



# LINCOLN LORE

... NUMBER 1909 SUMMER 2015

## CODED CONFEDERATE MESSAGES

Learn more on page 3.

# Lincoln Lore

IS THE BULLETIN OF  
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LINCOLN COLLECTION OF INDIANA

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



SEPTEMBER 10, 2015 | 7:00 PM

### ANNUAL R. GERALD MCMURTRY LECTURE ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY FORT WAYNE, IN

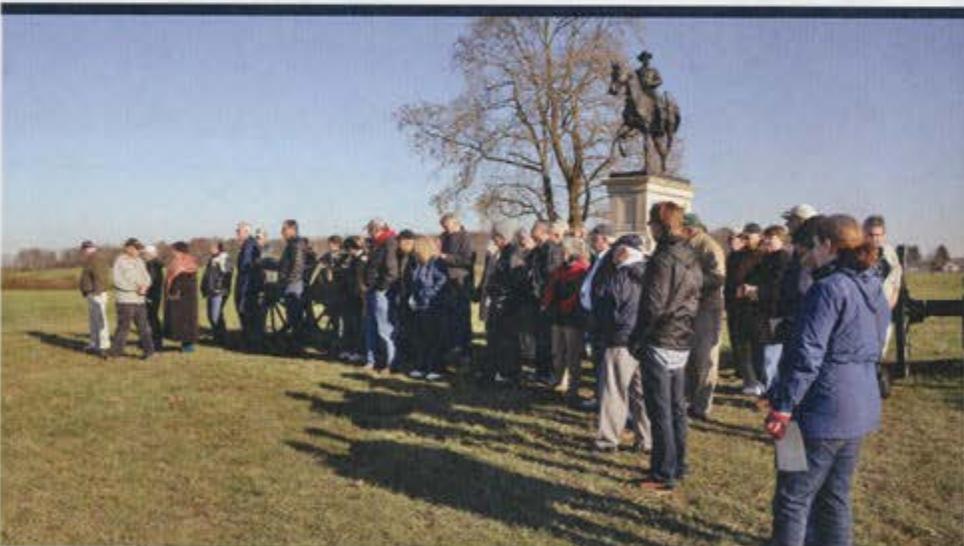
2015 McMurtry Lecture presents Harold Holzer on "1863 vs 1865: What a Difference Two Years Made". Holzer, the 2015 recipient of the Lincoln Prize for his book *Lincoln and the Power of the Press* and the author of 50 books on Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War, serves as Roger Hertog Fellow at the New York Historical Society.



OCTOBER 2 & 3, 2015

### 30TH ANNUAL LINCOLN COLLOQUIUM LINCOLN HERITAGE MUSEUM LINCOLN, ILLINOIS

The Better Angels of our Nature: The Influential Legacy & Character of Abraham Lincoln. For registration information, please contact: [museum@lincolncollege.edu](mailto:museum@lincolncollege.edu) or [amosley@lincolncollege.edu](mailto:amosley@lincolncollege.edu)



Ed Bearss is seen leading a tour of the Gettysburg Battlefield.

Photo by Henry Ballone

NOVEMBER 16-18, 2015

### 20TH ANNUAL LINCOLN FORUM SYMPOSIUM PRESENTS: "1865: TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY"

THE WYNDHAM HOTEL | GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

For registration information, please contact: [admin@thelincolnforum.org](mailto:admin@thelincolnforum.org)

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FROM THE LINCOLN FINANCIAL FOUNDATION COLLECTION

*Translation: cwn*

**South-Western Telegraph Company.**

The Person receiving, that in order to guard against mistakes in the transmission of messages, every message of importance ought to be repeated by being sent back from the station at which it is to be received to the station from which it is originally sent. Half the usual price for transmission will be charged for repeating the message, and with this company will, as heretofore, use every precaution to ensure correctness, it will not be responsible for mistakes or delays in the transmission or delivery of repeated messages, beyond an amount exceeding two hundred times the amount paid for sending the message; nor will it be responsible for mistakes or delays in the transmission of unreported messages from whatever cause they may arise, nor for delays arising from interruptions in the working of the Telegraph, nor for any mistake or omission of any other Company, over whose lines a message is to be sent to reach the place of destination.

All messages will hereafter be received by this Company for transmission, subject to the above conditions.

JNO. VAN HORN, Pres<sup>t</sup>, Jackson, Miss.

*Tullahoma Tenn 16 1863*

*By Holograph from Richmond 15<sup>th</sup> 1863*

*To Genl B. Bragg*

*For the present all which seems practicable is to H. U. C. V. X. G. A. H. S. P. L. M. S. K. L. H. R. G. R. S. M. and U. L. S. G. R. H. B. R. M. T. H. To S. B. R. G. For B. G. G. B. X. P. Should the V. M. K. X. B. J. S. S. V. U. K. S. to K. B. H. H. You and his S. S. L. O. V. U. S. P. X. U. Yours X. S. B. M. X. V. H. will be even better if I could U. S. L. M. R. H. S. S. V. R. M. U. S. S. X. V. K. V. M. S. H. to your T. O. S. S. R. S. S. H. S. S. X. B. which would enable them to X. S. L. S. M. their S. V. X. V. M. S. C. R. X. G. S. S. P. B. It would at once be done to send forward B. G. H. V. M. S. V. S. H. and S. V. X. S. P. R. S. H. Should be vigorously pressed as the best reliance for S. H. K. R. G. R. S. M. B. C. U. S. S. V.*

*Jeff Davis*

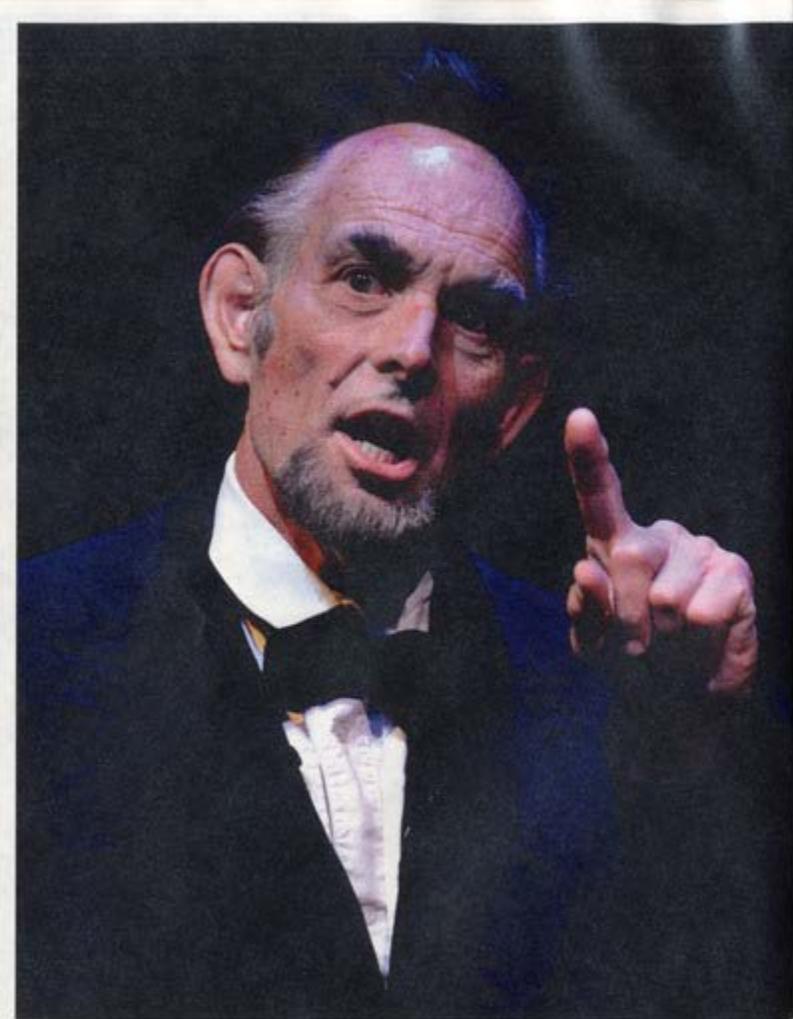
*211 PA*

The thin sheet of paper on the cover of Lincoln Lore is marked with circles and lines, a code that carried details of military actions during the Civil War. When placed on top of the pink code sheet, the coded message is revealed. The circles align with letters of the alphabet, which are printed in random order on the code sheet. Lines denote the spaces between words. The message, attributed to Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard, details a plot to destroy Washington, D.C., and remove President Abraham Lincoln and General Winfield Scott. The translation of the coded message is written at the bottom of the page: "I shall cross the river above Little Falls on Sunday at two AM. Signal red and white rockets from Turners Hill. For God's sake don't fail us. Fire the city at all points agreed on at once. Despatch Lincoln and Scott as you suggest and let the execution of our plot be perfect. Beauregard"

A second coded document (left) in the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection is a telegram sent from Confederate President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, to General Braxton Bragg in Tullahoma in January 1863. The message appears to be a series of letters, but after being decoded reveals Davis's instructions to Bragg about fortifications. The translation, written on the back of the telegram, reads: "For the present all which seems practicable is to select a strong position and fortifying it to wait for attack. Should the enemy attempt to pass you with his whole force your chances will be even better. If I could furnish reinforcements to your glorious Army which would enable them to crown their recent victory it would at once be done. To send forward absentees and recruits should be vigorously pressed as a best reliance for additional force. Jeffn. Davis."

The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection's Civil War Documents Collection, consisting of 92 letters, orders, and official papers from both sides of the war, has been digitized and is accessible online through the Allen County Public Library website.

- Adriana Maynard, Lincoln Librarian at Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN



# BECOMING LINCOLN

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*An interview with Fritz Klein, who travels around the world to present our Sixteenth President.*

Sara Gabbard: When I grew up in Lincoln, Illinois, every tall, gangly male picked up a couple of extra dollars by reciting the Gettysburg Address at county fairs, etc. You, however, are a genuine Lincoln scholar and have devoted your entire life to the presentation of the life and legacy of our 16th President. How did you begin your fascinating career?

**Fritz Klein:** I was first asked to take the role of Lincoln's way back in 1976 in Hawaii, where I worked in landscaping at the time. Drama and theater were only sideline events in my life then. That role seemed impossible to me at the time and it was turned down initially. Eventually I accepted it and it went pretty well, with the help of a four-hour make-up job! The transition to full time required some considerable adjustment and did not take place until several years down the road.

**SG:** Very few people have your ability to appeal both to children and adults. My grandchildren must have been 8 and 5 during one of your visits to the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne. Both are now in college, but they still remember your fascinating depiction of the Lincoln cabin by using string. Please tell our readers about this presentation...and similar methods which you use to teach children.

**FK:** Thank you. There are so many ways in which we learn, and I have tried to address as many as I could when I work with children. The program to which you are referring was designed for younger children as a participatory experience in which story-telling, visual and tactile elements were woven together. The log-cabin experience was the basic concept. I built a 1/2 scale model of the Kentucky birthplace of Lincoln that could be assembled in a kindergarten classroom sitting by the children themselves in about 30 minutes. All during the process, in layers of the cabin began to arise, stories were told, some of which were related to Lincoln specifically and some of which were general about log-cabin life, especially as experienced by children. One element was the cabin's relatively small size, compared to what children today are accustomed to having. To illustrate the size of the original, I carry a loop of sturdy cord, pre-cut with knots in four places where the "corners" of the cabin would be. With four helpers, we open it into a rectangle that represents the size of Lincoln's entire house, and then



Fritz Klein as Abraham Lincoln

have all the children see if they can squeeze inside. Many American children have a bedroom to themselves, larger than Lincoln's entire house.

**SG:** I also remember a phone call from you, probably ten years ago. You were going to appear at an event in the South, and you were to be on trial for war crimes. I was able to give a couple of suggestions for your "defense." Please comment on your relationship with this particular organization, a description of your "trial," and other programs you have presented.

**FK:** The organization was actually a University in the South which holds annual Civil War Seminars. One year they wanted to create a mock "Trial" of Lincoln, as though the war had been won by the south. We had actual lawyers and a judge participating, and after gathering evidence, I consulted with my lawyer "out of court" to prepare my defense. The charges against "Lincoln" related to: 1. Aggression against Ft. Sumter, 2. Invasion of the South, 3. Blockade, and Prize laws, 4. Embargo, 5. Creation of West Virginia, 6. Federal interference with the Maryland Legislature, 7. Martial Law, 8. Confiscation of private property, 9. Federal Income Tax, 10. Emancipation, and 11. Conspiration. I researched each area thoroughly and prepared what I believed were solid constitutional cases. Much of what I prepared was

based on Lincoln's own words, much on J. G. Randall's signal work. I still believe my case was solid, if not airtight, but I lost.

**SG:** I know that you have traveled throughout the world in order to "present" Abraham Lincoln. Please comment on some of your most memorable trips and the manner in which your varied audiences responded.

**FK:** The most memorable trip with Lincoln was to China. I was scheduled to give the Gettysburg Address every half hour in a crowded convention in Beijing, followed by questions. Red Guards of course supervised everything. Questions were very pointed about the nature of liberty and self-government and the meaning of "equality" in the American system. The boldness of the Chinese in the face of intimidation was surprising. When visiting Tiananmen Square the numbers of Chinese that the figure of Lincoln drew was amazing, and that assemblage was illegal and immediately broken up by the ever-present Red Guards. Questions about class and the "right to rise" in America were especially revealing. In Mexico there is also amazing interest in Lincoln.

**SG:** You also appear in plays about Lincoln. Please give a listing of each and a brief description of content.

**FK:** Well, over the years there have been many one-man shows of my own author-



Fritz Klein (left); Indiana Tourism Photo credit (right); Indiana Tourism Photo credit (top and above right); Dennis Leunberger

ship which vary widely in content. A few I have written involved other actors: one called "At What Price, War?" was one-act play with Abraham and Mary Lincoln. It features the desolation wrought on both the Lincoln and the entire nation by summer of 1864, and the difficulties, both personal and political, of the looming re-election. "Dream of Freedom" featured interaction across time between Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Martin Luther King - jointly written. There was one called "Dark Days" with Lincoln and Francis Bicknell Carpenter conversing about the coming 1864 election - jointly written with Drew Gibson. Another was called "Lincoln & Douglas: An Unusual Friendship" which chronicles the development of the friendship between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, who were both similar and different in many ways. (This was jointly written with Michael Crutcher.) One was commissioned by Illinois Tourism called "Of Mutual Interest: Lincoln and Mexico" or "De Interés Mutuo: Lincoln y México" or "Lincoln and Matías Romero, chargé d'affaires of the Mexican legation in Washington, to be presented exclusively to a delegation from Mexico. (There was also a Spanish version because it was also staged in Mexico.) This one-act play chronicles the interesting part Mexico's Benito Juárez plays in the American Civil War story, and vice-versa. Of recent plays I did not write, there

was "The Heavens Are Hung in Black" by James Scill. This was a nearly three-hour "one-man show with extras" that takes you through the writing of the Emancipation Proclamation with honest vistas of Lincoln in his office, in both tender and stormy scenes with Mary, cabinet meetings, graveyards scenes, and even participation in a rehearsal scene with Edwin Booth at Ford's Theatre. "A Springfield Farewell" by Ken Beardsley is an engaging piece featuring Lincoln and his wife rising and dressing on their last morning in Springfield, sharing memories, hopes, fears, and laughter. Still in production through 2015, "The Last Full Measure," also by Ken Beardsley, is a moving perspective from Lincoln's point of view, on what might have transpired in the President's mind while he lay dying that fateful night of April 14th, 1865.

**SG:** Why does the story of Abraham Lincoln continue to resonate with people today?

**FK:** That is a question that I ponder myself quite often. My reflections may or may not even begin to answer it, but, to me, there appear to be many factors: the appeal of the Civil War era to the American mind as a confusing phenomenon that puzzles many people. There is the transition factor: America was leaving the Napoleonic era of warfare; and there is a resonance in a reminder of Victorian period manners and grace, which

is attractive to many in a time when people wear pajamas to the grocery store. Lincoln was the last of the enlightenment presidents, embodying the founding fathers' principles in a world that had largely cast them off. The period in which Lincoln lived embraced a severe testing of self-government as a system, a test that each generation must face and pass to some degree. The character of Lincoln was extraordinary in his day as well as our own, and it holds enduring attraction. Especially for the foreign-born, the embodiment of the rags-to-riches hope that America offers shines bright in Lincoln. The tragic and enduring quality of the Lincoln family story has powerful appeal. Lincoln's humor, wisdom, and achievements certainly draw many to this story. Of course the "elephant in the room" is the issue of slavery and emancipation. Controversies surrounding the conclusion of that evil in the midst of war will always hold the attention of people of all ages. There is a general mystique about Lincoln as well, that is almost unexplainable, both in his time, and in ours.

**SG:** Do you have particular plans for 2015 and the sesquicentennial of the end of the Civil War and the subsequent assassination?

**FK:** There are several events going on in which I will be involved. 1. The National Park Service Lincoln Funeral Journey, an NPS program following the path of the original Lincoln Funeral Train is 1865 begins April 18th in Washington, DC and ends May 3rd, 2015, in Springfield, Illinois. 2. The Rebuilt Lincoln Funeral Train will be taking the train to Springfield, if they get the funding they need. The plan is then to travel from Springfield to cities across the nation. At this point in time, I do not know the schedule, but there are plans for me to be involved with the programming over the next several years. 3. The production of "The Last Full Measure," described already, throughout 2015. 4. And on April 14th a film called "Lincoln's Last Day" produced by the museum of American History at the Smithsonian will air on the Smithsonian Channel. ♦

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Fritz Klein

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# An interview with Eric Foner

about his recent book, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*.



Left: *The Fugitive's Song* sheet music cover illustrated with a portrait of Frederick Douglass (LC-USZ62-7823)  
Right: *Contrabands on Mr. Foller's farm, Cumberland, May 14, 1862* (LC-DIG-stereo-1s02415)



**Sara Gabbard: Why was New Bedford, MA, important to your story? Please explain why Frederick Bailey became Frederick Douglass.**

Eric Foner: New Bedford before the Civil War was known as the "Fugitives' Gibraltar." A major whaling port, it had a large community of free blacks, many of whom worked as sailors or on the docks, and who were happy to shelter fugitive slaves. Many fugitives from the South were sent to New Bedford where they could be more secure than in other parts of the North. The most famous was Frederick Douglass. As Frederick Bailey, he escaped from Baltimore in 1838. In New York, David Ruggles, the lead of the local Vigilance Committee, which assisted fugitives, sent him to New Bedford. Bailey had changed his name to Johnson when he reached New York, but in New Bedford there were a large number of black Johnsons, so he chose a new name once again and became Frederick Douglass.

**SG: Please discuss Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831. Did his efforts make the lives of slaves even more difficult?**

EF: Nat Turner's rebellion was the largest slave insurrection in the three decades before the Civil War. It took place in Southampton County, Virginia, and resulted in the deaths of between 50 and 60 whites. Turner him-

self was captured, after hiding out in the woods for some weeks, and executed. The rebellion spread panic throughout the South and led to a tightening of laws regulating slaves, and especially restrictions on black preachers (Turner was one) and on blacks meeting together without a white person being present.

**SG: You state that "New York had close economic ties to the slave South and a pro-southern municipal government." How did this relationship affect anti slavery advocates?**

EF: New York, declared DeBow's Review, the major southern periodical of the 1850s, was as dependent on slavery as Charleston. New York merchants dominated the cotton trade; New York banks helped to finance the expansion of slavery; and New York insurance companies issued policies so owners would be paid in the event of a slave's death. Thousands of southerners visited the city each year, often accompanied by slaves. The pro-southern atmosphere definitely affected public policy, and made the city a hostile environment for abolitionism. There was a major anti-abolitionist, anti-black riot in 1834. The movement in New York was smaller than in Boston and many other northern cities.

**SG: I have always found it difficult to understand why the Fugitive Slave**

**Law of 1850 was considered by some to be a promising compromise. In your book you state that it, "embodied the most robust expansion of federal authority over the states, and over individual Americans, of the antebellum era." How/why did it pass?**

EF: The law was part of the Compromise of 1850, which sought to settle several points of dispute between free and slave states, including the status of slavery in territory recently acquired from Mexico, and whether California could enter the Union as a free state. Southerners had been complaining in the 1840s about the growing number of slaves escaping to the North and the obstruction, in some states, of their recapture. The new law took the capture of fugitives out of the hands of state and local authorities and made it a federal responsibility. A new class of officials – US Commissioners – would hear these cases, federal marshals would arrest fugitives, and there were severe penalties for those who aided runaway slaves. This was probably the most robust exercise of federal power over the states in the entire pre-Civil War era, which is ironic in that the South is generally believed to have adhered to the idea of states' rights.

**SG: Who was Sydney Howard Gay?**

EF: Gay was the editor of the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, a weekly abolition-

ist newspaper published in New York City. It reflected the outlook of William Lloyd Garrison's faction of the abolitionist movement. Gay also took a leading role in assisting fugitive slaves who passed through the city. His "anti-slavery office" was a major station on the underground railroad.

**SG: You state that the popular concept of the Underground Railroad as a "highly organized system with tunnels, codes, and clearly defined routes and stations" isn't correct. What is a more realistic view?**

**EF:** Many people take the railroad metaphor a bit too literally. There was no single underground railroad organization, no regular schedules and depots, etc. I see it as a set of local networks, that communicated with one another and assisted fugitives. These groups rose and fell over time; some went out of existence for a while, and then revived. Very few people were actively engaged in helping fugitives, although a larger number gave occasional assistance. Moreover, people working on the underground railroad also took part in other abolitionist activities. Gay was an editor, others attended meetings, gave speeches, petitioned the legislature, and went to court to try to defend fugitives. In other words, they operated underground and overground, as it were, at the same time.

**SG: How did both black and white people aid the escaping slaves?**

**EF:** Assistance to fugitives took many forms. In the South, it consisted of hiding them, giving them food, and giving them directions for travel to the North – or actually transporting them across the Mason-Dixon Line. In the North, local groups hid fugitives, gave them new clothing so they would not look like slaves, and put them on trains or steamboats to carry them to cities further north, where local groups would assist them.

**SG: Please explain your comment that the Railroad was a "quasi-public institution."**

**EF:** Local Vigilance Committees, as groups helping fugitives were called, often publicized their activities, publishing numbers of fugitives assisted and even individual stories of runaway slaves. In some parts of the North, such as Syracuse, a very antislavery city, the underground railroad operated openly. The local head, Jermain Loguen, advertised in newspapers and held fund-raising events in his home. On the other hand,



*A group of "contrabands" (LC-DIG-sterco-1502762)*

in New York City, much of the activity was quite secret, because of the hostile political environment.

**SG: What was the role of the Dutch West India Company in the establishment of slavery in New Amsterdam?**

**EF:** Slavery existed from the very settlement of New Amsterdam in the early 1600s. The West India Company brought in slaves to build fortifications and do other work. Slavery in the town was looser than it would later become. Many slaves came to enjoy "half-freedom" – they worked part of the time for the company and part for themselves. The system tightened considerably after the British took over in 1664.

**SG: Please comment on the aid given to escaping slaves by the Quaker population in New York City.**

**EF:** Quakers were well-known for their antislavery sentiments and among slaves, it was widely circulated that if you reached a town, you would be well advised to "ask a Quaker" for help. On the other hand, most Quakers were not abolitionists. They disliked disorder and controversy as much as slavery. Isaac Hopper and a couple of other Quaker abolitionists were expelled by the monthly meeting in New York because of their abolitionist activities, which not only caused public controversy but involved their working with non-Quakers. A few of the underground railroad operatives in New York were Quakers, but most Quakers had no part in aiding fugitive slaves.

**SG: What was the status of slavery in New York City during the Revolutionary War?**

**EF:** From 1775 to 1783 New York City was occupied by the British. And during the War of Independence, British commanders offered freedom to slaves of patriots who escaped to their lines. Thus many slaves headed for New York from nearby colonies, and as far away as Virginia, seeking liberty. When the British evacuated, they took over 3,000 black men, women, and children with them – most of them newly freed slaves. (George Washington, who asked the British commander to keep a "look out" for two of his own runaway slaves in New York, remonstrated strongly against the British action but to no avail.)

**SG: Please comment on two items in the Constitution:**

**Article I, Section 2 Was the provision that 3/5 of "all other Persons" would count in determining population absolutely necessary for the ratification of the Document? How was the 3/5 number established?**

**Article IV, Section 2 was cited as justification for the return of escaping slaves, but it seems rather vague. Who was in charge of "delivering up" these escapees?**

**EF:** It does seem that both the 3/5 clause and the fugitive slave clause were necessary to secure the approval of South Carolina and Georgia for the Constitution. Oddly, northerners argued that no slaves should be counted as part of the population used to apportion membership among the states in the House of Representatives, while southerners insisted that slaves were people and all should be counted. 3/5 is clearly a compromise. The fugitive slave clause is indeed vague. It does not say whether the states or the federal government would be responsi-

ble for apprehending fugitives, nor does it indicate what kind of legal procedures their return should involve. It seems to leave it up to the owner to capture and return fugitives himself, which became more and more difficult as time went on.

**SG: What was the history of the Manumission Society?**

EF: The New York Manumission Society was founded in 1785 by a group of prominent New Yorkers, including Alexander Hamilton and John Jay, to press for the abolition of slavery in the state. Many of the members were themselves slaveowners, and the group did not admit blacks as members. The Society achieved passage of the (gradual) emancipation act of 1799, although not until 1827 did slavery come to an end in the state. But the Society did many other things. It encouraged owners to manumit slaves, and it set up the African Free School to educate black children. It survived until 1849, but by the 1830s it was eclipsed by the more radical, and interracial, abolitionist movement.

**SG: Please comment on: the Antebellum status of free Blacks in New York City; the New York Vigilance Committee; and the Colonization Movement in the City.**

EF: New York City had the largest free black community in the North in the antebellum era, but the status of blacks in the city was very precarious. They had few opportunities for anything other than low-paid, menial jobs, were forced to live in the most undesirable neighborhoods, and were barred from hotels, restaurants, and many other public places. The colonization movement, which had the support of many prominent New Yorkers, pressed for their removal to Africa. Blacks also ran the danger of kidnapping and sale to the South. The New York Vigilance Committee was founded in 1835 to combat kidnapping, but it also quickly began to assist fugitive slaves, marking the beginning, in a sense, of the underground railroad.

**SG: What were the roles of Lewis Tappan and Louis Napoleon in your story?**

EF: Lewis Tappan was the most prominent white abolitionist in New York City. He was a wealthy merchant who donated very liberally to the antislavery cause. He also assisted fugitives on many occasions. Tappan led the anti-Garrisonian faction of the abolitionist movement. He believed abolitionists should work within the political system (Garrison did not) and opposed Garrison's strident attacks on the churches for their complicity with slavery. He also opposed allowing women to hold office in abolitionist organizations, which the Garrisonians supported. Most New York abolitionists followed Tappan, not Garrison. Louis Napoleon, an illiterate black laborer, was the key activist in



*Fugitive negroes fording Rappahannock (LC-DIG-stereo-1s02891)*

the city assisting fugitives. He scoured the docks looking for those who arrived hidden on ships, and met slaves sent from abolitionists in Philadelphia, at the railroad depot. He also went to court to obtain writs of habeas corpus for slaves illegally brought into the state by southern owners (New York law, after 1841, declared that any slave, except a fugitive, who entered the state automatically became free).

**SG: Please explain the significance of the Supreme Court's ruling in Prigg v. Pennsylvania.**

EF: Prigg was the first Supreme Court decision dealing with fugitive slaves. It interpreted the Constitution's fugitive slave clause as meaning that it was a federal responsibility to apprehend fugitives, and also affirmed the right of slaveowners to capture fugitives themselves, without any legal procedure, so long as they did not cause a breach of the peace. The decision led some northern states to bar local officials from assisting in the capture of fugitives, and soon led to the passage of the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

**SG: Was the Canadian government actively involved with the Underground Railroad, or did it simply serve as a destination for some of the escapees?**

EF: I don't think the government of Canada had anything directly to do with the underground railroad. But British and Canadian authorities refused to extradite slaves who managed to reach Canada. After 1850, as the federal government became active in apprehending fugitives, more and more fugitives headed to Canada, as they were no longer safe in New England or upstate New York. The fact that the Canadian government refused to return them became a major point of friction in Anglo-American relations.

**SG: Please comment on the story of Thomas Sims.**

EF: Thomas Sims was a 17-year-old fugitive slave from Georgia, who was apprehended in Boston in April 1851 and subsequently returned to slavery in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. When he arrived back in Georgia, he was punished with a whipping in a public square and then sold to a resident of Mississippi. In 1863, he escaped again, this time finding refuge

with the Union army.

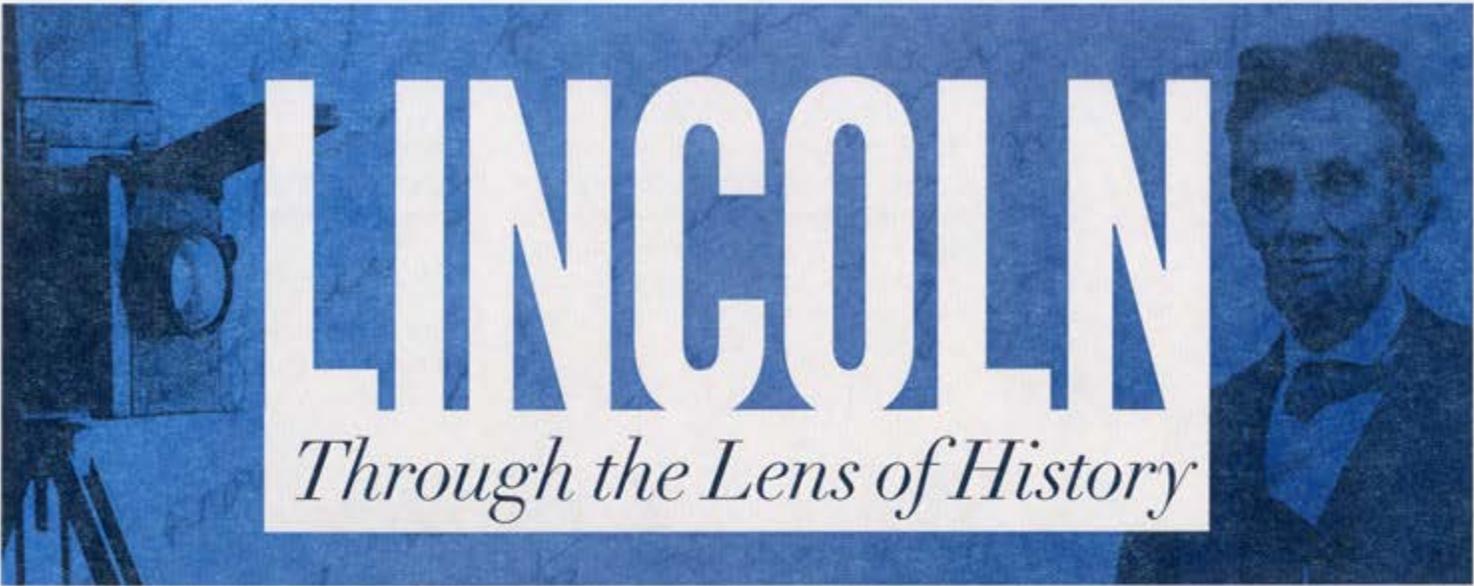
**SG: When did activities of the Underground Railroad officially end?**

EF: The Civil War marked the end of the Underground Railroad. At first, the number of fugitives increased. But quickly, slaves realized that they could obtain freedom by heading for the lines of the Union army, not the North. Many thousands of slaves found refuge behind Union lines, and fairly early in the war the Lincoln administration abandoned the idea of returning them all to their owners. Thus, by the end of 1861, few if any slaves were escaping to the North and Canada; the army had replaced them as destinations. ♦

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Eric Foner**

Eric Foner is the DeWitt Clinton Professor of History at Columbia University. He is the author of *Reconstruction, America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863 - 1877*; *Who Owns History*; and *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*.



# LINCOLN

## *Through the Lens of History*

## What Lincoln Means to Me—And Not Necessarily to Others

by Richard Striner

As the Civil War Sesquicentennial begins to wind down—after all the many words of commentary from various and sundry writers and historians—we are focused on the horrid anniversary of Lincoln's murder. As I write this essay in the final weeks of March 2015, the latest issue of *National Geographic* magazine has arrived with a cover story on Lincoln. Once again, as so often in the past, the life-achievement of Abraham Lincoln is the subject of commentary, but this time on the anniversary of its tragic—its brutal—termination.

My own conclusions on the life achievement of Lincoln were formed long ago, and I have set them forth in a number of books, chiefly in *Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle to End Slavery* and *Lincoln's Way: How Six Great Presidents Created American Power*. The gist of it: Lincoln was a genius, one of the greatest that America has ever produced, and his genius flowed from his skill in orchestrating power to achieve noble ends. He was a "power artist," to use a phrase from the lexicon of T. Harry Williams. He was a master strategist.

I formed this impression as I studied Lincoln's work in graduate school. I remember reading the uncomplimentary chapter on Lincoln in Richard Hofstadter's book *The American Political Tradition*. At one point Hofstadter shared a reminiscence of the abolitionist Moncure Daniel Conway regarding a meeting with Lincoln in January 1862. According to Conway, Lincoln said that he

actually wanted to have abolitionists vilify him in public because it would give him leverage in advancing the goals of the anti-slavery cause. I thought to myself, "How extraordinary. What other politician has encouraged his friends to trash his own reputation in the interest of creating strategic leverage?" And this question never seems to have occurred to Hofstadter. He was so busy attempting to pillory Lincoln as an opportunist that the full significance of this passage went straight past him. But it registered with me.

Then I read LaWanda Cox's *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership*. I was enthralled by her account of the way that Lincoln worked behind the scenes in Louisiana in 1863 and 1864 to quietly turn it into a free state by redrafting its state constitution. In a cunning letter, with nuance embedded in every line, Lincoln told his agent, the political general Nathaniel Banks, to make the transformation happen in a way that would give him—Lincoln—deniability. Then it hit me: maybe Lincoln's supposedly "lenient" Reconstruction plan of December 1863 was a tricky way to speed up this transformation of slave states into newly-minted free states. It seemed lenient to many people at the time (and to many ever since) because when only ten percent of a rebel state's voters had taken a loyalty oath, they could elect a state legislature that Lincoln would recognize. But there was more to Lincoln's plan, much more: if these people actually wanted

to vote, they had to swear to something else. They had to swear (on the holy Bible) that they supported emancipation. Result: only anti-slavery whites in these southern states would be allowed to vote, and it would not take very many of them (only ten percent of the state's electorate) to transform the state into a free state. In other words, Lincoln's "lenient" plan for Reconstruction was exactly the reverse of what it seemed to be in some respects. It was a crafty and high-handed way to force the anti-slavery agenda.

When I finally resolved to do a book-length treatment of Lincoln's role as an anti-slavery strategist, I immersed myself in the *Collected Works* to test my impressions in relation to the documented record. What I found was more than enough: item after item revealing that Lincoln seemed to do best-case and worst-case contingency planning almost all day every day. He was simply a natural genius in power orchestration, not only in military matters, as T. Harry Williams argued in his book *Lincoln and His Generals*, but across the board.

There were many individual revelations for me in the *Collected Works*. When I came upon Lincoln's secret proposal (a trial balloon that he floated in February 1865) to pay \$400 million to the slave states on the condition that they ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, I was stunned—filled with admiration for the man's remarkable mind. Has any other president dared to entertain for one instant the notion of paying off states to amend the

constitution? But this was the quintessential Lincoln as I had come to understand him: a man of supreme audacity. After all, there is nothing in the Constitution forbidding such a scheme, so why not try it?

All of this went into my book *Father Abraham*, which was published in 2006.

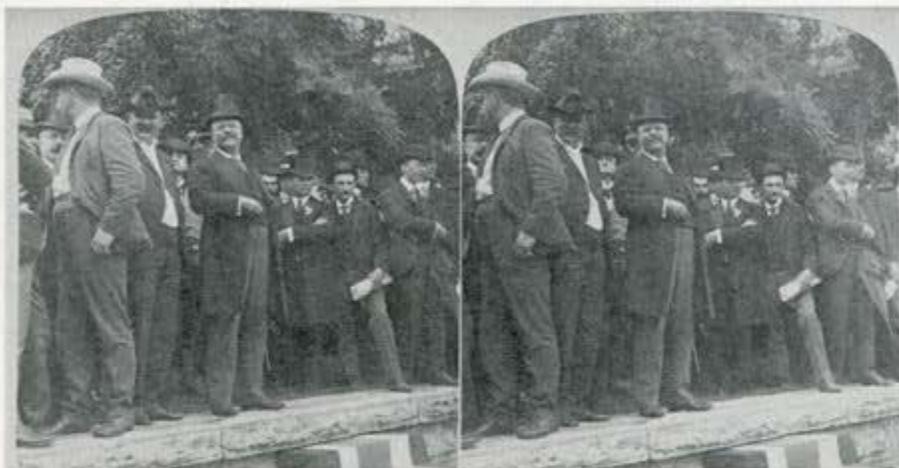
Then I started working on another angle entirely: Lincoln's role in the intellectual and ideological evolution of American politics. For some time I had sensed a correlation between the idea of "using Hamiltonian means to achieve Jeffersonian ends"—an idea deriving from Herbert Croly's classic 1909 political treatise *The Promise of American Life*—and Lincoln's brand of politics. Simply put, Croly argued that the president who had just left office in 1909—Theodore Roosevelt—healed a schism in American political life that had originated in feuds among the Founding Fathers. Alexander Hamilton's elitist brand of "big government" statecraft had been opposed by Jefferson, who feared that big government was a threat to the common man.

A conservative-liberal overlay in this pattern should be noted, though its content eventually reversed itself, to wit: early conservatives made use of the state (i.e., big government) as a counter-revolutionary force, whereas classical liberals believed in laissez-faire, which is to say they were government-bashing libertarians. Of course conservative and liberal preferences on the proper role of government reversed themselves over time in a process that Jacques Barzun used to call the "Great Switch." But even the Switch could not obliterate the hierarchic nature of right-wing proclivities or the anti-hierarchic impetus of left-wing politics. In any case, the Hamilton-Jefferson clash represented the emergence of the left-versus-right polarity in American political culture.

Back to Croly, Theodore Roosevelt, and (ultimately) Lincoln. Croly wrote in 1909 that the Hamilton-Jefferson clash represented a grievously false antithesis. In Croly's opinion, heroic government (depending on the specific nature of its policies) could

sometimes deliver results that are essential for underwriting the liberty and also the day-to-day prosperity of everyday citizens. So the methods of Hamilton might at times serve the purposes of Jefferson. Croly praised Theodore Roosevelt in glowing terms for understanding this and for acting upon this understanding in his presidential program. But then he acknowledged something else of even greater interest to me: Lincoln did it first.

Theodore Roosevelt was quite aware of this



President Roosevelt and Governor McMillin reviewing troops, on the site of a desperate charge, Chickamauga battlefield, Tenn. (LC-DIG-stereo-1s02007)

connection, as I later found out. As I began my new research for this project, I discovered that Roosevelt had written in 1908 that his mission as a Republican leader was "to take hold of the conservative party and turn it into what it had been under Lincoln, a party of progressive conservatism, or conservative radicalism; for of course wise radicalism and wise conservatism go hand in hand." For years it had been very clear to me that the Hamilton-Jefferson feud of the 1790s correlated closely with the evolution of conservative and liberal ideology. So I felt myself on very sure ground as I propounded the theory that Lincoln had engineered a centrist convergence—a synthesis of left and right—in regard to the role that a mighty federal government can play in the dynamics of our republic.

As I studied the evidence, this ideological convergence played out within the intellectual history of the presidency. As Lincoln was one of Theodore Roosevelt's greatest heroes, the elder Roosevelt was the single greatest hero of the younger one: FDR. And the centrist convergence that Lincoln began passed right across party lines as it was handed from the elder Roosevelt to his

cousin. The proof? "Reform if you would preserve," proclaimed Franklin D. Roosevelt in a 1936 campaign speech; "I am that kind of conservative because I am that kind of liberal." And this legacy was passed directly forward through the "vital center" policies of Truman (the phrase was coined by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.) and the "middle way" of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

This was the package of ideas and interpretations that formed the basis for my book *Lincoln's Way: How Six Great Presidents Created American Power*. I

argued that "Lincoln's Way" provided the basis for national modernization, long-term planning, and national cohesiveness that turned our nation into a global superpower by the middle of the twentieth century. And the evidence of this abounds in the civilian-side legislation of Lincoln and the Civil War Republicans: the building of the trans-continental railroad, the chartering of the

National Academy of Sciences, the Morrill Act providing federal aid to education via land-grant colleges, and much more. Lincoln was a brilliant modernizer, and this was yet another form of power orchestration.

This is what Lincoln is to me: a towering genius who channeled power in strategic ways that made America live up to its best and highest potential.

But this is not the view of Lincoln that is commonplace in our culture.

People view Lincoln in different ways depending on different points of view: whites who make a hobby of re-enacting Civil War battles in the role of Confederate soldiers may very well view Lincoln very differently from African-Americans. And African-Americans will frequently differ in their estimations of Lincoln, depending on whether they regard him as a sincere opponent of slavery or an overblown fake whose reputation unfairly eclipses the black abolitionists who constitute the "real" heroes.

Many Americans view Lincoln as our greatest president, though the reasons for this belief clash sharply with my own view of him as a master of audacity. For a long

time, the stereotype among Lincoln admirers has been the traditional vision of him as a saintly, forgiving, and moderate unionist who saved the republic as his first and overall priority and used emancipation as a tool to achieve that result. This notion is easy to fathom since Lincoln said as much (or appeared to say as much) in a famous open letter to the editor that he wrote to Horace Greeley in August 1862. "My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union," he wrote, "and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery [original emphasis]." This impression was literally enshrined in the verse composed by Royal Cortissoz for inscription in the Lincoln Memorial:

*In this temple*

*As in the hearts of the people*

*For whom he saved the Union*

*The memory of Abraham Lincoln*

*Is enshrined forever.*

Some Lincoln admirers who subscribe to this traditional notion see nothing whatsoever in Lincoln that smacks of audacity. To the contrary, Lincoln scholar and biographer David Donald wrote in the 1990s that Lincoln's personality exuded an "essential passivity," that he showed a consistent "reluctance to take the initiative and make bold plans."

Hence the image of the simple rugged man of the West, "honest Abe," whose plain-spoken manner and homely visage exuded the wisdom of a straightforward patriot devoid of Machiavellian guile—a great patriot, whose patience and ultimate forgiveness saved the nation and whose passive and stoical endurance, though haunted by an almost unimaginable degree of sadness and grieving, led our country through its greatest ordeal.

There are obvious elements of truth in this stereotype. But its elements of falsehood flow from a lamentable amount of mass ignorance in this country regarding the historical events that led to disunion and Lincoln's charismatic role in shaping those events. Anyone who studies the record of Lincoln's rise in the 1850s encounters a man whose deep rage against slavery, whose loathing for the politicians who protected it, whose sharp tongue and satirical wit were apparent both in private correspondence and in spell-binding speeches, makes a mockery of the notion that Lincoln was a man of "pas-

sivity." A formidable debater, a brilliant trial lawyer, he was every inch a man who knew how smart he was and had every intention of pushing his innate gifts to their utmost stretch.

As for the image of Lincoln the moderate unionist, a quick dose of background should suffice to show the facts of the time as they were.

What many Americans are never taught about these matters is that Lincoln in cer-



*Lincoln Memorial*

tain ways caused the breach in the Union. The Republican Party's free-soil platform in 1860—their refusal to permit the creation of any more slave states—spelled death for slavery over time. No one could tell how many decades the process might take, but it was obvious enough that the addition of more and more free states from the West would make the slave-state bloc a minority in Congress someday. And this meant that if anti-slavery legislation should be introduced in such a Congress, the South would be powerless to stop it. And when the free-state majority had reached the level of a three-quarters supermajority, a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery could be ratified. And this is exactly what happened in 1865. John C. Calhoun and other slave state leaders had perceived the threat decades earlier.

So when Lincoln was elected in 1860—and Republicans gained control of both houses of Congress—secessionists in South Carolina

took immediate action. The state's secession convention stated that the federal government would soon be in the hands of a party representing the "non-slaveholding states," a party whose leaders believed that "a war must be waged against Slavery until it shall cease throughout the United States." Consequently, the southern master class had to cut its losses and remove the institution of slavery from the reach of United States law and federal power.

The lame duck Congress took immediate action to isolate South Carolina and prevent secession from spreading. A compromise, involving a package of constitutional amendments, was introduced by Senator John Crittenden of Kentucky. One of these amendments would overturn the Republicans' free soil platform and allow the institution of slavery to go on spreading.

Lincoln killed the Crittenden Compromise and he did it in secret. In a series of letters to Republicans marked "Private & confidential," Lincoln wrote, "have none of it. The tug has to come & better now than later." To one Republican Lincoln issued the following instruction: "hold firm, as with a chain of steel."

Very few Americans know much if anything about this. What they know is what Lincoln wrote to Greeley in 1862: his paramount object was to save the union, he had written, and since "honest Abe" was honest, he must have meant exactly what he said. But if Lincoln's paramount object was to save the Union, why kill the Crittenden initiative? The truth: Lincoln meant to save the union his way, and since different methods of saving the union existed—the Democrats' pro-slavery method of saving the union, for example, by seeking accommodation with the South—Lincoln skillfully manipulated patriotic sentiment with half-truths and outright deceptions, like his letter to Greeley.

Yes, deceptions. For though Lincoln told Greeley and his readers that his object was to save the union regardless of the outcome on slavery, a private memorandum that he wrote in 1863 proves otherwise. By the time that Lincoln wrote this meditation, he had escalated the war with his emancipation policy — ostensibly to save the union faster. But in a moment of worst-case contingency planning, Lincoln toyed with the possibility that the Confederates might simply surrender and then try to force re-admission to the Union with the slavery system intact. "Sup-

pose," Lincoln wrote to himself, "those now in rebellion should say: 'We cease fighting; re-establish the national authority amongst us . . . we claiming to send members to both branches of Congress, as of yore, and to hold our slaves according to our State laws.'" Lincoln's reaction to this particular scenario of saving the Union through Confederate surrender was stunning: "I shall dread, and I think we all should dread, to see 'the disturbing element' so brought back into the Government."

How many Americans know anything at all about that memorandum — and what it means?

Still, there is something to be said for the traditional view of Lincoln, and I am perfectly ready to confess it. Indeed, I proclaim it. This man of imperious audacity possessed some countervailing powers as a diplomat, as a conciliator, as a unifier. How else, among other things, could he have possibly achieved the political and ideological synthesis or reconciliation of values that I chose to call "Lincoln's Way?" How else could Theodore Roosevelt and Herbert Croly have perceived in Lincoln the power to achieve a sophisticated centrist convergence?

Among Republicans today, the greatness of Lincoln is reflexively invoked — at least some of the time — though the current domination of the party by the radical right would be nothing less than appalling to Lincoln's sensibilities. And it would certainly shock the tea partiers to learn about the Hamiltonian side of Lincoln, the president who pushed through Congress legislation to authorize and pay for whatever he believed would advance the national interest. This was the Lincoln who worked with the Radical Republicans in 1865 to create the Freedmen's Bureau, one of the earliest federal welfare agencies in American history and one that prefigured much of what Franklin D. Roosevelt would support in the 1930s. And support for strong federal action was nothing new for Lincoln, who after the Panic of 1837 proposed projects in the Illinois legislature to stimulate the state's economy through spending that would help the unemployed by creating new jobs.

As I ponder the condition of America today, I see a nation profoundly at risk—a nation sinking steadily as the threats to its long-term security, prosperity, and political sanity accumulate. I also see a multitude of ways in which the Lincoln legacy as I understand

it could turn this nation around, empower it, revive its greatness, and brace it for the turbulent future that awaits us.

I see a future in which the United States loses its super-power status, a future in which the forces of fragmentation, unreason, ignorance, malice, and primitive rage undo the society that leaders like Lincoln created at the cost of so much sacrifice and so much struggle.

The article on Lincoln in the April issue of *National Geographic* was written by a colleague of mine at Washington College, Adam Goodheart. It retraces the course of the funeral train that bore the body of Lincoln from Washington to Springfield. The theme, not surprisingly, is grief. "The nation mourned Lincoln as it had never mourned before," Adam writes. And I know what it means to mourn the death of Abraham Lincoln. Every year at this time I reflect, as Walt Whitman did so many years ago, about the "powerful western fallen star" that went dark for America when Booth's pistol fired, and how the advent of "ever-returning spring" makes us think about death as we commemorate the loss not only of Lincoln, but also the hundreds of thousands of war-dead whom he joined.

Yes, we think about death and grieving and sacrifice. But Adam has some further reflections that are doubtless quite common right now in our country. He writes that the deepest tragedy of all was that the Civil War was "self-evidently unnecessary, a matter not of foreign invasion but of domestic politics gone badly awry," that Americans understood that truth at the time and they understand it all too well today.

But perhaps it could be argued that the war was made quite necessary by southern belligerence, that American politics did not go awry, that Confederate rebellion made fighting unavoidable except at the cost of surrendering the fight against slavery, and that Lincoln was right—absolutely right—to hold firm as with a chain of steel. The slaveholding power elite controlled the southern states like police states. In most of these states any public opposition to slavery had been made a criminal offense, and in some a capital offense. The name of Lincoln was kept off the ballot in most of the slave states when southern whites went to vote in the election of 1860. While many Confederate soldiers simply fought out of loyalty to their states, those states would never have fallen under

the control of secessionists in the first place except for the tyranny of wealthy southern whites who subscribed to a master race theory and suppressed the free speech of anyone who dared to disagree.

Was Lincoln wrong to stand up to these people—wrong to take a stand in his Cooper Union Address that prefigured the politics of leaders like Winston Churchill in the twentieth century?

Lincoln forced this issue with courage and brilliance and daring: he made Americans summon all the power that was needed to correct the nation's deepest flaw. And then America emerged from the struggle with potential that would grow under leaders like the Roosevelts. At last, when America faced the threat of Hitler in 1940, Franklin Roosevelt pointedly seized upon the Lincolnesque vision of a house divided when he spoke about a world that was divided into force-realms of slavery and freedom. And America, he said, would have to tip the moral balance by rising to the heights of global power in confronting "unfreedom." And the power created by a super-mobilized America during the Second World War would have done Lincoln proud if he had seen it.

When I think about Abraham Lincoln triumphant, what I mourn most of all is that Americans in general have little or no understanding of what this man could really teach us these days, and how his legacy has fallen by the wayside.

When I finished writing my books *Father Abraham* and *Lincoln's Way*, I concluded that my work on Abraham Lincoln was finished, that everything I had to say about the man had been said.

Maybe not.

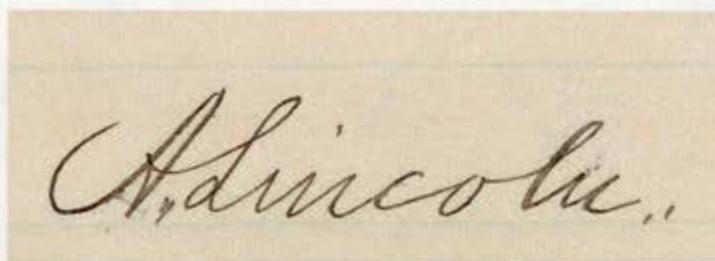
I'm starting to think about another book on Lincoln, perhaps a biography, a book to show Americans the Lincoln whom I think I understand. *Lincoln, the Uncompleted Life of a Genius* is the title I believe I like best. ♦

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Richard Striner

Richard Striner teaches at Washington College. He is the author of *Lincoln and Race*; *Lincoln's Way: How Six Great Presidents created American Power*; and *Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle To End Slavery*.

# An interview with Daniel R. Weinberg



One of these signatures is Abraham Lincoln's and one was written by Robert Todd Lincoln's son, Abraham (Jack) Lincoln. Can you tell which is the authentic signature?

**Sara Gabbard: I once heard you give a fascinating program on your efforts to verify Abraham Lincoln's handwriting. Please tell our readers about these efforts.**

Daniel Weinberg: Every day I face the challenge of someone coming to me with a Lincoln letter, note, document, or manuscript. I need to decide right then whether it is authentic and if I should put hard earned cash into it – and how much!

I see forgeries more often than I'd like to. Over my 44 years, I've collected quite a few – getting them off the market and, eventually, placing them in an institution for research.

Just recently I discovered that Lincoln's secretary, John Hay, also forged Lincoln's signature. During the last few months of the War, Hay had acted like a secretary, writing out notes for Lincoln and signing for him. This is justifiable, since secretaries do that all the time. [Although he should have designated the Lincoln signature he produced with the addendum of "(Sgd)" to signify that the signature is not Lincoln's but by a secretary.] But! Forging a Lincoln signature on a carte-de-visite photograph a mere two weeks after Lincoln's martyrdom is astounding to me.

People (even colleagues) place too much emphasis on the "three-tier" signature that is predominant with Lincoln. I've discovered that we need to give him more leeway in his signature. There are many times, for instance, that his 1840s signature creeps into the 1860s. And I've identified five different capital "A's" that he used.

**SG: I believe that Robert Todd Lincoln's son was quite successful at forging his grandfather's signature. Please comment.**

DW: Abraham "Jack" Lincoln did actually forge his grandfather's signature, mainly for gullible tourists. His own signature did slightly resemble the President's, though. We usually see this in books that he owned, particularly in the many examples at Hildene, his father Robert Lincoln's home.

**SG: Your book on the trial of the Lincoln conspirators is a standard on the topic. Why did you decide to write on this particular topic?**

DW: First, because of the opportunity, and second because my co-author, James Swanson, was already a friend who collected in that area.

The opportunity came in two ways. I had the fortune of separately obtaining both the original order to carry out the execution of the conspirators and a collection of all the photo images of the hanging. So I began collecting around them.

James and I wanted to write a book that told the story of the trial and execution through historical artifacts. The late Arena Books, a photography-based publisher, produced a beautiful book that does just that. Publisher William Morrow has since produced a reprint, both in cloth and in paper.

**SG: I have always been fascinated by the fact that Mary Surratt was executed for her role in the conspiracy, but her son John was allowed his freedom because of a hung jury. In your opinion, was this difference in judicial outcome simply a result of the fact that Mary was tried by a military tribunal and John by a civilian court... or was the evidence connecting him to the crime less compelling?**

DW: Well, Mary was executed because, as the newly minted President Andrew Johnson

said, "She kept the nest within which the rotten egg was hatched." She knew something was going to happen but did not go directly to the police. Under the law of "vicarious liability," she was guilty. Perhaps a civilian court would have been more lenient for a woman, but I believe there was enough there for a finding of guilt in any court.

John, who really was in it for the kidnapping and was out of the city at the time of the murder and probably did not know of it, was finally captured and tried. But by then the emotion of the earlier days was drained; not finding direct links, a hung jury let him go...to the lecture circuit, though it lasted only a short time before he was "booed" off the stage.

**SG: Do you have plans to publish new book(s) on Lincoln and/or the Civil War?**

DW: Not at present. I'm putting my time into our Virtual Book Signing™ venture instead.

**SG: What is the current "market" for Lincoln-related documents and books? Does interest in specific areas vary from time-to-time? Is it possible to predict these trends?**

DW: The market is still strong, though not everyone can now scratch that collecting itch. People still read books, and Lincoln and the Civil War era remain of interest to a wide public.

There has been some change in our culture, though. All of us in the world of business wonder if modern technology and all the forms of entertainment now available and the proliferating social networking sites will take away future readers and collectors.

Even though many schools are no longer

teaching cursive writing, still many wish to own and collect signatures of the famous – U. S. President, Civil War generals, and the like.

I've found that it is impossible to "predict trends." One might guess correctly, but it was based on speculation. Areas of interest to the public do vary a bit, sometimes leaving an impact, sometimes not. Certainly, when the original TV version of *Roots* was broadcast, the impact was seismic -- genealogically. Many people began to search for their own roots, and many found the Civil War and their grandfathers and great-grandfathers. They began coming in looking for regimental histories of their ancestors; when they found them, they then found the battles behind them. Civil War reading exploded! The collecting of historical artifacts followed.

But few mini-series or documentaries, timed for their specific anniversaries, impacted the same way. Indeed, many had none at all. The just lapsed Sesquicentennial of the Civil War was one of these.

**SG: I am aware of your "virtual book signing" programs, but I'm not sure that I fully grasp the subject. Please explain your programs, with examples of past and future participants.**

DW: I found that fewer people could make the trek to the shop for our author events and signings. So, I decided to go to them! We invented Virtual Book Signing, meaning the viewers are virtually with us in the shop. We expect the publishers to send their latest authors to the shop, where we produce an hour-long interview over the internet. The authors sign or inscribe their latest book and we send them out – all over the country and even the world (we have viewers and buyers in Germany, Australia, England, and elsewhere – even New Jersey).

Since we are essentially an antiquarian shop, we have the ability to show histori-

cal artifacts relevant to the book's subject; our viewers seem to enjoy these especially. We are a 19th century shop comfortable in the 21st century.

While we are live, anyone can email in a question and we will look into the camera and answer. We then archive each of our



*Abraham (Jack) Lincoln, 1873-1890*

programs for viewing at any time.

Of course we need to keep our doors open, so we rely on our reading public to purchase these first edition signed books, for themselves and as gifts. This is intellectual retail, as I call it. We have an expertise here at the shop of both our subject matter and the book industry itself. We enjoy the responsibility of choosing the titles that represent the best being published today; works that will last into the future and stay relevant for the next generation to absorb.

We have broadcast these for almost ten years now and have had a wide range of authors come through, including a number

of Pulitzer Prize and Lincoln Prize winners. Past authors include: Doris Kearns Goodwin (2 times); FCC chair Tom Wheeler; Jeffrey Shaara; Harold Holzer (5 times); James McPherson (3 times); Ron Chernow; Tony Kushner; Cokie Roberts; Edmund Morris; George McGovern; and many others whose names would be familiar to your readers.

We have widened our subject area a bit with authors such as Walter Isaacson, David Axelrod, General Wesley Clark, Newton Minnow, and others. [I'd have Danielle Steele in, if I could sell books!]

**SG: Now that the "sesquicentennial year" of 2015 is coming to a close, should Lincoln-and-Civil-War-related research and study head in new directions or stay-the-course? Or a bit of both?**

DW: I think we should "stay the course" as we always have, but heading in "new directions." Academics and talented amateur historians have always found new and vital information to write about.

During the Sesqui years, many terrific books have been published, pushing the boundaries of our knowledge and understanding. And they are of high writing quality as well, propelling the reader on to the next chapter. This is why Virtual Book Signing has been successful; the authors are excellent writers and interview subjects and people respond to that.

Readers may contact Daniel Weinberg and his staff at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, Inc., 357 W. Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL 60654 or at [lincolnian@aol.com](mailto:lincolnian@aol.com) or by phone (312) 944-3085. Visit [www.ALincolnBookShop.com](http://www.ALincolnBookShop.com) and [www.VirtualBookSigning.net](http://www.VirtualBookSigning.net) as well. ♦

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Daniel Weinberg

Daniel Weinberg serves on the Board of Trustees and the Executive Board of Lincoln College, Lincoln, Illinois, and the chair of the Heritage Committee, which oversees the Lincoln Heritage Museum at Lincoln College. He is also a director for the Lincoln Forum and on the Board of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

# LINCOLN

## *Through the Lens of History*

### The Legacy of Abraham Lincoln

by John F. Marszalek

Every human being, by the very fact of his or her existence, leaves something behind for those who follow him/her. This bequest might be good, or it might be bad. The predecessor might have been rich or poor, famous, infamous, or common, influential or unimportant, long remembered or quickly forgotten.

An individual might have achieved good things, or he or she might have been an agent for evil. Certainly Mother Theresa left a legacy, but so did Adolf Hitler. When he died, Ulysses S. Grant was a hero, but then he sank to mediocrity in the public mind and is now rising to importance again. George Washington died in fame and has never lost that luster. Thus, a legacy might be good or bad, permanent or mobile.

It is left to historians and to the general public to decide on the worth of a legacy. Sometimes members of the general public ignore what historians find and continue to believe in the worth of a deceased individual long after the historical profession has rendered a different judgment. For example, historians no longer hold Robert E. Lee as the unquestioned supreme general of the Civil War, but the public continues to view him as the leading military man of that conflict.

The legacy of presidents of the United States has often been a particular focus of those determining legacy. Historians and the public are mesmerized with polls ranking presidential importance. In determining such

rankings, the polls evaluate the difficulties during a president's time, his response to challenges, the representation of national symbolism in the individual, and the impact of an individual on the future. The higher the evaluation in these categories, the greater the president was, so the reasoning goes.

The most significant legacy coming from the American nation's past is that of Abraham Lincoln. Some individuals, still influenced by the "Lost Cause" version of the Civil War, modern libertarian views, or by ideas of Lincoln's alleged racism, hold him in low esteem. Others put him on a pedestal. Famous historian Roy P. Basler once phrased this situation well: "Lincoln the hero and the prophet is debased into a petty talisman, the cure-all for modern social and political ills." Abraham Lincoln's legacy is thus both a positive one and a negative one.

As a result, Lincoln is a never-ending source of interest. The number of books and pamphlets written about him is astronomical, over 16,000, second only to Jesus Christ. Juvenile books are particularly numerous because Lincoln is readily seen as a fit inspiration for young people. Lincoln's time on the harsh American frontier, his almost desperate desire to gain knowledge, and his love for his foster mother each present a variety of opportunities to draw lessons for young people. At the same time, adults can also learn from his early days. Lincoln was not the perfect child, and his father was hardly the perfect parent, but in growing up, Lin-

coln learned lessons that would affect him in later life. He is an enigma, an inscrutable individual. Significantly, the fact that authors are never able to confidently explain the young boy or the mature man's essence, only makes Lincoln that much more a subject of curiosity, interest, and inspiration.

Every American and hosts of other nationalities have heard and believe a variety of stories about Lincoln. There is the tale of Lincoln, then a store clerk, mistakenly short-changing a customer, and then walking a long distance to make up the tiny monetary difference. Or, there is the account of Lincoln taking on Jack Armstrong, the strongest man in his village, in a no-holds-barred wrestling match and prevailing in the tussle, or at least holding his own. When his town's militia unit volunteered to fight in the Black Hawk War, Lincoln, with no military experience but obviously holding a great deal of influence in his village, was elected the company's captain. In fact, Lincoln did not even know how to drill his unit properly. He marched his men to an opening in a fence only to forget the command to get the company through it. No problem, the story goes: he simply dismissed the unit and told it to re-form on the other side of the obstruction.

When Lincoln returned to his village and ran for a regional political office, he gained almost all the available votes in his community, even though he lost the overall count. He later was elected to the Illinois state House of Representatives and forth-

rightly demonstrated his political principles. A staunch Whig, Lincoln opposed Democrat James K. Polk for taking the nation into the Mexican-American War. He even introduced a resolution calling on the administration to show the exact spot where the Mexicans had spilled American blood. He introduced what came to be called the "Spot Resolution," that this skirmish had occurred not on American soil but in disputed territory. Yet, courageous or not, this resolution resulted in Lincoln being accused of refusing to support American troops in combat, and his later defeat in electoral campaigns was greatly influenced by his opponents calling him "spotty Lincoln."

Lincoln's career as a circuit-riding lawyer has also provided fodder for his later reputation. He is always pictured as an attorney for the down-trodden, never the smartest lawyer in court, but always winning through his superior common sense. Once, the story is told that a witness identified Lincoln's client as a murderer. The man seemed on his way to the gallows, but Lincoln pulled out an almanac to show that the night when the murder had taken place had been a moonless night and the witness could not have been able to identify the culprit.

All sorts of other tales enliven the Lincoln attorney legacy, and these provide examples of his ability to charm the other circuit-traveling lawyers and judges. Lincoln told jokes and stories, and his fellow circuit riders loved it. He enjoyed riding the circuit, and others enjoyed riding it with him. Tales of his six foot four inch frame spilling over a frontier inn bed only add to the humor, although his sharing of one of these beds with several other attorneys or complete strangers, as was common in those frontier days, has been used recently as alleged proof of his gayness. Similarly, his close friendship with Joshua Speed has also recently been cited as an example of an obviously gay relationship. Whether this will become a part of an untrue Lincoln legend remains to be seen, but it does demonstrate how all segments of society reach out to Lincoln's memory as a legacy to fit their modern needs.

Another controversial issue that remains a part of his legacy is the young Lincoln's alleged love affair with Ann Rutledge. Some historians find this romance to be unprovable, while others insist that it happened, his former law partner William Herndon recording remembrances of some of Lincoln's old friends recalling Lincoln's love

for Rutledge. The story goes that Ann was a beautiful young woman with whom the young Lincoln fell madly in love. Tragically she died mysteriously from typhoid. Lincoln, it seems, went into a deep depression over her death, having to battle it for the rest of his life.

Adding to the Ann Rutledge story is Lincoln's uncertainty about his later marriage. Mary Todd was the daughter of a wealthy family from Lexington, Kentucky. She frequently visited her sister, who lived in Springfield, Illinois. During these visits to Springfield, Mary had been linked romantically with the famous Illinois politician, Stephen A. Douglas, and other eligible men of her day. She chose Lincoln only to have him leave her standing at the altar. No one has ever been able to discover the reason for Lincoln's non-appearance, although his depression over losing Ann Rutledge, and, more recently, his possible gayness, are given as definitive reasons. In fact, Lincoln eventually married Mary, and, recognizing that her family considered him to be a plebeian, playfully joked about her lineage. "One d was enough for God's name, but not for the Todds."

The marriage of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd has been the source of a variety of rumors, then and now. The legend holds that Mary was a shrew who made Lincoln's life miserable. Conversely, historians argue that Lincoln was no model husband, and his constant travel on the circuit left Mary alone with the task of raising their sons. Mary also did not get along, at all, with one of Lincoln's law partners, William Herndon, and most of the well-known anti-wife stories come from him. When Mary suffered the death of several sons, over-spent her White House accounts, and later when her son Robert placed her into a mental institution, her reputation plummeted. Most people believe that Lincoln suffered severely from his marriage, but the legend and the fact do not match. Lincoln loved Mary. He was willing to accept her for what she was, and he was loyal to her. Their marriage was not an easy one, but there was love between those two complex personalities. Their joint legacy is one of a difficult love between two difficult people.

In the period of the 1850s, when Lincoln was most involved in politics and becoming well-known, the stories about him proliferated even more. The most famous, of course, revolved around the legendary Lincoln-

Douglas debates. The tall thin high-voiced Lincoln, debating the short, rotund, deep bass-throated Douglas, in open air venues, with huge crowds in attendance, has been a natural for interest around the nation, then and now. The politically experienced Douglas and the seemingly inexperienced Lincoln traded barbs and philosophical differences in long multi-hour speeches. The rowdy crowds, listening to every word and joining in to harass the speakers whenever they wished to, made for the greatest nineteenth century entertainment possible. The story has long been told that Lincoln demolished Douglas in these debates, such as when he backed the "Little Giant" into a corner at Freeport, Illinois, and allegedly forced him to contradict his popular sovereignty argument. The fact that Lincoln lost the election is rarely remembered, so the image of Lincoln, the supreme debater, remains dominant. Victory of the underdog over the political favorite appeals to a public which believes in democracy but sees the favored candidate always rising to the top.

It was during his presidency that Abraham Lincoln gained his greatest contemporary and later enduring fame. But his experience was hardly positive. Historians know, but many people in the public do not realize, that Lincoln was one of the most disliked and attacked chief executives in American history. His very entrance into Washington to be inaugurated into the presidency was fraught with disdain. Rumors spread that there was a plot to waylay him, and either capture or kill him. As a result, he had to change into a disguise and be whisked into the capital rather than make a grand entry before adoring crowds. Laughter, rather than adulation, greeted the new president when it was discovered that he was safe in the city.

Even excluding his undignified entry into Washington, Lincoln was an unpopular president. He received only 39% of the popular vote and was not even on the ballot in the southern states. He won because he carried most of the northern states and thus gained the highest number of electoral votes of any of the four candidates for office in 1860.

During his run for the presidency, he was regularly tarred with the accusation of abolitionism, his election signaling a threat to the slave system of the Old South. He repeatedly insisted that he could not and would not touch slavery where it already existed because the Constitution guaranteed its existence. However, he admitted forthrightly that he

stood for no further expansion of slavery into the new territories, and on this he was adamant. Most of the public did not make that distinction, and Lincoln entered the White House under harsh criticism.

In his first inaugural address, which was a form of legal brief, Lincoln promised that he would not touch slavery, and he even supported a proposed thirteenth amendment to guarantee the future existence of the institution. Yet this same Abraham Lincoln, just a year and a half later, issued the Emancipation Proclamation which gave freedom to the slaves on January 1, 1863 in areas still in rebellion against the United States. By the time he was running for reelection in 1864, moreover, he demanded that the Republicans put into their National Union Party platform a plank calling for a thirteenth amendment not to preserve slavery but to outlaw it throughout the nation. In his second inaugural address he rendered a judgment on the sin that had caused the awful war.

Yet Lincoln insisted that he was not conducting the war to end slavery, but rather to save the Union. Even though he had a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation in his desk drawer, he told newspaperman Horace Greeley that preserving the Union was indeed his major aim, and he would try to do it if this meant eliminating slavery or maintaining it. Yet he knew that the only way to preserve the Union was to end slavery and include the freed black men into the nation's army. So, in the Emancipation Proclamation, he freed slaves in places still in rebellion against the Union and added some 200,000 African-Americans into the "United States Colored Troops." Thus, he preserved the Union, and he ended slavery in a way that demonstrated that the two causes were intertwined. In the process, he opened himself to criticism then and later for not moving quickly enough and, conversely, for moving too quickly.

Lincoln recognized how racist American society was. He knew that the Constitution protected slavery where it already existed. At the same time, he believed that there was nothing in the Constitution that prevented him and his Republican party from working to keep slavery from expanding into the territories. He knew, in his heart, that if he tried to wage the Civil War on the platform of ridding the nation of slavery, he would not be successful. He had to base the war on preservation of the Union and came to

argue for the elimination of slavery as a way to win the Union-preserving war. This took time, yet he moved along, and both aims were achieved.

Here the two most significant legacies that Lincoln left for the nation can be clearly seen. He gave to the future a united and free country, one which was built on unity and equality, as he expressed it in the Gettysburg Address. Lincoln entered the White House with the United States splitting apart into slave-owning and free sections. He left behind a nation unified for the future, with secession a discredited phenomenon never again to be seriously considered. This nation was now based on the Declaration of Independence, with the Constitution amended to eliminate any legal justification for the enslavement of people.

Lincoln became president believing in the supremacy of the Constitution, and that was why he respected the protection of slavery contained in it. Yet he saw the Constitution as a flexible document which gave him, as president during a time of war, powers which he did not possess otherwise. His Whig philosophy of a limited presidency included within it expanded powers when the nation was at war. In this way, he believed that he had the constitutional right, nay the responsibility, to be an activist president. He was in fact the most activist president in American history to that point, and one who set examples for his twentieth century successors. He believed that, in times of national crisis like the Civil War, the president had powers that the other two branches did not have.

Lincoln implemented a variety of measures which demonstrated his insistence on being a strong war-time president. He read the Constitution to mean that he alone had the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, despite the fact that the Constitution expressed that power in the section outlining Congress's powers. It was the war-time crisis, he believed, that gave him the power to act, to interpret the Constitution as he did. Similarly, when he took office for the first time in March 1861, with Congress not set to be in session until December of that year, he took unilateral action to proceed with the war effort. Then, he called a special session of Congress for July 1861—not to propose legislation—but because he wanted the legislature to act on what he had already done. They did. They accepted his suspension of the writ, his calling out of troops, and so many other war-time actions.

He even established a blockade, though such an action violated his own position that the Civil War, then raging, was an insurrection not a war between two sovereign nations. A blockade could not be declared against an insurgent, but Lincoln did it and Congress approved. He thus clearly demonstrated to the nation when he was president and afterwards that one of his legacies was a strong chief executive.

Lincoln also had to deal with a variety of opponents who bluntly disagreed with him and his policies. He showed the nation that, no matter what anyone said about him, he would not demonize the individual in return. Even though Edwin Stanton treated him with obvious disdain during a court case in the 1850s, Lincoln still did not hesitate to appoint Stanton to be his Secretary of War because he believed he would thus be aiding the Union cause.

Lincoln's general-in-chief George B. McClellan displayed complete disrespect for him, but Lincoln patiently accepted that, too. One famous incident saw the general leave the president sitting and waiting at the general's home late one evening, while McClellan went to bed without any explanation. Lincoln calmed his irate aides and told them that he would hold the reins of McClellan's horse, if the general would only win battles for the nation. When his own Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, worked behind his back to try to take over the presidency, Lincoln displayed extreme patience and even appointed Chase the Chief Justice of the United States. At the end of the war, with the Confederacy on its last legs and many northerners calling for punishment of the defeated southerners, Lincoln called for "malice toward none; with charity for all." He left behind for anyone who cared to notice in the future, that the answer to conflict was not more conflict but patience and a desire to achieve one's ends—the salvation of the Union—rather than the punishment of opponents. Those in opposition, even in a Civil War, he said, were not evil; they were simply mistaken. The nation needed judgment and sentencing but could more easily be turned to the truth through "charity" not "malice."

Lincoln's time as president also provided later historians with a standard by which to judge other presidents. Beginning with Arthur Schlesinger Sr.'s poll in the 1940s, historians frequently evaluate the nation's chief executives and three presidents reg-



*Aerial view of the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. (LC-DIG-highsm-04781)*

ularly appear at the top. These individuals are George Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln, with the latter usually first. Historians rank Lincoln this highly, not because he never made any mistakes, but because his presidency was so transformational. The nation that went into the Civil War in 1861 was not the same nation that emerged from it in 1865, and it was Lincoln's ability and his willingness to act decisively which influenced this monumental change. Lincoln's talents were influential, but so was his determination to use these abilities appropriately. This approach was instrumental in the way the war affected the nation, then and far into the future.

Lincoln came to represent human greatness at the time of the nation's greatest crisis, and it was this fact which demonstrated his long-term importance. During the Civil War, he embodied the nation's highest ideals and values, and this is the way later generations have continued to view him. It is no accident that the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. has become not merely an awe-inspiring example of art, but it has also become the nation's cathedral. It is here that the nation comes to pray; although that word is never used.

When the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to allow Marian Anderson, a leading opera singer who was black, to use Constitution Hall, the concert was held in front of the sitting Lincoln, his visage seen through the columns—approving what he was viewing. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, African American leaders conducted a march on Washington to shout out for equality. Surely they could have held this event in front of any number of other monuments, but they chose the Lincoln Memorial.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ringing words about equality during the march on Washington found the best audience possible in the granite ears of Lincoln, the president who had been the first to insist on such change. When, soon after, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, Bill Mauldin, a leading cartoonist of World War II and later decades, expressed the nation's grief by showing the sitting Abraham Lincoln, in the Lincoln Memorial, hunched over with his head in his hands. Who but Lincoln could express the nation's pain and disbelief so poignantly? Lincoln (and his monument) remain a source of inspiration.

Lincoln's legacy has not been simply action and symbolism, but it has also included his ability with the written word. He showed his contemporaries and later generations the vast capacity of the English language. In no other piece can one imagine so few words saying so much as his Gettysburg Address. Using only 272 words, he talked about "a new birth of freedom" and that "government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." His first inaugural address which included the phrase "the mystic chords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave" and his second inaugural with the classic words: "With malice toward none; with charity for all" are masterpieces of prose.

Letters to his generals also show examples of his powerful talent with words. He told newly appointed General Joseph Hooker that "What I now ask of you is military success and I will risk the dictatorship" that Hooker had said the nation needed. Lincoln warned the general of his weaknesses, but he did so in a way that Hooker said made him feel as though Lincoln was a father talking to him, his child. Who better described the Virginia campaign between Lee and Grant than Lincoln when he told Grant to "hold on with a

bulldog grip and chew and choke as much as possible? In an age of Twitter, Lincoln remains a beacon of prose, demonstrating over and over again the beauty and the clarity of good language.

Despite such amazing skill with the words and his love for great literature like Shakespeare's writings, the Old Testament, and Pilgrim's Progress, Lincoln also had the ability to use more common sources to make his point. Often when he was grappling with a problem and someone demanded to know just how he was going to handle it, he would seemingly digress and say: "That reminds me of a story." In fact, though, he was releasing tension and giving himself time to think, to be able to respond most wisely to a conundrum. He would often open a cabinet meeting with a story from his favorite humorist Artemus Ward, sometimes confusing his cabinet members as to his point, but more often than not getting them to laugh (Secretary of War Stanton rarely even smiled) and taking the edge off their joint concerns. Lincoln understood the value of humor as a way to banish moroseness. He helped himself deal with his depression by looking to humor. He laughed so he would not have to cry, a lesson that not all those who have followed him have understood.

Lincoln studied the intricacies of everything he undertook so that his major decisions resulted from knowing the small details. He considered every situation carefully and was thus able to continue to grow in knowledge and ability and to manage change effectively. He did not rush to judgment, but when he made up his mind he acted accordingly. He did not enter the White House knowing the answers to everything, but he was determined to learn so he could act accurately.

Something that modern Americans rarely remember about Lincoln, and thus do not often see as one of his legacies, is the fact that he was a master politician. That word is frequently denigrated in the modern age; the worst thing that anyone can say about a modern officeholder is to call him or her a politician. Yet, it was because Lincoln was such a master of the political art that he was able to achieve the many triumphs that he did. Lincoln was always careful not to jump ahead of public opinion. He brought the nation along slowly but inexorably, to a particular position and, then and only then, would he attempt to implement that position.

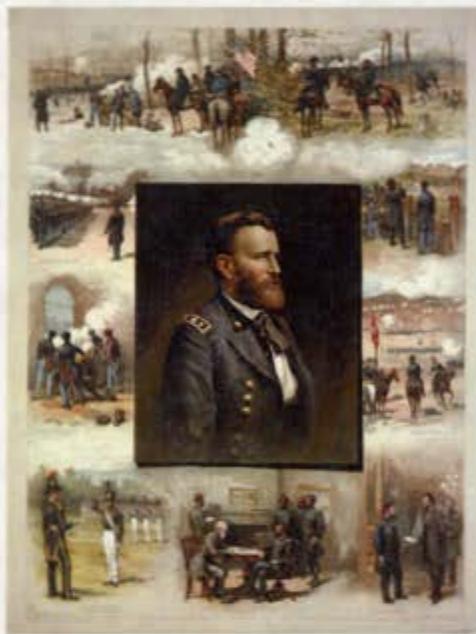
While he was dealing with the nation-threatening Civil War, Lincoln also influenced the United States in other ways. It was during his presidency, in May 1862, for example, that the Department of Agriculture came into being. Less than a week later in May, the Homestead Act was passed, and it quickly came to symbolize opportunity for both native-born Americans and immigrants. Even though it was not literally true, anyone, it seemed, could become a land owner. And to make sure that neophyte farmers would become as efficient as possible, he signed the Land Grant Law. Land was given to states to establish colleges which taught engineering and agriculture. Lincoln, who was mesmerized by mechanics and even obtained a patent for lifting a boat off a sandbar, believed in science for everyone. For example, it was during his administration that the transcontinental railroad began in earnest. While he was fighting a war to preserve the Union and free the slaves, he also transformed agriculture, and along with the transcontinental railroad, opened the West to the post-war agricultural boom. The man credited with emancipating the slaves and keeping the nation united as one also moved the nation toward scientific improvement and progress.

Lincoln left to future generations the example of the importance of being a visionary. He was a flexible individual, able to change directions when necessary, but he was also someone who kept before him a vision of what he wanted to accomplish. He had to preserve the Union, and he wanted to free the slaves, but how to do both was not evident. So, he tried a variety of approaches for solving both issues. His pragmatism with vision meant that he might have to compromise; he might have to move slowly, but that was not as important as getting it done — winning the war and emancipating the

slaves.

In the end, Abraham Lincoln left a rich legacy to the American people, achievements that he accomplished during his life which continue to be influential long after his death. The Great Law of the Iroquois Confederacy says it well: any individual must "look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations." Lincoln did that, and the American people have been the beneficiaries.

Lincoln thus continues to influence generation after generation because he is a symbol of so many things that Americans consider important. Particularly impressive is something that on the surface does not seem that important. He spent hours sitting in his presidential office listening to the common citizen, usually an office-seeker asking for something. He did not always provide the person with what he requested, but he tried to be fair to everyone and to gain the pulse of the nation. As he listened to common men who came to see him, he looked like one of them and exuded an obvious sympathy. His hair was frequently uncombed, and his clothes rarely fit him properly. His roughhewn face was the result of vigorous outdoor labor. He could relate to those who came to see him because he was one of them. And that remains his greatest legacy. He was a man who came from the lowest background to become the best president in American history. ♦



Grant from West Point to Appomattox  
(LC-USZC4-1886)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### John F. Marszalek

John Marszalek, executive director of the U. S. Grant Presidential Library at Mississippi State University, is the editor of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* and the author of many books, including: *Sherman: A Soldier's Passion for Order* and *Lincoln and the Military*.

# Teaching Lincoln and the Civil War

Part Two (Part One by Fort Wayne Towles Middle School Teacher Sally Benjamin Butler appeared in the Spring 2015 issue of Lincoln Lore. Students were assigned to write original "letters home" prior to the Battle of Gettysburg or to prepare letters to soldiers from their families at home, using spelling and terminology of the era.)



Battle of Gettysburg, Kurz & Allison, 1884

## NARRATIVE FROM TOM TAYLOR TO HIS WIFE

by Leslie Alter

July 10, 1863

My Sweet Love,

How are things back home in Florida? The children? Hope everything's hunkey dorey. Oh how I miss all of you! I know how dearly you wanted me to stay home, but I need to be here and fight for what's right. Hopefully the war will end soon. When I first came here, I didn't think I would be here as long as I have been. I'm trying to write to you more. I really miss everyone. I have been so lucky to find as many possums as I have here. No one compares to you and everyone else back home...

... Sadly, I heard that your brother, Charles, has a very bad case of the quickstep and his leg was amputated after a very ugly wound. They can't do anything more for him. Hopefully he can be sent home to you to enjoy what life he has left with you and the rest of his family. Many people are dying this awful way. I wish there was a way I could make them die without feeling so embarrassed.

With all the training they make me go

through, I'm fit as a fiddle. I have to repeat the same training a dozen times every day. I will say this does help make the process easier when I'm on the battlefield. I reload and aim my pepperbox without even thinking about it. Without this process, I most likely would be dead. It's a very boring routine though. Sometimes I just wish they would have us practice something else.

I never realized how the living conditions would be when I got here. I was thinking I would be a little more snug as a bug. It's very cramped. Many nights I lie awake, so uncomfortable I can't sleep. Very little to eat. I snack on goobers most of the time to keep myself from being too hungry. We cook our meals on a little fire outside.

Can't wait to be home again. Send the children my love. Don't worry about me; I'm doing what I have to. I'm just toeing the mark. I'm sending some greenback your way. Do something fun with the children with it. I'll send more as soon as I get some. Also, get some bark juice. We can use it to celebrate when I return home. I love you very much, and I'll see you soon.

Love always, Tom

*Butler's comments: Description of battle scenes – Students researched Civil War battles from*

*Fort Sumter to Appomattox. The battle that was most deeply discussed was Gettysburg. Regiments were given to students so that they could identify with soldiers more easily by following their actions in certain battles. Two of the regiments used by the students were the 20th Maine and the 15th Alabama. The following narrative takes advantage of the lessons learned about Little Round Top and how these two regiments faced each other there on the second day of Gettysburg. The student who wrote this entry did extensive research on William Oates, the colonel of the 15th Alabama.*

## CIVIL WAR BY WHITE DOVE

July 2nd, 1863

We have just marched over 25 miles into the northern territory of Pennsylvania. News had reached me that my brother; John had dropped out during the march. I decided to go back and look for him. I saw him there lying on the ground. He didn't look too good, and I figured that he was sick. It was for sure he was not in a good condition, but he was determined. He told me that he was going to fight, whilst knowing he could barely fight.

The both of us went to battle together along with our regiment, the 15th Alabama. Our regiment was put in the very rear of our

Confederate line at Gettysburg. I was given the orders to take the 15th and 47th Alabama regiments. We were to move around the edge of the mountain, to engage the federals at Round Top. We were welcomed with a fire of hornets as we set foot, from very few companies of Yanks at the foot of the mountain.

Leading my men, I decided to climb the mountain. As we took control over the summit the Yanks started to show tail. But a few moments later we started to engage in combat again, but this time against the 20th Maine under Lt Col. Chamberlain. Wounded and dead were many, including my brother. I was right behind John when he fell. He took 7 to the hip and legs while another took off one of his fingers as he was dragged to safety. It was the last time I ever saw him again.

We failed to take over Round Top and had to retreat. Retreating was even too late, Chamberlain sent his gallant Yankees charging as we fled downhill. We ran like a herd of wild cattle. Most of the men in our regiments were picked off and captured. The ones that survived were pushed back to the Confederate line.

I have to admit there were never harder fighters than the Twentieth Maine men and their gallant Colonel. His skill and persistence and the great bravery of his men saved Little Round Top and the Army of the Potomac from defeat.

*Butler's comments: Comments on unique soldiers – Students are usually fascinated by the women who disguised themselves as men so they could fight as Civil War soldiers. The following narrative is based on the true story of one such woman. Several women were researched before this student chose Sarah as her example of an atypical Yankee.*

## THE HIDDEN LIFE OF SARAH EMMA EDMONDS

by Eden Diller

Since I was born I was always known as a "fighter" but that never changed the fact that I was a woman. I was looked down on. I was mistreated. My father always wanted a boy to work in our fields, and when I came out wrong he hated me. So I left. I ran. No one was going to push me down. I stood tall. I would not marry that person; all he had was money. You can't control me. My

name is Sarah Edmonds. I never liked my old name anyways.

I wasn't born in the United States, but my heart lived there. I knew my daddy was out to get me and I knew I had to leave. So I became what my father always wanted me to be, a man. I cut my hair extremely short and wore some big clothes and I was off. I went across the ocean as Franklin Thompson. Soon I was enlisted in the 2nd Michigan Infantry for a three year period.

They led me to a camp where I met my fellow soldiers. It was getting warmer, and the flowers were comin' up, and to be honest I was happier. Even though the food never wanted to stay down, and these men had no personal hygiene whatsoever. The housing was literally a disgrace. It was cold at night and some of us lost our lives due to disease. They needed nurses badly, and I remembered one time I helped a bird who fell out of a tree. So I enrolled to help the wounded.

I heard from some of the men talkin' how we got a new general, and he was going to actually do something for the North. They said we might see some action. A few days later we were shipped out to the South, in some town nobody's ever heard of. General McClellan said the Rebs called it Yorktown. It must've been April by then. When we arrived, I stopped smiling. The noise blocked out the directions. The smell overwhelmed my brain. The sour smell of iron blood, of my fellow people. My body was out of my head. I shot. Round after round, I killed too many. We carried on for hours. We never missed a beat. The sky darkened to a deep purple, and we stopped. The firing ceased and I got some rest. As I drifted, I tried to recall the events of the battle. I found myself not being able to remember anything except Johnny fallin'. I liked him; he was the only person who helped me when I came to this country. We enrolled together. I dreamed of the bayonet piercing his abdomen, and his bloodied scream cutting the air. He was gone. I wouldn't see him again, but he wasn't the only person who got his life taken...

*Butler's comments: Comments on officers – Of all the Civil War officers the students learn about, it seems that year after year the Confederates are their favorites. The only exception to that rule would have to be U.S. Grant. It is truly hard to dislike Lee, Jackson, and Stuart. The students don't really want the South to win the war. They just like the tenacity and flare*

*demonstrated by the Rebs. Stonewall Jackson's death always leaves them feeling sad.*

## AM I YOUNG? (SOUTHERN SOLDIER FROM THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA)

by Lois Mamani

May 11, 1863

My darling Elizabeth, since last time we've talked I swear I've been through the mill. Just six days ago, we gained a great victory over those pesky Northerners at the Battle of Chancellorsville. Aw, I'm sure you heard about it in the papers. You might've also heard that just yesterday, that Sabbath day, we lost one of our very own, Stonewall Jackson. I was fit to be tied when I heard that it was one of our graybacks that shot him! That's right, he was ridin' back after our victory without warning or signal, nothin', and someone from the Army of Northern Virginia shot him three times! It could have been multiple persons, but I wouldn't know. All I know is that he had to get his arm amputated and died five days later from pneumonia. It's a shame, that's what it is. The rest of Northern Virginia and I all sure hope Lee has got a plan. They say he's lost his left arm, and I believe it too. No one was better than Stonewall in my opinion, other than Lee himself. We lost a great man. Now Lee's got us preparing for a Gettysburg Campaign. Of course we don't have to do as much since we toed the mark, but now that Stonewall's gone, who knows what our next preparations will be.

It's battles like Chancellorsville that make me regret joining the infantry. It was a smart play of things for us Southerners, but I'm played out. These sheet iron crackers have got me feelin' sick all the time. I'm thirsty, tired, hungry, weary and lonely. I witnessed a good friend of mine go down with one bite of a hornet. James Robertson, that was his name. We had gone through training together and had been through it all up until now; battle, injury, hunger, thirst, and now death I guess. He was a nice possum to have around, and I saw him go down— just like that. It's hard ya know, bein' in battle all the time. All you see is death or struggle. All you hear are cries for life, or leaders' orders. Even if we are winning, nothing can possible make us soldiers from either side ever forget what we have had to witness and experience. In battle, we have no mind of our own I'll

tell ya that. Everything is force of habit that we have developed in training. Now that I think of it, it's a little scary...how we've been trained to kill and deal with it.

**Butler's comments:** *Comments on the enemy—Both of the following pieces discuss the Confederate invasion of Gettysburg. The first entry is from a civilian's viewpoint and the next a soldier's. Their writings are what the students supposed each would feel about the Rebels being in Northern territory. It makes me wonder how different my students' work would be if I taught in the South. Would there be more entries about invading Yankees seeing as most battles were fought in Southern states? Even after 150 years, I think the war is seen in a different light depending on your latitude if not your attitude.*

## DEAR JACK

by Emma St. Peters

July 3, 1863

My Dear Jack,

It is quite lonely here without you. I miss your lively presence around the town. It seems that the city is darker, gloomier, and sadder than usual when it lacks your presence. We've been invaded by the Confederates. They have run the town ragged. There is a special place in Hell for those rotten evil men. We will set them on the right path no matter how long it takes, we will not lose hope. I decided to write you now, even though the conditions are not well, because I have not received a letter from you in quite some time. Also I have heard talk of you being sick. This worries me, though I know I will be in your embrace soon enough.

I have some troubling news. My sister's husband was wounded in the battle of Chancellorsville. We do not know how serious it was, but he will be home soon. Neither she, nor my family could handle that loss. A bit more news to tell unfortunately. My father has been accused of being a southern sympathizer throughout the town. There are whispers from everyone, even your mother is talking about him. As a result of this I have been getting some distasteful looks from the neighbors. I do hope you will be back soon so we can go to the place we have been talking about. I don't speak its name in fear someone will read this. I am sure you know the place I am speaking of though...

... I heard that Mr. Burns took his gun out into the town to fight. He just couldn't

stay in his house waiting and watching these Rebels invaded his home. The man is nearly 70 years of age and a little loony if you ask me. He went right on out into the chaos and started shooting some Rebs. He's much too old, and I fear he may die out there. But there was no stopping him, he would rather die than simply sit there and watch others serve their country...

... I just want you to know that I.... Oh my dear I'm extremely sorry I must end this so abruptly. We are going to my sister's house to bake bread for the soldiers. I will see you soon.

Fervently, Ginnie Wade

## AN EXCERPT FROM THE JOURNAL OF JONATHAN C. KILLIGAN

by Ben Stachera

John Killigan

88th New York

Journal entry: June 30th, 1863

We're still marching east. For the last 3 weeks we've been doing so. Through the pouring rain, freezing mud, and heat that hell can't even contain. The sounds of the guns are the worst. It's like a distant thunder without any rain. Even though we are kept well nourished, the bread is stale and the meat is stinky. Not that I'm complaining about it. The Greenhorns are saying that we're going to reinforce the eastern front and that the Rebs are trying to kick up some dust. The boys are getting restless, with rumors of a big fight spreading through the ranks. I can only hope that it's not true...

Journal entry: July 1st, 1863

Last night was mighty strange. I was awoken by what looked like a ghost, but it appeared to be me. It was as though a clear, glowing version of me was going off to fight, and an imaginary battlefield opened in front of me. I fought hard, but was stung by a hornet straight in the belly. As I fell, a Reb ran upon me like water on rock and stuck me in the heart with an Arkansas Toothpick. I was carried off by my men and thrown into a pile. It was horrifying that I dreamt of my death, but even more frightening to think that it might happen.

Later...

The guns are getting louder, and more unrelenting. We've marched all day in this blaz-

ing Pennsylvania heat. We know for certain there is fighting off to the east of our small encampment, and the Colonel is commanding us to prepare our guns and load our sardine boxes. The boys are saying that the top rebel general will make his appearance, so we'll be sure to get a beat out of him.

Journal entry: July 2nd, 1863

Chaos. Everything is terrible. We've encountered large scores of rebel troops, and fighting is everywhere. It seems as the armies of Heaven and Hell have come to engage in the battle for Earth, but I'm not sure which army is which. The town of Gettysburg is a ways to the North, and there is a small peach orchard to the Northwest. The trees are bare of any leaves, as the sheer amount of destruction made them all fall like snow. We were attacked in a field, and scores of men fell in mere minutes. I'm beginning to wonder if my premonition was true, and that maybe I will die before this nightmare comes to rest.

**Sara Gabbard: Is there a conclusion which you have reached about the way in which your students view Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War?**

**Sally Benjamin Butler:** I will borrow the words of Tillie Pierce to answer this question. Tillie was a teenager who lived in Gettysburg when her small town was permanently and dramatically changed by war. Years after the battle, she wrote a book called *At Gettysburg: Or, What a Girl Saw and Heard of the Battle*. Amidst descriptions of fleeing the town with her neighbor Hettie Shriver and details about nursing the wounded men, Tillie offered these wise words: "What in my girlhood was a teeming and attractive landscape...has become a field for profound thought, where, through coming ages, will be taught lessons of loyalty, patriotism, and sacrifice." That is what my students learn from studying Lincoln and the Civil War. Loyalty - they understand that it is possible to feel so strongly about something that a person is willing to give up everything. Patriotism - they comprehend ultimate unselfishness and love of country. Sacrifice - they grasp feelings of gratitude for what was given up so that they can have so much. My students realize that these people of the past have impacted their present so they can continue to create a better future. When the lessons of loyalty, patriotism, and sacrifice are learned by today's twenty-first century scholars, our nineteenth century heroes did not live or die in vain. ♦