Kellogg, and Baldwin, of the Michigan delegation in Congress, have signed a recommendation of my appointment as Commissioner of the Department of Freedmen.

This paper is enclosed herewith and marked No. 1.

Mr Howard would have signed, but fears that if he did so, it might prejudice his recommendation of Mr Edmund as a member of the Cabinet. It will be seen that Mr Edmund has united with the Michigan delegation.

Also enclosed you will find <sup>2</sup> the recommendation of the Governor of the state of Michigan & members of the Legislature of that state, marked No 2.

Also letters of Governor Lerape & Mr Owen Treasurer of the state of Michigan.

In 1861, when a vacancy occurred in the U. S. Senate by the death of Senator Bingham my name was mentioned in connection with the succession. Mr Chase having known me for twenty five years wrote me a note expressing his desire for my success. It is herewith enclosed, as it was not intended as a private letter.

I am desirous that this application should meet with your favorable consideration. For thirty years I have been conversant with the disrupions pertaining to the elevation of the black man. My early life was spent in Alabama and Kentucky.

James G. Birney devoted his life to the interests of the colored man, and

expended his fortune inherited, and acquired for the promotion of his wife.

Of the five sons he left, four of them have volunteered their services in behalf of the country. Three of these sons have lost their lives in the service. One is now in command of four thousand Colored troops, and having raised seven regiments of Colored troops in Maryland is said to have broken the back of slavery in that state. My eldest son is also in the army.

The Republican party has been in power four years, I have never received office, or the slightest emolument from you, <sup>administration</sup> I earnestly entreat of you to give me this opportunity of being useful to my country and the cause of humanity. You will find me faithful, diligent and prompt in the discharge of the duties.

Most Respectfully

Your hum<sup>ble</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

James Birney.

# The Wolverine Citizen.

40977

F. H. RANKIN, EDITOR.

Flint, Saturday, August 11, 1860.

Mr. W. L. Beardsley,  
AT THE POST OFFICE,

Is Agent for this paper, and will deliver it to subscribers at his New Depot, and receive subscriptions, at the rate of

\$1 50.....for one year.  
75 cents.....for six months.  
25 cents.....for three months.  
10 cents.....for one month.

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Subscribers receiving only of the Citizen with this paragraph marked, are requested to take notice that their time has expired, and if the subscription be not renewed, the proprietor will understand thereby, that they wish the paper discontinued, and act accordingly.

All kinds of merchantable produce, wood, &c., taken on subscription.

## REPUBLICAN NOMINATIONS.

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**  
OF ILLINOIS,

For Vice-President,

**HANNIBAL HAMLIN,**  
OF MAINE.

For Representative in Congress—4th District

**ROWLAND E. TROWBRIDGE,**  
OF OAKLAND.

## STATE NOMINATIONS.

For Governor—**AUSTIN BLAIR.**

For Lieut. Governor—**JAMES BIRNEY.**

For State Treasurer—**JOHN OWEN.**

For Auditor General—**LANGFORD G. BERRY.**

For Secretary of State—**JAMES B. PORTER.**

For Attorney General—**CHARLES UPSON.**

For Com'r. of the Land Office—**SAMUEL S. LACEY.**

For Supt. Public Instruction—**JOHN M. GREGORY.**

For Member of the Board of Education—

**EDWIN WILLETS.**

Presidential Electors—

At Large—**HEZEKIAH G. WELLS.**

**RUFUS HOSMER.**

From First District—**GEORGE W. LEE.**

" Second District—**EDWIN DORSCH.**

" Third District—**PHILOTUS HAYDEN.**

" Fourth District—**AUGUSTUS COBURN.**

## REPUBLICAN COUNTY CONVENTION.

The Republicans of the County of Genesee are requested to meet, by Delegates, at the Court House in the City of Flint,

On WEDNESDAY, August 23d, 1860,

At ten o'clock A. M., for the purpose of nominating Candidates to be supported by the party for the Office of State Senator for the Twenty-fourth Senatorial District of Michigan, and for the several County Officers to be chosen at the ensuing election in November next; also to transact such other business as may come before the Convention.

Each Township and Ward will be entitled to three Delegates.

F. H. RANKIN,

JAMES SKYMOUR,

R. G. GALE,

B. C. BADLER,

M. P. BALDWIN.

Republican  
County  
Committee.

Dated June 19, 1860.

## REPUBLICAN DISTRICT CONVENTION— REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT No. 1.

A Convention of Republican Delegates, from the several Townships and Wards composing Representative District No. One, of the County of Genesee, are requested to meet at the Court House in the City of Flint,

On TUESDAY, August 21st, 1860,

At two o'clock P. M., for the purpose of placing in nomination a candidate to be supported by the Republicans of said District, for the office of Representative in the State Legislature, and to transact such other business as may be brought before the Convention.

The District is constituted of the Townships of Burton, Flint, Flushing, Forest, Genesee, Montrose, Mt. Morris, Phœnix, Vienna, and the City of Flint.

Each Township and Ward will be entitled to three Delegates.

A. T. CHORMAN,

D. N. MONTAGUE,

HARLOW WHITTLESEY,

Republican  
District  
Committee.

Dated June 30 1860.

From the Daily Citizen, 6th.

## Meeting in the Wigwam.

The Republican Wigwam, commenced on Tuesday, was, through the energy and efficiency of the Building Committee, so far completed, as to admit of being opened for the meeting of the Young Men's Republican Club, and Lieutenant Governor Birney, on Friday evening. It is a commodious and strongly built structure, that will comfortably seat 600 to 700 persons, or a much larger number, if crowded. There is also a roomy gallery on the west end, for the accommodation of ladies; and a raised speaker's platform on the south side of the building.

It having been announced that Hon. James Birney had accepted an invitation from the Young Men's Club, to address them on Friday evening, the Wigwam was crowded at an early hour—the gallery being filled with ladies. Mr. Birney was introduced to the meeting by the President of the Club, and received with much enthusiasm. He spoke for more than an hour, directing his remarks principally to the history of the slave question in this country in its relations to the Territories, and the doctrines of the several Presidential candidates in that regard. Mr. Birney spoke with ease, fluency and eloquence, and his views and sentiments were received with loud tokens of approbation.

At the close of Mr. Birney's remarks, Hon. Rowland E. Trowbridge was called for; and though he was suffering from the remains of severe indisposition, he addressed the meeting for a short time. His appearance was enthusiastically greeted, and his remarks—conceived in the happiest vein—were warmly applauded.

The arrangements of the Wigwam having been hurried up for this occasion, and no conveniences yet supplied for reporting, we are unable to give even a synopsis of the speeches made. Mr. Adams, on the part of the Club, moved a vote of thanks to the gentlemen for their very able exposition of the principles of Republicanism; and Senator Davis, upon adjourning, proposed three cheers for Birney and Trowbridge, which was ardently responded to, uprising, with waving hats and handkerchiefs—and a tiger. The feeling was altogether of the best kind, and we regard the opening of our wigwam as an event accomplished under the most favorable auspices, and holding out the most promising auguries for the future of the campaign.

**Growth of Republicanism in Saginaw.**

Correspondence of The Detroit Daily Advertiser.

EAST SAGINAW, Sept. 13, 1862.

To the friends of freedom a word of encouragement. Behold, how the "light shineth in a dark place!" Truth is stranger than fiction, and our faith has nearly become sight. In this once dark and benighted land of Democracy—this stronghold of the slavery apologists, Saginaw county—a new and holier impulse is leading the people. There is no mistake in this matter—the indications are *unmistakable*.

The Hon. James Birney, our gallant candidate for the office of Lieutenant-Governor of the State, was advertised to speak at East Saginaw on the evening of the 13th inst. One hundred Wide-Awakes, with "lamps trimmed and burning," and freedom's flags floating in the air, led on by martial music, went out to meet and to welcome to their city this noble defender of human rights. It was a splendid sight, and being the first appearance of the "Wide-Awakes" here, attracted no little attention.

Mr. Birney's speech was a clear, candid and truthful statement of the positions of the several candidates now asking a nation's suffrage. He charged home upon the Democracy, that *they* were the negro agitators and disunionists, instead of Republicans—that *they* were the repealers of compromises "akin to the Constitution" in sacredness—that in *their* ranks, and there only, were hands found "ruthless enough" to touch them. So clear and so candid were the arguments of the speaker, that his words even challenged the respect of his most bitter opponents on the opposite side of the question.

Republicanism here is looking up. You may put down Saginaw county two hundred majority for Blair, Birney and Trowbridge—also for the entire State ticket.

Yours, &c.

40978-3 . . .

Will the President  
read the enclosed note  
as above, on the 15th;  
May President all England  
Feb. 1865

James Beving-

Rec. for Court Freedmen

Letter of R. R. Chase

to the President  
of the  
United States