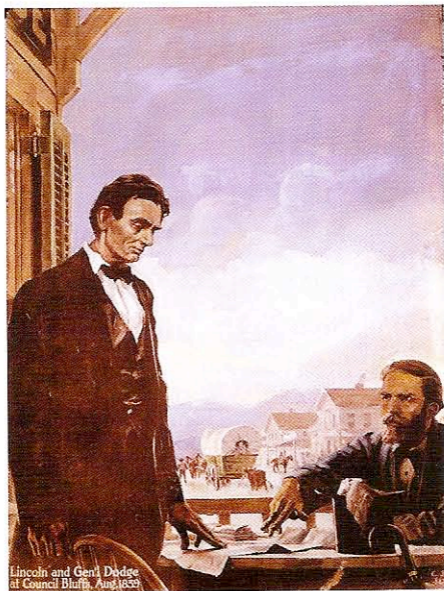


# The Start of Something Big

In August 1859, before he became president, Abraham Lincoln visited Council Bluffs to speak for the Republican Party. Fellow lawyers invited Lincoln to the area, hoping to interest him in investing in land they believed would be a key stop on the transcontinental railroad. During that visit, Lincoln met with Grenville Dodge, a civil engineer and land speculator who had surveyed the area for a potential railroad. Dodge could not have known he was talking with the man who would hold the future of railroad expansion in his hands.

Yet four years later, as president, Lincoln was responsible for choosing the originating point for the transcontinental railroad's westward expansion. Convinced by Dodge's survey and comments in support of the area, Lincoln signed the order designating Council Bluffs as the site two days before he delivered his Gettysburg Address. Though Lincoln loaned \$3,000 to another lawyer investing in Council Bluffs land, Lincoln did not capitalize on railroad land speculation himself. He was assassinated before the loan and interest were due. — *C.B.*



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