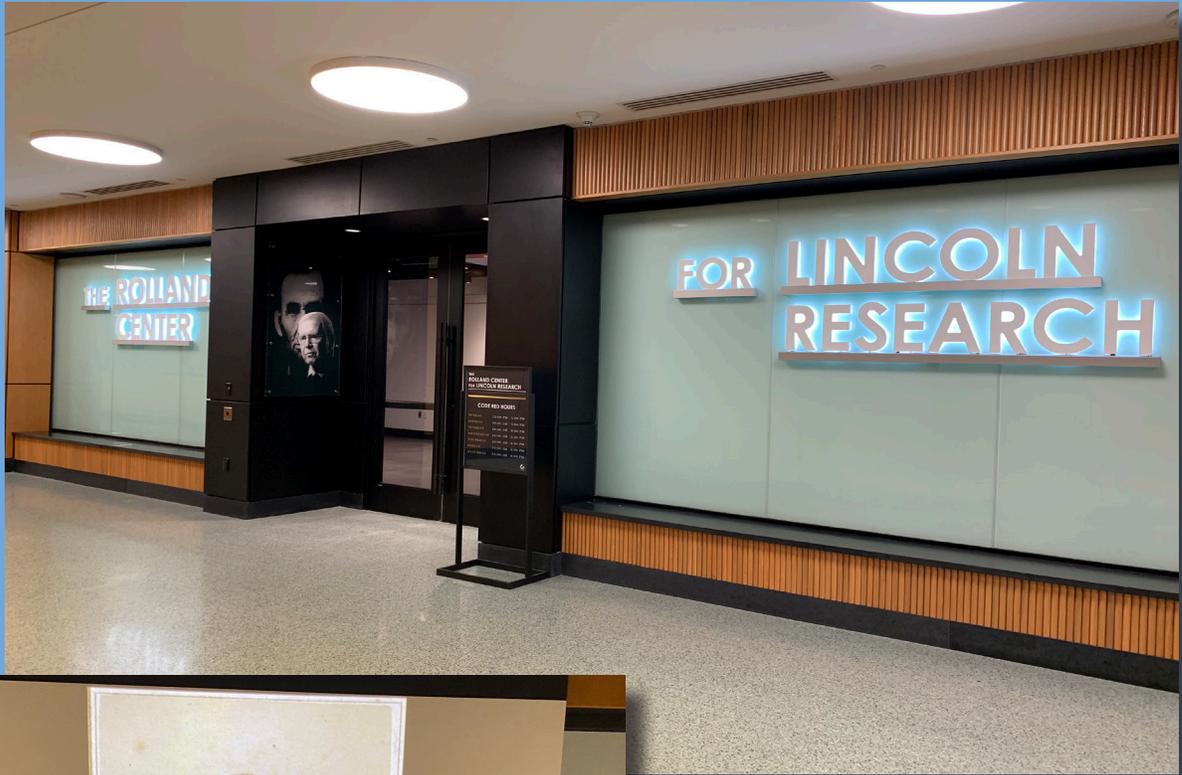


# Lincoln LORE

NUMBER 1932 WINTER 2021



Lincoln Lore is a publication of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana



## Accessing Lincoln Lore's Archive

Visit [www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org/lore-archive](http://www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org/lore-archive)

**Select** Years of Publication or Lincoln Lore Issue Number

Click "PDF" next to the specific Lincoln Lore and read, download, save, and share the PDF.

### Want to Search Lincoln Lore?

Type your keywords into the Google Custom Search on the Lore Archive page to find specific topics.

### Have Questions about Accessing Lincoln Lore?

Contact Emily Rapoza, Webmaster and Lincoln Lore Designer, at [Lincoln@acpl.info](mailto:Lincoln@acpl.info) or (260) 421-1379.

### Allen County Public Library

Emily Rapoza, Senior Lincoln Librarian  
Jessie Cortesi, Senior Lincoln Librarian  
[Lincoln@acpl.info](mailto:Lincoln@acpl.info)

### Friends of the Lincoln Collection

Sara Gabbard, Editor  
P.O. Box 11083  
Fort Wayne, IN 46855  
[SGabbard@acpl.info](mailto:SGabbard@acpl.info)

[www.acpl.info](http://www.acpl.info)

[www.LincolnCollection.org](http://www.LincolnCollection.org)

[www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org](http://www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org)

### Lincoln Lore®

ISSN 0162-8615

Unless otherwise indicated, all images are held by the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection (LFFC)

## Member Discount

Members of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana receive a discount for books published by Southern Illinois University Press. To order, contact Chicago Distribution Center at:

1.800.621.2736 Phone

1.800.621.8476 Fax

Order online at [www.SIUPress.com](http://www.SIUPress.com)

Use promotional code FLC25 to receive a 25% discount on your order.

# Table of Contents

**Harold Holzer** Lincoln Through the Eyes of History.....page 3

**Burrus Carnahan** Interview: The Nature of War.....page 8

**Jonathan White** Interview.....page 12

**Burrus Carnahan** Book Review: Morel *Lincoln and the American Founding*.....page 18

**Emily Rapoza** The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research.....page 20

## Lincoln Update



### The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection has partnered with the Allen County Public Library to create the Rolland Center for Lincoln Research. The Center will highlight the thousands of unique and significant items in the Collection including original photographs of Abraham Lincoln, his family, Cabinet members, and generals; letters and documents to and from Lincoln; diaries of Civil War soldiers; and so much more. Primary sources combine with modern technology to create new opportunities to experience Lincoln and his time.

The Center will incorporate an expert-in-residence program. That position will be open to a wide range of individuals, including scholars and artists, who wish to work with the Collection's materials to further an understanding of Lincoln.

There are four points that serve as the North Star for the Rolland Center, guiding the project team members as they work through the planning and construction process:

- Connect people to the life and times of Abraham Lincoln.
- Display and bring to life this incomparable collection of Lincoln materials.
- Deliver a 21st century engaging experience.
- Make the Center a destination for people inside and outside of our community.

Learn more about the Rolland Center at [www.friendsofthelincolncollection.org](http://www.friendsofthelincolncollection.org).

**On The Cover:** An image of the new entrance for The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research and an image of the Rolland Family visiting the Center. To see more, turn to page 20 to learn more about the Rolland Center. (photo: Emily Rapoza; Susan Baier)

# LINCOLN THROUGH THE EYES OF HISTORY

---

HAROLD HOLZER  
ON  
FRANCIS CARPENTER

Sara Gabbard

**SG:** When we first discussed your participation in this series of articles about Lincoln biographers, you asked if I thought that Francis Carpenter should be included. Obviously, Carpenter does not “fit into” the list of biographers who have used research techniques in order to write about Abraham Lincoln. Please defend our joint decision that Carpenter’s *Six Months at the White House* deserves a place in this series.

**HH:** Of course, Carpenter did not need to do much research (although he did excavate many second-hand anecdotes). He saw Lincoln up close and first-hand almost every day for half a year as he worked as an artist-in-residence in the White House on his monumental painting, *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation*. I think Carpenter deserves a place—an important place—as a biographer-in-residence because he wrote a source that every serious Lincoln scholar since has mined and quoted. Today, no book about the Lincoln presidency can be undertaken, or taken seriously, unless it uses and cites Carpenter’s memoir. And that’s because, aside from John Hay’s

diary, no book offers better insight into what actually transpired in the executive mansion between February and July 1864, the year of Lincoln’s re-election. And no book presents a better overview of Lincoln’s thoughts, hopes, and doubts leading up, two years earlier, to his most momentous act: the Emancipation Proclamation. I admit I also had a personal reason for advocating to Lincoln Lore on Carpenter’s behalf. I started my own Lincoln career writing about art and iconography, and Carpenter—as both a painter and memoirist—has been the leading character, and *Six Months at the White House* my bible. Remember, it is subtitled *The Story of a Picture*, and from the first time I read it, the book struck me as the best account written about the creation of a Lincoln image—in this case the most influential of all Lincoln images. I’ve not only quoted Carpenter often, I’ve examined his personal papers and scrapbook, written articles about him, and later, a biographical introduction to a 2008 reissue of *Six Months* published by the White House Historical Association. Of course I own several editions of his 1866 original. The little volumes come in a variety of colors, so over the years I’ve acquired a rainbow of bindings. The one I owned first (green) is so tattered by now, so filled with underlined passages and post-it notes, it’s the only edition I consult. I don’t want to fray any more Carpenter books than I have to.

**SG:** Did Carpenter write any other books?

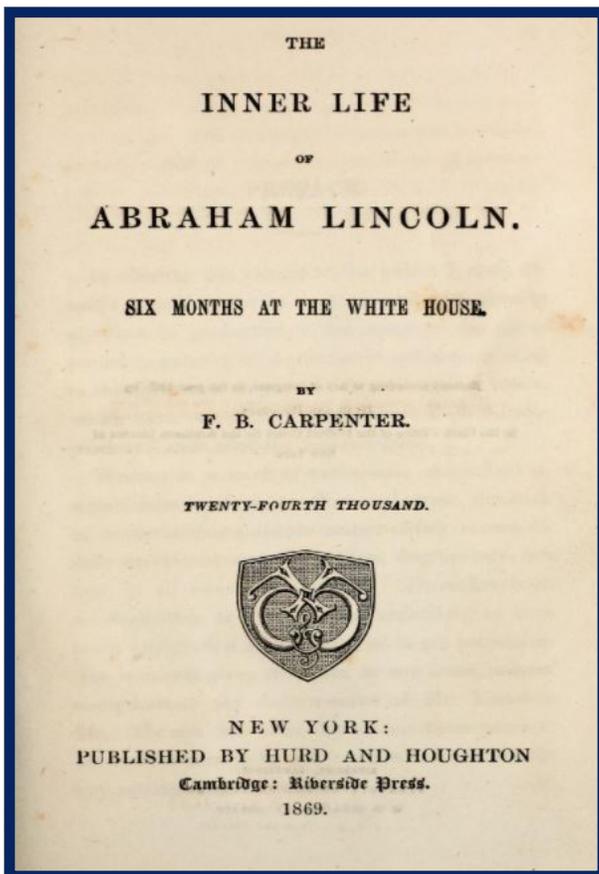
**HH:** No, *Six Months* was his sole book. He did publish a few pieces before it appeared, most importantly “Anecdotes and Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln,” a seldom-consulted but very useful 41-page essay printed as an appendix to Henry J. Raymond’s 1865 book, *Life and Public Services of Abraham Lincoln*. The essay actually contains a few stories that did not make it into *Six Months*. Carpenter also wrote a series of articles about Lincoln, one published just two weeks after the assassination in the

*New York Independent*, and another in June 1865 for the second issue of a new religious magazine, *Hours at Home*, published by Scribner’s. Alas, the only other book title in the Carpenter canon is *The Inner Life of Abraham Lincoln*—which was actually nothing more than a presumptuously re-titled edition of *Six Months* at the White House (its text unchanged). Otherwise, Carpenter told his “story” of Lincoln solely in his art—not only *First Reading*, but numerous portraits of the president over the next 30 years, several paintings of Mary Lincoln, one small picture of Lincoln and Tad, and a beautiful Lincoln family painting that the artist created with the help of Mary Lincoln. Interestingly, while his painterly skills declined over time, and the reputation of his prime work ebbed, Carpenter’s book has consistently remained an essential tool for understanding Lincoln’s life in the White House.

**SG:** Please explain the circumstances under which he was given such extraordinary access to the White House.

**HH:** It’s really a surprising story, but one has to remember that just before Carpenter appeared on the scene, Lincoln had granted another artist, Edward Dalton Marchant, three months’ worth of access to paint an emancipation painting of his own. As for Carpenter, he was a fairly well-established painter in New York City, having already painted two presidents: Fillmore and Pierce. Emancipation inspired him and fueled his ambition like no previous subject. He came up with the idea “to paint a picture which should commemorate this new epoch in the history of Liberty,” what he viewed as “an act unparalleled in human grandeur in the history of mankind.” And he wanted his to be a realistic commemoration devoid of allegorical gimmicks like broken chains and kneeling slaves. Realism, he told anyone who listened, was what the great proclamation deserved. Once he got hold of this notion, he was unstoppable.

First he got a wealthy friend, Frederick A. Lane, to finance his project. Then he went to Samuel Sinclair, an editor at the *New York Tribune*, whom he convinced to write him a letter of introduction to Speaker of the House Schuyler Colfax, beseeching him to convince the President to grant him



*Six Months at the White House*  
71.2009.084.00888

life sittings in Washington. Leaving no stone unturned, Carpenter also wrote to Lincoln's old friend, Illinois Congressman Owen Lovejoy, saying: "I wish to paint this picture now while all the actors in the scene are living and while they are still in the discharge of the duties of their several high offices...especially *Mr. Lincoln* as [emancipation] is the great act of his life." Lovejoy was convinced; he provided the necessary introduction to Lincoln, and in February 1864, Carpenter arrived in the White House and presented his case to the President, who promised to turn him loose in the White House. Armed though he was with good testimonials, Carpenter also had an ace in the hole, which I'm sure he played to the hilt to help him get through the doors. I'm talking about his childhood friend, William Osborn Stoddard, who now served as the so-called "third secretary" to Lincoln, assisting John Nicolay and John Hay.

It's really an extraordinary American story: two kids from a farm town in upstate New York who both ended up in the Civil War White House—one to paint an iconic picture, the other to serve on staff and ultimately write a number of his own books about the President. Obviously, Lincoln enjoyed having Carpenter around: he let him set up a makeshift studio in the State Dining Room, permitted the artist to sketch the architectural and decorative details of his private office, sat for life sketches and a preliminary oil portrait, and encouraged his Cabinet ministers to do likewise. He even let Carpenter bring a photographer into his White House office (for the first time in history) to take pictures the artist could use as models. Most important of all, Lincoln allowed Carpenter to walk him to Mathew Brady's Gallery just a few days after the artist's arrival. The result was the extraordinary photographic sitting of February 9, 1864, which produced both of the models that have been adapted for Lincoln's portraits on the five-dollar bill, not to mention the penny profile and the iconic photo of Lincoln studying an oversize book with his son, Tad. I credit Carpenter with creating those poses.

**SG: Was the publication of a book Carpenter's idea?**

**HH:** That's hard to say. I've never found definitive evidence to prove Carpenter himself initiated the project, though I wouldn't be surprised if he did. He was



*First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation*  
LN-1488

such a skillful marketer, even if he admitted, "I had little or no training for literary work." All Carpenter ever said of his "little book" was that "it grew" from "simple enthusiasm and affection." I think the project also "grew" out of the ongoing and interlocking relationship that then existed between art and publishing. Carpenter had arranged for his painting, *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation*, to be engraved. Its publisher was to be J. C. Derby, whose New York firm, Derby & Miller also happened to be rushing Henry Raymond's Lincoln biography into print right after the assassination. But the engraving was taking a long while to accomplish—it would not come out until 1866—and I suspect Carpenter was getting anxious that he might lose public interest if he didn't quickly lay claim to a special relationship with the now-martyred Lincoln. I imagine it was publisher Derby who suggested to his restive client that he write an essay for the Raymond book. But who knows? Carpenter himself might have come up with the idea, he had so many stories to share. In any event, as we say today, that effort, along with Carpenter's 1865 magazine and newspaper articles, got him a book deal—ironically not from Derby but from Hurd & Houghton, another prominent New York publisher, the forerunners of Houghton Mifflin. To me the question is why Henry Raymond allowed his own book to serve as a launching

pad for Carpenter, potentially a rival author; and why the canny publishing veteran J. C. Derby let the Carpenter book project slip away from him and into the hands of another company?

**SG: The author frequently comments on visitors to the White House and Lincoln's response to them. Are most of these incidents reported elsewhere?**

**HH:** Some are and some aren't. A few are tales told by people who witnessed them, or had heard them from others. Going through Carpenter's book is a bit like navigating Herndon's essential Lincoln biography. What Herndon actually saw or heard for himself is priceless; what he picked up elsewhere, less so. Carpenter's recycled stories are often charming, but they aren't pure gold. (To his credit, he never appropriated a second-hand story without crediting its source.) What is invaluable is what Carpenter observed for himself over his six months at the White House, and what he heard from Lincoln's own lips. He saw the President at work and observed his daily routine. He got to listen in on some pretty meaty conversations, although Lincoln occasionally joked to his most uninhibited visitors to be cautious because an artist was in the room. Most important to history and historians, Carpenter got Lincoln to describe the July and September Cabinet meetings at which he first proposed and then promulgated emancipation.

And apparently Carpenter was the only person, certainly the only future author, ever to ask Lincoln to recall those scenes! How do we know Lincoln “hesitated” before signing the final proclamation, because he worried that his hand, strained by New Year’s Day handshaking, would produce a “tremulous” signature? Because he told Carpenter the story! How do we know Lincoln read aloud to his son, Tad? Because FBC peeked into a room and saw the scene for himself. Do we need to season all of this with the proverbial grain of salt? Sure. Carpenter would later claim, or at least imply, that he lived in the White House for those six months. That’s an exaggeration, and regrettably, it’s been repeated routinely ever since. Then truth is, he never got a bedroom of his own there; but he did work there daily for half a year, and that’s saying a great deal.

**SG: What was Carpenter’s opinion of Mary Lincoln? Her opinion of him?**

**HH:** Well, for a time they got along famously. Carpenter was a clever fellow, and he wasn’t going to get on the wrong side of the woman whose home he turned upside down with paints, a

giant canvas, and an easel so big it looked like scaffolding! We know Mary at first liked Carpenter. She expressed “great pride in the success” of the *First Reading* picture. Seven months after her husband’s murder, she gifted the artist with a sacred relic: “a very plain cane” that had been “handled by him.” Later, the artist proposed painting a portrait of the Lincoln family—showing them as they might have looked when they gathered together (they rarely did) in 1861 before the death of their beloved son, Willie. Mary not only acquiesced; she provided Carpenter with a photograph of her late child, suggested another of Robert, and predictably recommended a flattering image of herself so the composite scene could be crafted from photographic models. And when Carpenter went on to issue an engraved version of the preliminary Lincoln portrait he had painted in the White House, Mary provided a rare personal endorsement, hailing it as “the most perfect likeness of my husband that I have ever seen.”

Most remarkably, Mary shared with Carpenter the frequently quoted (and dramatized) account of her last carriage ride with her husband a few hours before their fateful April 14, 1865, visit to Ford’s Theatre. The stories of Lincoln’s cheerfulness on his final day alive—his optimistic plans for their future—all come from a breathtakingly personal letter his widow wrote to the artist. But the friendship did not long endure. When Carpenter’s book was reissued under its revised title, she went ballistic. “I can scarcely express to you,” she told a friend of the late President’s, “how indignant I feel, when such men, mere adventurers, with whom my husband had scarcely the least acquaintance, write & publish such false statements about him.” She was just getting started: the Lincolns had permitted Carpenter to work in the White House, she now claimed, only because they sympathized with his “indigent circumstances,” but once there, Carpenter had “intruded frequently into Mr. L’s office, when time was too precious to be idled.” As she put it: “To think of this stranger, silly adventurer, daring to write a work, entitled, ‘The inner life of Abraham Lincoln.’ Each scribbling writer, almost strangers to Mr. L., subscribe themselves, his most

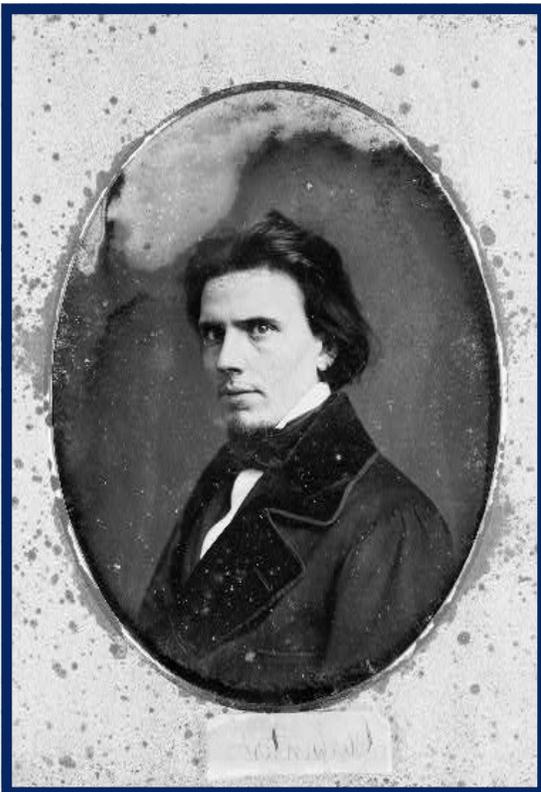
intimate friend.” Mary dismissed the painter as “a second edition of Mr. L’s crazy drinking law partner, Herndon, writing himself into notice, leaving truth far, far in the distance.” The two never spoke or wrote to each other again, which is really a shame. Imagine the stories Carpenter could have heard from Mary had he retained her friendship—though he never once quoted any of Mary’s revealing letters to him.

**SG: As a leading authority on art related to Abraham Lincoln, what is your assessment of Carpenter’s work?**

**HH:** Immensely popular and hugely influential. The best-selling print of *First Reading* was so popular that the steel plate nearly wore down from overuse. Sadly, Carpenter kept noodling with the Lincoln portrait in his original canvas until he had made a blur of Lincoln’s once-vivid features. When Congress finally acquired the painting in 1878, its Lincoln no longer resembled the man in the engraving. Carpenter had some equally bad luck getting his *Lincoln Family* painting engraved; by the time it came out as a popular print, the market had been flooded with inferior Lincoln Family images. Yet no one could claim more influence than Carpenter in molding the public and private images of Lincoln. Carpenter perfected the “Great Emancipator” image that long dominated popular culture, and also invented the genre that humanized the late President, and gave Americans hope that the late President had managed to find some solace from his wife and children during the darkest days of the Civil War. And to think that Carpenter simultaneously embellished his own reputation as an image-maker with an enduring memoir! Usually our most cherished Lincoln books contain illustrations. Carpenter’s unique legacy is that he created an “illustration” that was accompanied by an important book.

**SG: What is the general assessment of historians for *Six Months at the White House*?**

**HH:** I think it’s still positive—and grateful. As I write, I’ve just been thumbing through Lincoln books at random. I haven’t found a bibliography yet that doesn’t include Carpenter. He’s just unavoidable and essential. More than once, a colleague has



Francis Carpenter LC-USZ62-110148



*The Lincoln Family 71.2009.081.0169*

admitted to me that he'd remembered a crucial anecdote he wanted to include in a new manuscript, but experienced a bit of trouble recalling its source; more often than not, he would find it in *Six Months*. This is by no means the unanimous view in Lincoln circles; what issue is? I remember that Don Fehrenbacher once took Mary's side, and argued that Carpenter exaggerated both his access to Lincoln and his long narrative accounts of the run-up to emancipation. In his book *Recollected Words of Lincoln*, he featured 11 pages of Carpenter anecdotes, rating most of them with the letter-grade of "C"—for "a quotation recorded non-contemporaneously," which I don't quite comprehend. A few of them even received a "D"—for "a quotation about whose authenticity there is more than average doubt." My late friend must have been a brutal grader in his days at Stanford! After all, nearly everyone buys into the story that Lincoln hesitated in signing the final Emancipation Proclamation while resting his weary hand. That's straight out of *Six Months at the White House*. And it's important not only because Lincoln paused, but because tens of thousands of people of color and abolitionists were kept waiting in Northern churches while Lincoln held off authorizing black freedom.

**SG: While much of the book contains reports of events, etc., there are examples of Carpenter's assessment of Lincoln. Do these opinions basically agree with others**

**who worked in close proximity to Abraham Lincoln?**

**HH:** Yes, I think Carpenter's friend Stoddard, along with John Hay and other contemporaries, shared the belief that Lincoln worked incredibly hard, and that he deeply mourned the losses incurred on the battlefields of the Civil War. They've agreed that he read the bible, was something of a fatalist, adored and was quite permissive with his young son, Tad, and while he definitely enjoyed telling stories, was a visibly sad man. Where Carpenter treads unique ground is the deeply nuanced portrait he paints—in words—of the complexities involved in accomplishing emancipation. Carpenter is not hesitant about attesting to Lincoln's greatness. But I prefer the anecdotes that speak for themselves—like the scene from their first meeting, when Lincoln declared, "Do you think, M r. C\_\_\_, that you can make a handsome picture of *me*?...in a tone so loud as to attract the attention of those in immediate proximity."

**SG: Is there anything that you would like to add about the importance of this book?**

**HH:** I think we should not lose sight of the fact that it was as admired in its day as it has proven influential since. An advertisement in 1867 described it as the "great success of the year," noting that "one million

persons have read, are now reading, or are about to read Carpenter's book." Maybe a bit of hyperbole there, but it came after only a year in print. An 1879 reprint sold another 27,000 copies. Why? Because it was both accessible and authoritative. And because the publishers of Carpenter's equally popular pictures (in engraved form) promoted the book whenever they sold the images, while publishers of his book inevitably plumped the images. Many contemporaries had equal or even greater access to Lincoln, though for a concentrated time period—those famous "six months"—Carpenter may have run a close second to the White House secretaries. But few people used that access as ingeniously or immediately as Carpenter did. Remember, Nicolay and Hay did not publish their Lincoln biography until 25 years after Lincoln's death. Carpenter gave the public the first taste; and in his modest little book, whether it came in red, brown, or green binding, he came close to offering the most as well. His stories have yet to be challenged or contradicted—and sometimes, reading the conversations he recollected, we can almost hear Lincoln's own voice.

*Harold Holzer is the Jonathan F. Fanton Director of Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College.*

# The Nature of War: An Interview with Burrus M. Carnahan

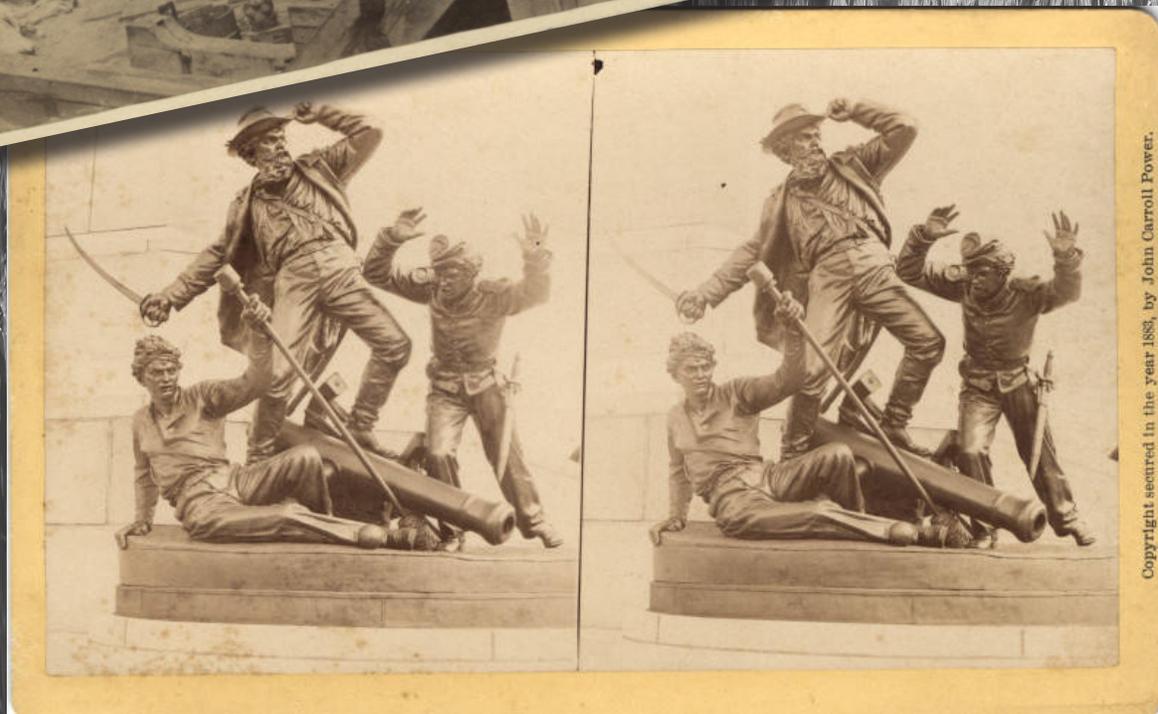


Plate 26 Cavalry Charge 71.2009.081.2115;  
Lincoln Monument, Artillery Group on Lincoln Tomb,  
Springfield, IL LN-0205

Sara Gabbard

**Sara Gabbard: A friend told me that a college professor once told the class that money is the only real cause of war throughout history. Do you agree?**

**Burr Carnahan:** No. For one thing, war is much older than money. In Western civilization, money, in the form of coins with an official, government-certified value, seems to have originated in the kingdom of Lydia, in what is today western Turkey, in the sixth century BC. (Historians believe the Lydian kings developed coinage as a convenient way to pay mercenary soldiers, so they were already fighting wars before they had money.) Wars have been recorded in Mesopotamia and Egypt going back to the early third millennium BC, and there is worldwide archaeological evidence of war in pre-literate societies farther back than that. War was common among high civilizations of Pre-Columbian America, even though they never developed monetary economies.

So, if not for money, then what did people fight over? The Prussian thinker Karl von Clausewitz concluded that war was the continuation of politics by other means. If so, then almost any dispute over political power could be the cause of a war, including property claims, greed for resources, or intangibles like ideology, religion, or even honor.

Take our Civil War as an example. Historians agree that slavery was the ultimate cause of the war, but what does that really tell us? Did the Confederates go to war to protect their property rights in human beings? President Lincoln had given repeated assurances that he had neither the intent nor the power to interfere with slavery where it existed, so any Republican threat to slave property was long-term, hardly a rational cause for immediately taking up arms. It seems more likely that southern whites were simply tired of being told that their core institution was immoral, and were ultimately fighting for honor as they understood it. The North also fought for an idea, the concept of Union, though for many that may have changed to include abolition of slavery after 1863.

**SG: What are the most important changes (weapons, tactics, strategy, fortifications) in the history of warfare?**

**BC:** As far as land warfare is concerned, I'd focus on five developments: the taming of the horse, the invention and application of gunpowder, the invention of the machine gun, the internal combustion engine, and finally, of course, the development of nuclear

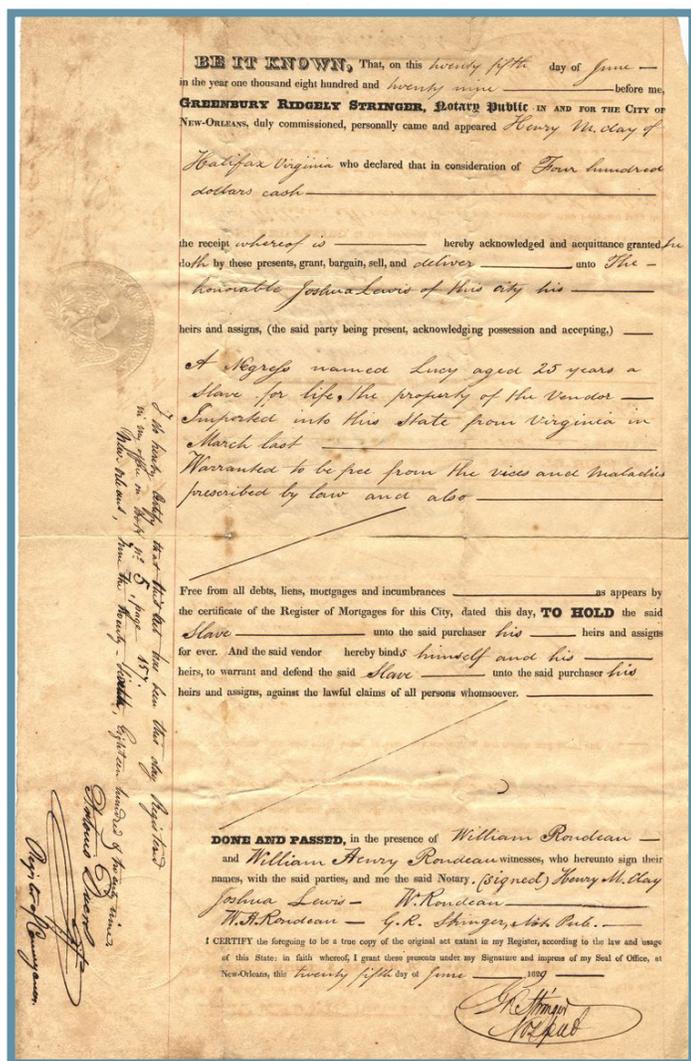
weapons. The development of cavalry, initially in the form of bronze-age chariot warfare, increased the speed of tactical movement and reconnaissance as well as the impact of shock on enemy formations. Infantry tactics responded, of course, and the pendulum swung between infantry and cavalry as the dominant force on the battlefield until horse cavalry was finally rendered obsolete in the 20th century.

Until the gunpowder revolution, fighting was an intensely personal experience; the soldier had to literally look his enemy in the eye to kill him. Archery was useful for causing attrition to enemy forces but, with a few exceptions, was not decisive through most of history. Also, it required years of practice to become an effective archer. On the other hand most soldiers could be quickly trained to handle the musket. Muskets and cannon allowed killing at a distance, expanding the area of the potential battlefield; decisive attacks might be delivered between forces that could barely see each other. Long-range artillery, missiles, and armed drones are the ultimate development of this trend so far. The next step may be the deployment of autonomous weapons systems ("killer robots," as their opponents term them).

Application of the gunpowder revolution in the form of the machine gun and automatic weapons in general, led to the demise of cavalry and a radical transformation of infantry tactics. Mass, close-order infantry attacks became obsolete in World War I, and thereafter soldiers had to be trained to fight individually.

The internal combustion engine allowed for the development of armored fighting vehicles, such as tanks and the airplane. Both increased the speed of military deployments and the airplane expanded area of conflict to far behind enemy lines by opening war-supporting infrastructure to attack. Sometimes, as with the 1999 NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia, such attacks could lead to victory without deployment of ground troops. The importance attached to such strategic attacks led to the development of nuclear weapons. These raised the prospect that full-scale war between nuclear powers could be so destructive that neither side would be truly victorious.

**SG: Please comment on the earliest**



Slave Bill of Sale 71.2009.083.00670

**mention of slavery that you have found. Were most slaves acquired through war, or were some purchased? Is there any evidence of slaves being emancipated in the ancient world?**

**BC:** As we understand the concept today, slavery means treating human beings as property, subject to total control by their owners. It is questionable, however, that this definition is useful in societies with pre-monetary economies. Egyptologists will be quick to tell you, quite properly, that the pyramids were not built by slaves. Nevertheless, the pharaohs, like other Middle Eastern and Far Eastern monarchs, had near total control of the labor of their peasant populations. Yet historians do not regard these low-status farmers as slaves.

Institutions we would recognize as slavery appear in the Middle East with the rise of large-scale warfare between competing empires of the second millennium BC. Records and royal monuments from Egypt, Assyria and elsewhere show captive peoples subjected to massive relocation and forced labor in the conqueror's homeland. These unfortunates were often sold or given to royal favorites as private property. Among other legal documents from the period, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (ca. 1750 BC) recognized that slaves had a different status from free persons, and could be sold like other property. While most slaves were war captives or their descendants, a free person could be enslaved for debt or as punishment for crime.

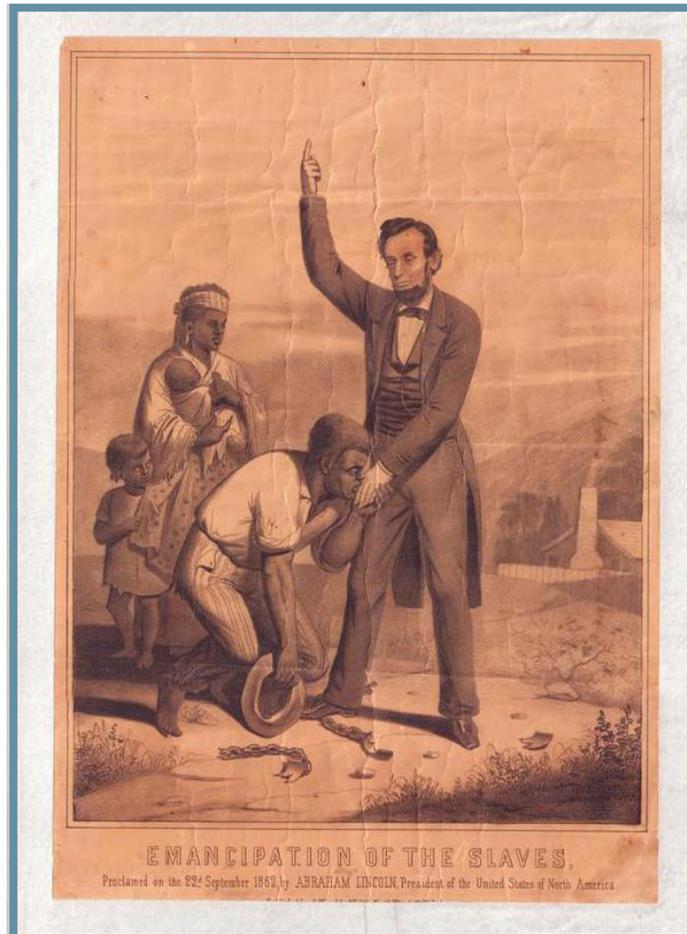
Offering freedom to an enemy's slaves was a common tactic in ancient warfare. A prime example occurred during the Peloponnesian War between the Greek cities of Athens and Sparta. Athens is famous as the first democracy, but Sparta was a highly militarized oligarchy. While male Spartan citizens served as full-time soldiers, their farms were worked

by a class of slaves known as helots. In 425 BC the Athenian navy seized an outpost on the Spartan coast at Pylos. This posed a direct threat to the Spartan regime as helots seeking freedom fled to the Athenian base. A botched attempt to recapture

and Spanish officials repeatedly offered freedom to enemy slaves during their colonial wars in the Americas.

**SG:** Is there such a thing as a "Just War"... or is this concept simply in the eye of the beholder?

**BC:** Today there is no universally accepted definition of a "just war." During the Middle Ages, Christian and Islamic scholars developed sophisticated just war theories based on their respective theological doctrines. These theories addressed the just causes for war, the proper means for waging war, and identified which authorities had the legitimate right to declare war. In the West, however, religious just war doctrine lost much of its authority with the Protestant Reformation and the rise of rationalism under the 18th century Enlightenment. Enlightenment philosophy attempted to establish its own just war doctrines based on "natural laws" discovered by pure reason. (The Declaration of Independence was an effort to apply this theory to the American Revolutionary War.)



*Emancipation of the Slaves*  
71.2009.081.1549

Pylos led to the capture of over a hundred Spartans, which in turn led to a negotiated peace favorable to Athens. (Unfortunately for the Athenians, this peace proved temporary.)

In the modern era, the earliest emancipation proclamation I have found was a 1697 Spanish decree offering freedom to any English slaves who could make it from the English colony of South Carolina to St. Augustine, capital of Spanish Florida. Though the countries were not at war, the Spanish claimed that the northern border of Florida extended all the way to Virginia, so in their view the English colonists were invaders. For the next 150 years, British, French

In 19th century Europe natural law suffered a major setback. It was widely blamed for having led to the excesses of the French Revolution, and lost much of its intellectual prestige. By the late 1800s, Western international law and international relations theory virtually abandoned just war doctrine, focusing instead on limiting the means of warfare by treaties such as the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907.

Just war doctrine was revived following the Second World War. The Nuremberg and Tokyo trials established the precedent that waging aggressive war was a violation of international law, and a crime for which the responsible individuals could be punished. This doctrine was

codified in the Statute of the International Criminal Court (Treaty of Rome, 1998).

However, beyond the straightforward conquest of one state by another, there is little consensus on which wars are aggressive and which are defensive. Some scholars argue that armed “humanitarian interventions” to stop serious human rights violations are not illegal acts of aggression, while others reject this position. Also, there is no generally accepted standard for the legitimate use of force by non-governmental bodies, such as so-called “national liberation movements.”

**SG: What is the history of the concept of legal punishment for “war criminals”? Should there have been trials of Confederate leaders or would that have led to even greater trauma?**

**BC:** According to tradition, if an official of the ancient Roman Republic violated an agreement with the enemy during a war, he was to be turned over to the enemy for punishment. This rule may be little more than myth, however, since historical examples of its application are rare.

We are on firmer ground in the Middle Ages. At that time there was a body of rules known as “law of arms” binding on all members of the European military class, that is, knights and nobles. The law of arms codified the ideals of chivalry, and violations of that law could be punished by any prince or official having custody of the accused, regardless of nationality. While most such violations involved breaking an agreement or other dishonorable actions, there is at least one 15th century case where a knight serving the Grand Duke of Austria was captured and tried by the duke’s enemies for committing atrocities against the people of the city the knight governed. Prior to execution he was stripped of his knighthood for having violated the law of arms.

By the time of the Civil War, the Medieval law of arms had been succeeded by the international “laws and customs of war.” Many of its rules, such as the prohibition on using poison, derived directly from the old law of arms. With some reluctance, the Lincoln administration decided to treat the Confederate armed forces in accordance with the laws and customs of war, despite its refusal to recognize the legitimacy

of the Confederate government. In April of 1863 the Union army issued a general order summarizing the laws and customs of war for the guidance of its officers (*Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, General Orders No. 100, 24 April 1863). Article 59 of the order provided that a “prisoner of war remains answerable for his crimes committed against the captor’s army or people, committed before he was captured, and for which he has not been punished by his own authorities.”

During the war many Confederate guerrillas were tried, and some executed, for violations of the laws of war by fighting or committing sabotage while holding themselves out as inoffensive civilians rather than members of the enemy armed forces. It was on this basis that John Wilkes Booth’s co-conspirators were tried and condemned by a military commission rather than a civilian court. The Confederacy similarly executed Union soldiers caught engaging in hostilities in civilian garb.

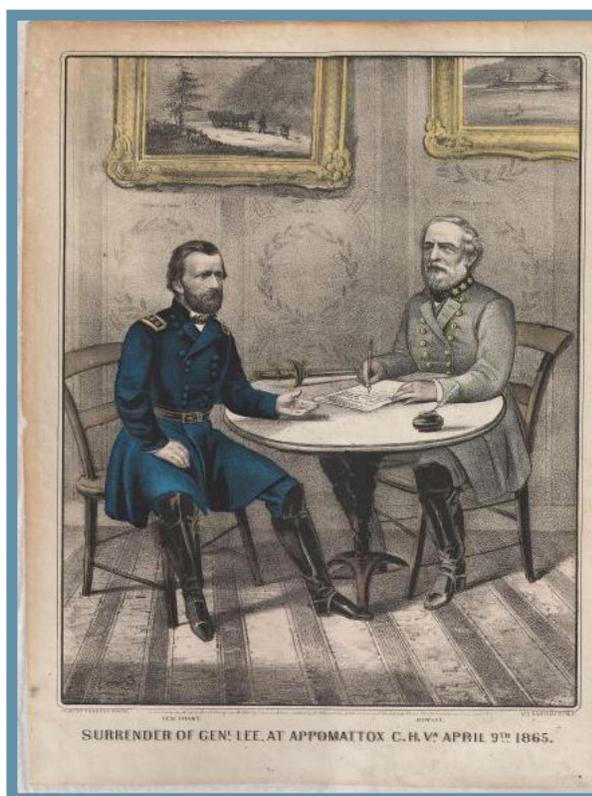
In 1865 a U.S. Army court condemned Confederate Captain Heinrich Wirz to death for mistreatment of Union prisoners of war at the Andersonville, Georgia, prison camp. In the same

year, Champ Ferguson, a Confederate guerrilla in Tennessee, was tried and executed for 53 murders, including the killing of several wounded members of the U.S. Colored Troops. In March 1866 James Duncan, one of Wirz’s subordinates at Andersonville, was convicted by a military court of abusing Union prisoners of war. While he was charged with one count of murder, he was only convicted of the lesser crime of manslaughter, and sentenced to 15 years confinement. He escaped after serving a little over a year, and by then no one seems to have shown any interest in recapturing him.

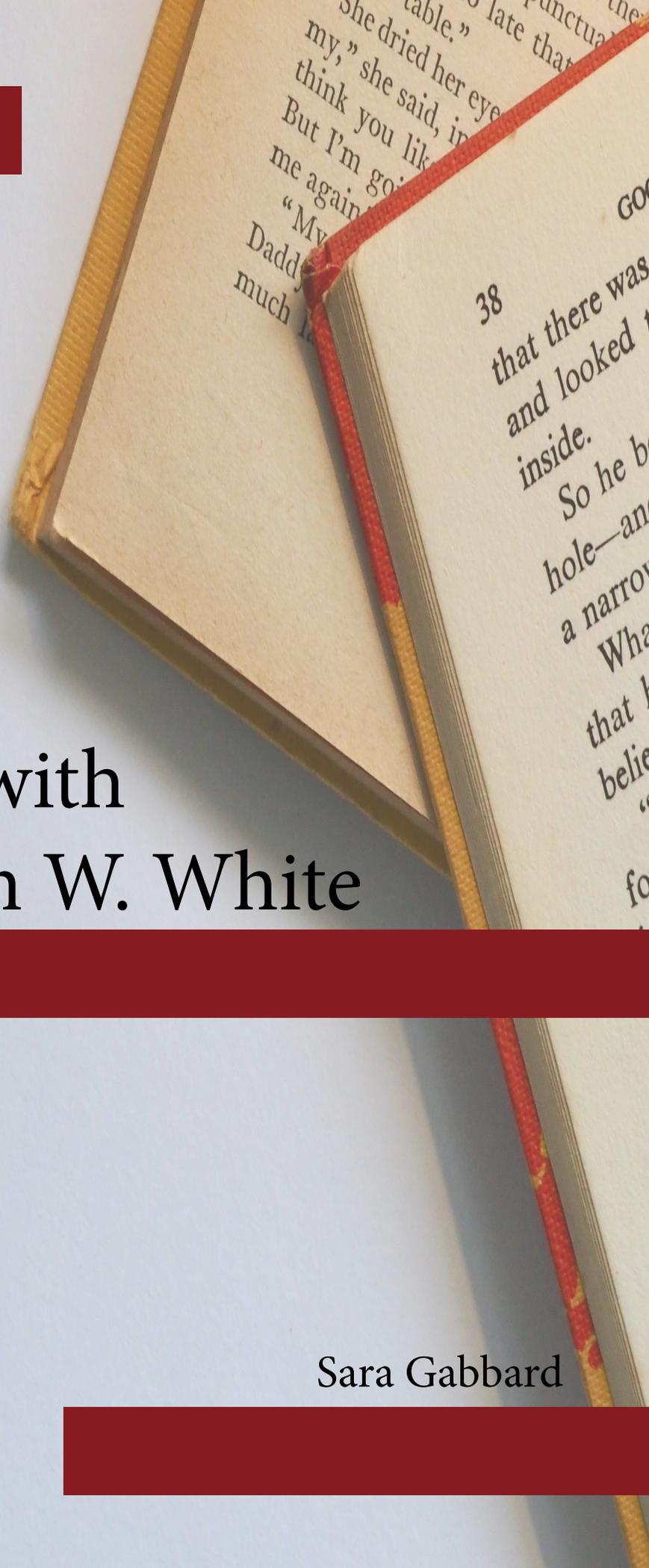
As Duncan’s case suggests, with the passage of time the government and the Northern public lost interest in punishing individual former Confederates. Similarly, the treason indictment against Jefferson Davis never went to trial and was quietly dismissed a few years after the end of the war. As commanding general of the Army, Ulysses S. Grant emphatically approved of such leniency as a necessary step in restoring peace. He personally intervened in cases involving former members of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, taking the position that the surrender terms he granted to that army prevented the United States government from prosecuting any of Lee’s men for past offenses. While this position was unsound as a legal matter, Grant’s prestige was such that his policies were respected at the time.

Today it is difficult to conclude that Grant was wrong. Punishing more individual Southerners would merely have increased the white bitterness that fueled the Lost Cause myth and the rise of the Jim Crow era.

*Burrus M. Carnahan is Adjunct Professor of Law at George Washington University.*



*The Surrender of Gen. Lee at Appomattox*  
71.2009.081.0739



# An Interview with Jonathan W. White

Sara Gabbard

**Sara Gabbard: Please describe the Center for American Studies at Christopher Newport University.**

**Jonathan White:** The Center for American Studies is a group of faculty on campus who seek to help students gain a better understanding of American history and political thought. Every year we put on a conference on America's founding principles and history, as well as a Constitution Day Debate. We've had a number of eminent historians speak at our conferences, including Harold Holzer, Allen Guelzo, Mark Neely, Lucas Morel, Gary Gallagher, Elizabeth Varon, Michael Burlingame, Michelle Krowl, Peter Onuf, and David Kennedy, to name just a few.

The Center also funds students to be research assistants for faculty—something we call junior fellowships. Junior fellows work closely with a faculty mentor to assist that professor in his/her work, but I've also worked hard to have my junior fellows craft their own research agendas. Over the past few years I've worked with my students to publish more than three-dozen articles in historical magazines, newsletters, and websites. I've been really proud of the work they've accomplished. They've placed pieces in several scholarly journals, including *Civil War History*, *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, and *Ohio Valley History*, as well as popular history pieces in *The Lincoln Forum Bulletin*, *Military Images*, *Civil War Navy: The Magazine*, and *At Home and in the Field*, the journal of the Society for Women and the Civil War. Recently I've also published two books with students: *Untouched by the Conflict: The Civil War Letters of Singleton Ashenfelter, Dickinson College*, (Kent State University Press, 2019), which I edited with my student Daniel Glenn, and *My Work Among the Freedmen: The Civil War and Reconstruction Letters of Harriet M. Buss* (University of Virginia Press, 2021), which I edited with my student Lydia Davis. The Center funded most of their time working on these projects and I couldn't have done it without that support. And for that I owe a big "thank you" to the Center's two founding co-directors,

Nathan and Elizabeth Busch.

**SG: What classes do you teach? How do your students react to subjects such as slavery, secession, and Abraham Lincoln?**

**JW:** Every fall I teach a course called "The American Experiment: Formation of Democratic Life" (American Studies 100). AMST 100 is usually a large class (well, large for CNU)—typically with between 45 and 99 students. To put that in perspective, most of CNU's classes have 19 or fewer. On the first day of class I walk in and without even introducing myself, I launch into a lecture on the early life of Abraham Lincoln. I tell them about Lincoln's parents; his birth in a log cabin; the times as a child when he almost died; how he lost his mother when he was nine; the time he was attacked and almost killed by Louisiana slaves; how he fell into depression when Ann Rutledge died of typhoid fever; his education and path to becoming a lawyer; and Joshua Speed's story about how he visited a prostitute but left because he didn't have enough money to pay her. At this point I stop and put a slide of the Lincoln Memorial up on the screen. I say, "I'm sure that most of you are really confused right now. You expected to go over the syllabus on the first day of class and you have no idea why you just heard a 45-minute lecture on the

early life of Abraham Lincoln." I then proceed to explain that when most of us think about Lincoln—if we think of him at all—we imagine a 19-foot statue in Washington, D.C.—an icon, not a real person. It's easy to forget that Lincoln was a living, breathing human being who experienced love and loss, heartache, sadness, joy, struggle, and triumph. I tell them that for the next class session they will be reading Lincoln's famous 1838 "Address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield," and that I've brought them up to the point in his life when he delivered this speech. So now when they read it they can think about Lincoln as a real-life person, not Lincoln the larger-than-life monument.

I know that most of my students in AMST 100 are taking the course because CNU requires them to complete 3 credits in "Civic and Democratic Engagement." I also know that most of them don't care much about American history, and some actively dislike it. I hope that by humanizing Lincoln on the first day of class I can begin to win them over—to show them that there is something captivating and worthwhile in the subject.

We spend the rest of the semester studying how the Declaration of Independence has informed and inspired various reform movements over the



Christopher Newport University, CNU.edu

course of American history. We start with the Constitutional Convention and then move on to movements like abolitionism, women's rights, and the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century. We read a lot of Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, among other things. I find that students are really surprised when they encounter these readings for the first time. Douglass's "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" opens their eyes to the evils of slavery in a new way, as does Lincoln's speech in response to the *Dred Scott* decision from June 1857. I think they are really struck by Lincoln's powerful metaphor of a shackled slave, and his argument that African Americans were treated better in the United States in 1776 or 1787 than they were in 1857. That, I think, is really eye-opening. In the spring I teach a variety of courses. One, called "Encounters with the Constitution," spends about a third of the semester looking at slavery and the Civil War—as the nation's greatest constitutional conflict. We read landmark cases like *Amistad* (1841), *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842), and *Dred Scott* (1857). We also read a lot of Lincoln. In this course I try to get my students to think about the different ways that judges have interpreted the Constitution over the past 230 years.

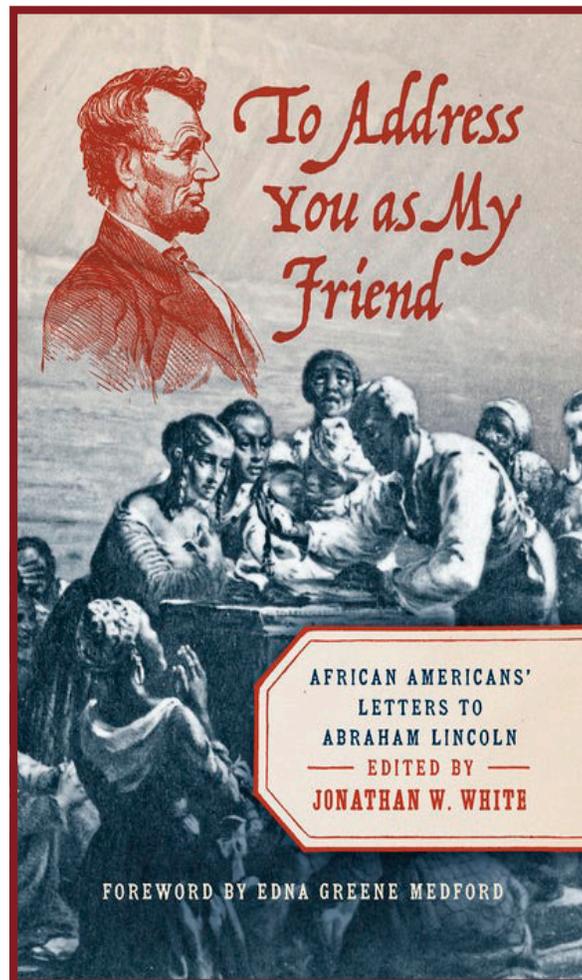
One of my greatest joys as a professor is the opportunity CNU has given me to integrate my teaching and my research. Every other year I teach an upper-level course called "Treason in America" (AMST 330) in which we discuss nefarious scoundrels from the past four hundred years of American history. I first developed this course during the Spring 2010 semester—the very same time that I was writing *Abraham Lincoln and Treason in the Civil War: The Trials of John Merryman* (LSU Press, 2011). I used to joke that I did nothing but think about treason that semester. Being able to teach and write about the same topic enabled me to finish the manuscript in nine months. Even more

importantly, it brought my students into my thinking on the subject and it enabled me to work through ideas with them that eventually found their way into the book. It is no exaggeration to say that I could not have written the book without the conversations we had in class, at office hours, and in the coffee shop at the library.

**SG: What led you to the material found in *To Address You as My Friend*?**

**JW:** I honestly don't remember what led me to start this project. I've checked my files and can tell that I began saving scans of letters from African Americans to Lincoln in Feb-

on their website. All of these sources lack transcriptions, so I just browsed through them looking for letters from African Americans. I went through record groups in which you would expect to find letters from African Americans, such as the records of the Colored Troops Division in the Adjutant General's Office. But I also wanted to find things that haven't been mined by scholars. I think the best finds I had were in the presidential pardon records in Record Group 204 at the National Archives at College Park. These case files contain incredible correspondence from African American convicts and their family members, as well as a few from black victims of crimes.



*To Address You as My Friend*, UNC Press

bruary 2015, but I can no longer remember how I got the idea. I found most of the letters on the website of The Papers of Abraham Lincoln (PAL) project. PAL has put almost 82,000 scans of letters and other documents

A few of the letters in my book are well known. I have letters from the Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, including the famous letters from Frederick Douglass and from Lincoln's old friend William Florville ("Billy the Barber"). I have also turned up some things that will be new to people in the Lincoln field. The famous black spiritualist and "sex magician" Paschal B. Randolph wrote to Lincoln about raising black troops for the Union Army. A group of Odd Fellows in Washington, D.C., sent him an invitation to attend their anniversary celebration in 1863. Some of the correspondents went on to achieve renown in state and national politics. Rev. Richard H. Cain, who would later serve in Congress, sought financial assistance for his ministry to former slaves. Aaron A. Bradley, who would become a prominent labor leader in Georgia during Reconstruction, wrote to Lincoln in April 1861 seeking a federal appointment. The last letter I discovered was by Benjamin Franklin Randolph. I found it during the copyediting phase and was able to squeeze it in.

I then was able to work his picture into the book when I was working on the page proofs. Randolph was a chaplain in a USCT regiment during the war and he wrote to Lincoln asking for chaplains to get new uniforms

that distinguished them from ordinary clergymen so that they would not suffer “indignities.” After the war Randolph became a state senator in South Carolina, where he also served as chairman of the Republican State Central Committee. Unfortunately, in 1868 he was brutally assassinated at a train depot in broad daylight by members of the Ku Klux Klan. Most of the letters, though, were written by ordinary Americans who needed some sort of help, and most of them will be new to readers. Out of the 125 or so letters in the book, only fourteen appear in the volumes of the Freedmen and Southern Society Project.

**SG: Are there some underlying concerns in many of the letters? Any hopeful/positive feelings?**

**JW:** African American men and women, from both the North and the South, frequently wrote about justice and equality. Men who were serving in the Union Army were justifiably angry when they did not receive equal pay as white soldiers, so they wrote to Lincoln about it. Their families back home were also gravely affected by this issue. If soldiers weren’t paid on time, or at all, it was their families that suffered. Many wives and parents wrote to Lincoln asking for their husbands and sons to get paid—and to receive the full pay and bounties they were promised when they enlisted.

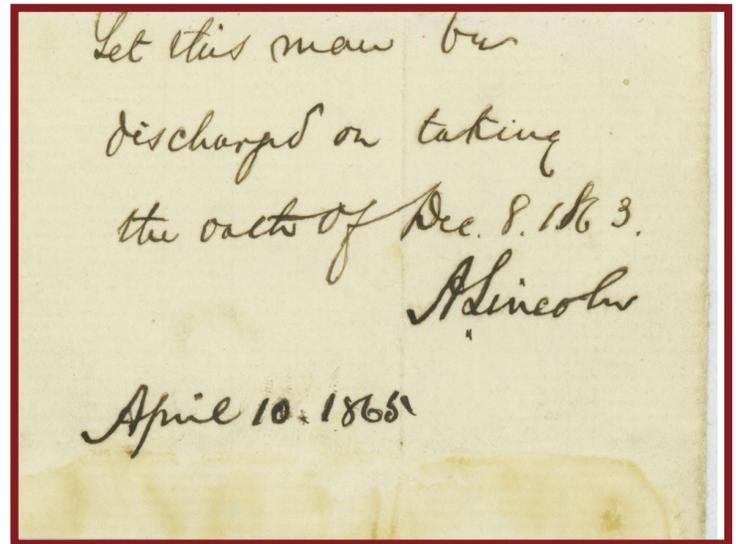
Concerns regarding justice and equality are also found throughout the letters of civilians. Some freedpeople who were working on government farms in the South wrote to Lincoln to say that they should get the same pay as white workers. At least two groups of southern African Americans personally presented petitions to Lincoln asking for the right to vote. African Americans realized that the Civil War was bringing about profound changes, and they decided to go straight to the Commander in Chief to push for their rights.

**SG: From the contents of the letters, can you develop a theory as to the way that the writers thought of Abraham Lincoln?**

**JW:** Many African Americans believed they had a “friend” in Abraham Lin-

coln. A number of them called him their “friend” in their letters, or wrote to him as a last resort, telling him that they were “friendless.” When Lincoln died, at least one even exclaimed that he felt like he had lost a friend. So I called the book *To Address You As My Friend*, which is a quote from one of the letters. I think that phrase captures the personal connection that many African Americans felt to Lincoln during his presidency. This, I think, is one of the most important contributions of this collection. Much of what we know about how African Americans viewed Lincoln comes from problematic sources—either the Works Progress Administration (WPA) slave narratives from the 1930s, or filtered through the pens of white Americans who wrote down what they heard—or thought they heard—black people say. In these letters, by contrast, we get black correspondents writing to Lincoln and telling him what they think.

I call the final chapter of the book “Mementos.” This chapter includes letters of gratitude that former slaves sent to Lincoln, as well as gifts, poems, and resolutions of thanks for the Emancipation Proclamation. Almost all of these letters are housed in the Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, which signifies that Lincoln kept them for himself, rather than routing them through the vast federal bureaucracy. (If he had done that, they would now be housed in a record group at the National Archives.) I think Lincoln’s decision to hold onto these letters says something special about how he viewed this correspondence from African Americans. In one of my favorites, a former slave told Lincoln about how he dreamt about him before the war. I actually discussed this letter in *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams during the Civil War* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017). In another very moving letter, a black soldier



Note of Discharge 71.2009.083.00123

describes how much Lincoln’s reelection meant to one of his comrades.

**SG: You include letters from both African American soldiers and civilians? Are their attitudes similar?**

**JW:** There are a lot of similarities in their attitudes about the war. Two themes that inform many of the letters are poverty and suffering. Of course, many Americans, regardless of their race, were suffering in unbelievably awful ways during the Civil War. But African American suffering was more acute in some ways because of the additional sting of racial prejudice. Not only did black soldiers face injustice from federal authorities (unequal pay, inferior weapons, fatigue duty)—they also risked being murdered or enslaved by the Confederates if they were captured on the battlefield. So black soldiers really understood that a lot was at stake when they decided to enlist. Their family members also suffered. They needed pay and they worried about the safety of their loved ones in the army. So whether soldier or civilian, they wrote to Lincoln seeking redress.

A lot of the letters from soldiers and civilians have to do with military recruitment. Some soldiers and civilians wrote to Lincoln telling him about how they’d recruited men into the ranks, and that they were willing to do more of that sort of work. In some cases, men were arrested for illegal recruitment practices, and so they wrote to Lincoln asking for release

from prison. A number of the “recruitment” letters show unseemly aspects of the draft system—for instance, how freedmen in the Border States were often rounded up without an official draft and were forced into the ranks against their will. These actions, of course, could have terrible consequences for their wives and children.

And this makes me think of another major theme. Soldiers and their families often wrote to Lincoln or other federal officials asking for discharge from the army—especially for minors who’d enlisted without their parents’ permission. In one letter, a father compared his son’s commanding officer to Captain Nathaniel Gordon, the infamous slave trader who was executed in 1862. The father said that the army was kidnapping his minor-son in the same way that Gordon kidnapped and enslaved Africans. In another fascinating series of letters, a Pennsylvanian who’d enlisted as a minor tried to deceive Lincoln by writing letters in his father’s name to make Lincoln think that his father was asking for his son’s release.

**SG: Who was Harriet M. Buss?**

**JW:** Harriet Buss was a middle-class, Baptist woman in her mid-thirties from Massachusetts who traveled south during the Civil War to teach freedpeople. She was born in 1826 and was well educated. In the 1850s she began teaching white students in Massachusetts. Then for a time she traveled out to Ohio and Illinois to teach. Her earliest correspondence that survives is from 1850. Throughout her life she talked about wanting to make a difference in the world. By 1862 she saw that she could do something of significance by teaching former slaves in the South.

The thing that is really incredible about her letters is their breadth. Most northern teachers who went to the South spent only a short period of time there, probably not more than two years. Harriet, by contrast, went south time and again. She spent 1863-1864 in Beaufort and Hilton Head, South Carolina. From 1868 to 1869 she taught in Norfolk, Virginia. From 1869 to 1871 she taught in Raleigh, North Carolina, where she helped found Shaw University. At the end of

her life, in the 1890s, she returned to Shaw. She really led a remarkable, selfless life. In reading through her letters, you can also see a shift in attitude toward her students. At first she wrote in some mildly condescending ways about her students, but by the late 1860s or early 1870s she sees herself as on a mission *with* her students.

**SG: Did her work put her in danger, or at least lead to severe criticism?**

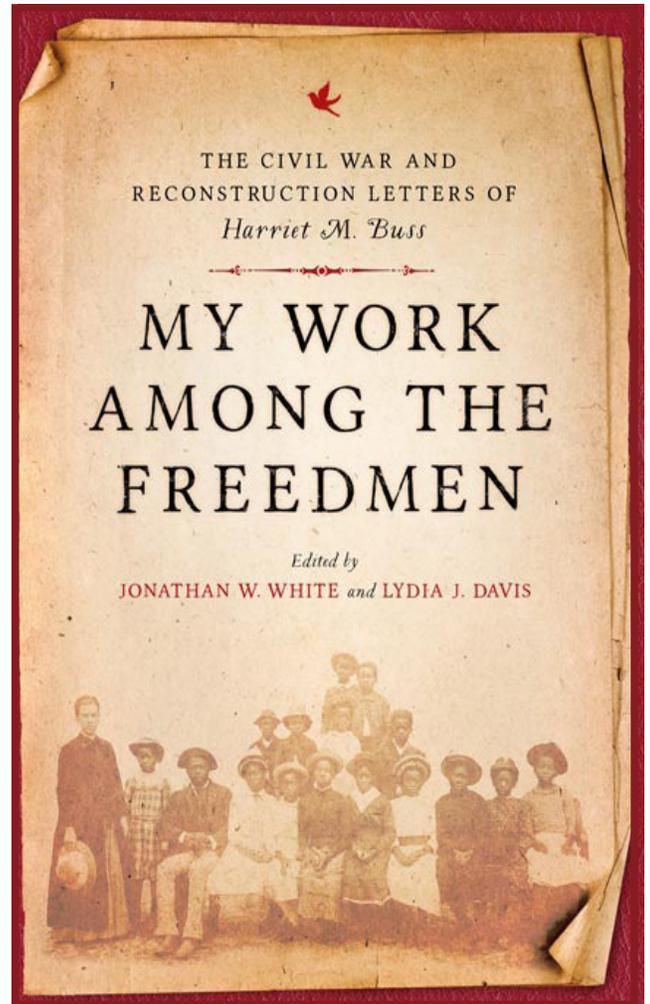
**JW:** Harriet never felt in danger in the South. Part of that is because she tended to be in places with a strong military presence. But part of it was her personality. She was very strong-willed and independent. Very brave. She didn’t want men to “domineer” over her, telling her where to go or how to live.

When she got to the South, she was anxious to see what was to be seen. I actually first came across her letters around 2014 when I was writing *Midnight in America*. In 1863 Harriet had a dream about going into combat, as many northern women did. She described not being at all afraid in her dream. In her waking hours, she wrote about wanting to fight in the war, or to witness a battle. When she visited Hampton, Virginia, in 1869, she reflected on the Battle of Hampton Roads and said she wished she could see a fight between ironclads.

Of course, Harriet was aware of the threats of the Ku Klux Klan and she wrote about them on several occasions when she was living in North Carolina. But the Klan was outside of the urban area where she was living, so she never really feared for her own safety. For the most part, southern whites appeared to leave her and her fellow teachers alone. She wrote on several occasions that she had no “southern society” in the South, but that didn’t both-

er her at all. She loved her students and her fellow teachers, and she had plenty of fun times with them.

Along the way she also met a number of famous people. In South Carolina she had dinner with Lincoln’s private secretary, John Hay, and she was quite taken with him. She also met Dorothea Dix and Union generals Rufus Saxton and David Hunt-



*My Work Among the Freedmen, UVA Press*

er. Her description of Colonel James Montgomery is fascinating, and she very clearly did not like General Hunter. Harriet’s most famous student was the ex-slave Robert Smalls. In fact, she was the person who taught him how to read and write. Her diary records some new information about Smalls that hasn’t been seen before, including some incredible remarks he made about white southern women and interracial marriage.

**SG: What was her opinion of Reconstruction?**

**JW:** Harriet's primary goal in the postwar period was to train black teachers to "radiate" their "light" into African American communities throughout the South. At the Raleigh Baptist Institute, which later became Shaw University, she taught future teachers and ministers. She believed that the best way for African Americans to come out of slavery and into citizenship was by being taught by fellow African Americans. She often had her best students assist her in the classroom and in Sunday School.

Politically, Harriet was a Republican. In 1859, when she was teaching in Illinois, she penned a letter to her parents decrying the politics of Stephen A. Douglas. In 1867, she wrote of her disgust with Andrew Johnson and said she would refuse to shake his hand if given the opportunity. In 1868, she had a lot to say about the presidential election, and she celebrated Ulysses S. Grant's victory.

Harriet was deeply concerned by what she saw as the threat of Roman Catholicism. She frequently described the work of Catholic missionaries among former slaves, which she worried about for both political and religious reasons. As a Baptist, she feared that the freedpeople would

come to accept heretical doctrines. From a political perspective, she worried that the Jesuits would persuade freedmen to vote Democratic. A major theme in her letters is how she and her fellow teachers should strive to teach the freedpeople not to fall for the lies emanating from Rome.

**SG: Did she believe that the federal government was doing enough to promote the status and well-being of former slaves?**

**JW:** Surprisingly, Harriet didn't say a whole lot about this. In one letter from Norfolk she described the work of the Freedmen's Bureau to supply African Americans with daily provisions, but that is the only thing that comes to mind. That said, she frequently described the poverty and living conditions of the formerly enslaved. This was often within the context of her asking the folks at home to send her old clothes, linens and supplies that she could distribute to the poor.

Some of her most touching letters are about a student in Raleigh named Thomas Noel. During the war Noel fought with the 54th USCT (not to be confused with the 54th Massachusetts). Although he was an Episcopalian, he attended the Raleigh Baptist Institute, and Harriet allowed him to drill the other students in military maneuvers. Noel became very ill and desperately needed money, so on several occasions she wrote home asking for donations to help him. Her approach to helping Noel was similar to her approach more generally—she usually looked for private charity to help those in need.

**SG: What is your next project?**

**JW:** In February 2022 I'm going to publish a book called *A House Built By Slaves: African American Visitors to the Lincoln White House* with Rowman and Littlefield. I'd originally conceived of *To Address You As My Friend* as a collection of "African American Correspondence and Conversations with Abraham Lincoln," but I soon realized that I had more material than could fit into a sin-

gle book. So around 2017 or 2018 I decided to break it into two separate books. The letters part will be published by UNC Press in October, and the "conversations" part will come out on Lincoln's birthday next year.

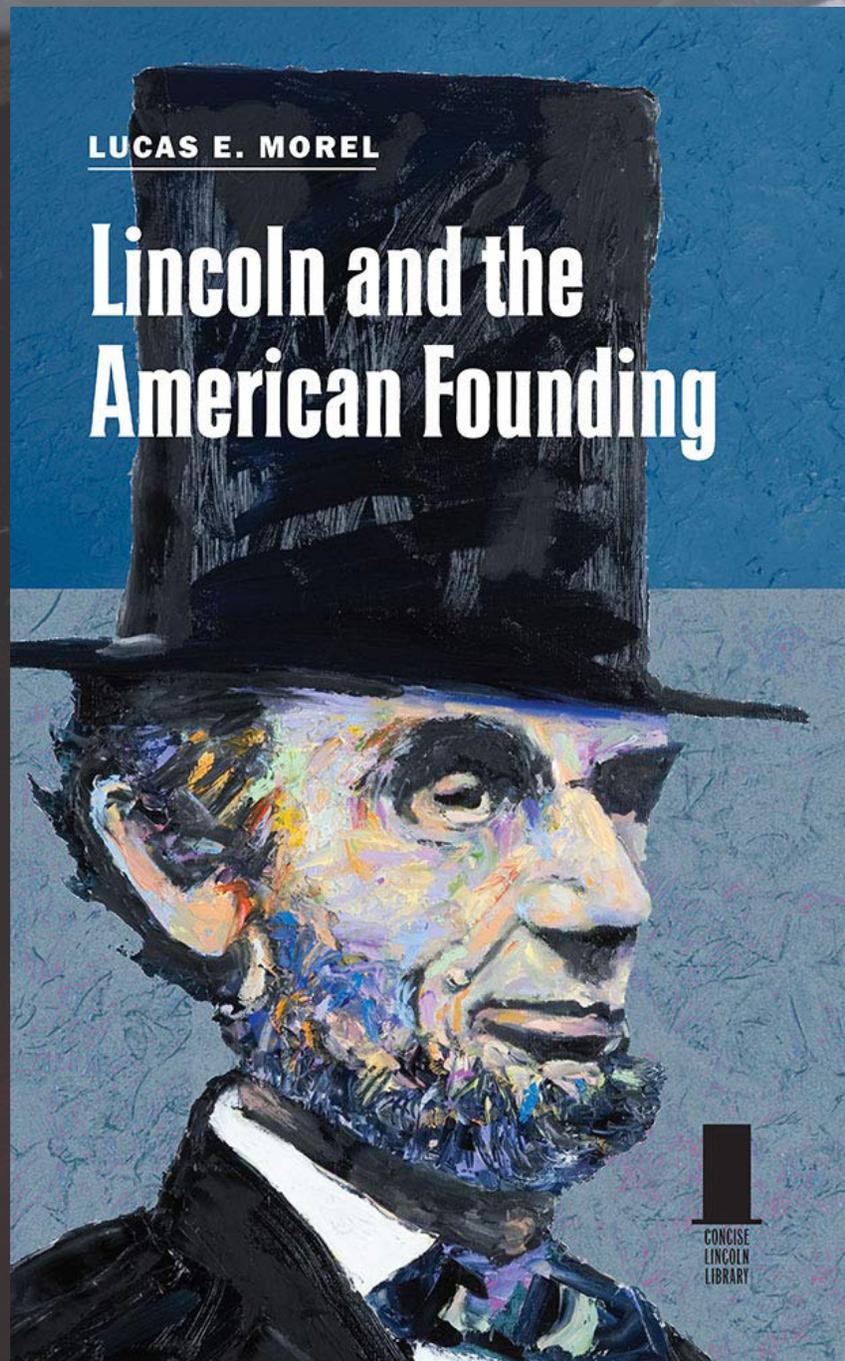
I've got a few ideas for my next book projects. I've written about 30 pages of a potential book on Abraham Lincoln and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and I'm excited to see where the research takes me. I've also recently discovered the diaries of a soldier who fought in the Indian wars in Minnesota in 1862 and who then went on to become an officer in a U.S. Colored Troops regiment. He started the war as a Douglas Democrat but came to support Lincoln by the time of the presidential election of 1864. I'm working with a student to transcribe and edit the diaries and think we shouldn't have trouble finding a publisher for them. They are a truly remarkable first-hand account of the war in the west.

*Jonathan W. White is Associate Professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University. He serves as a Director for the Abraham Lincoln Institute, the Abraham Lincoln Association, and the Lincoln Forum.*



US Grant, Commander 71.2009.081.1369

Book Review: Lucas Morel,  
*Lincoln and the American  
Founding*



Burrus M. Carnahan

In the fall of 2020, Professor Lucas Morel of Washington and Lee University spoke at the University of Colorado on “The 1619 Project as Missed Opportunity.” His point was that Nicole Hannah-Jones depicted American history as a racial zero-sum game – that any gains in equality and freedom by African-Americans had to be at the expense of white Americans, who were little more than constant oppressors. According to the professor, the Project missed the opportunity to remember the contribution of both races to the expansion of freedom and equality in this country.

Professor Morel’s new book on Lincoln and the Founders is a powerful example of what was missed. The achievements of President Lincoln expanded freedom and equality in America and strengthened the cause of democracy worldwide. As *Lincoln and the American Founding* demonstrates, he based those achievements on his understanding of the values of the founding generation.

Morel’s basic thesis is that Lincoln was equally devoted to the two primary texts created by the Founders, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration defined the proper ends of free government while the Constitution prescribed the institutional means to those ends. As president, Lincoln’s task was to find a way to fully respect both documents.

Morel’s first chapter examines Lincoln’s fascination with George Washington. Early in his life, Lincoln became convinced that Washington and his soldiers were fighting for something more than mere independence from Great Britain. They were, he concluded, also fighting for universal values of human freedom and equality. Within the context of the entire work, this chapter explains why Lincoln regarded the achievements of the founding generation so highly.

In subsequent chapters the author examines Lincoln’s understanding of the Declaration and the Constitution. The Declaration, particularly its self-evident truth that “all men are created equal,” was the “sine qua non of Lincoln’s political thought.” The application of this principle in his own life had allowed him to rise

from poverty to the presidency.

According to the Declaration, governments derived their legitimate powers from the consent of the governed, and the Constitution was the mechanism by which Americans gave their consent to government action. Lincoln therefore “identified allegiance to the Constitution as allegiance to liberty.” In this he differed from William Lloyd Garrison, who would have destroyed slavery regardless of the procedural restraints in the constitution. On the other hand, Stephen Douglas’ “popular sovereignty” elevated majority rule over justice by allowing the expansion of slavery. Lincoln believed justice required respect for both the Constitution and the ideals of the Declaration. In the Emancipation Proclamation, for example, he believed he had found a “constitutional means” to a “humanitarian end.”

Chapter 4 deals with the problem of slavery under the Constitution. The historical evidence, Lincoln believed, established that the Founders regarded slavery as an evil on the road to ultimate extinction, and tolerated its existence only as a temporary necessity. To ensure its eventual extinction they opposed its expansion into new territories.

He lamented that his own time was not as anti-slavery as the Founders’ generation, with some even declaring slavery a positive good. “On the question of liberty,” he wrote in 1855, “we are not what we have been.” In a private note, he declared that the “essence of democracy” could be expressed in the statement, “As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*.” From this, Morel concludes, Lincoln believed the “legitimacy and viability of self-government depended on free citizens not thinking they could be good masters.” The weakening of anti-slavery sentiment, therefore, threatened the liberty of all Americans. In this regard, Lincoln believed the Abolitionists were their own worst enemies, whose inflammatory rhetoric impeded the anti-slavery cause by stiffening Southern resistance.

Lincoln did recognize that new circumstances could limit the value of the Founders’ work, an issue the author addresses in his chapter on “Lin-

coln and Original Intent.” As president he faced such situations whenever he invoked his war powers as commander in chief. An early example was his decision to suspend the writ of habeas corpus on his own authority. While the power to suspend the writ in cases of war or insurrection was located in Article I of the Constitution, which deals with the powers of Congress, the document did not expressly say which branch of government should make the initial decision to suspend the writ. Reasoning that the Founders must have intended that the power to suspend must be used effectively, and that a suspension could not have been effective if the government was forced to wait until Congress had assembled during an invasion or insurrection, he concluded that he, as president, had the initial power to suspend the writ.

In this case and others, “Lincoln’s focus on constitutional ends showed how to interpret and apply the specific means spelled out in the Constitution.” By publicly explaining the “spectrum of executive authority when faced with an unprecedented threat,” Lincoln hoped “to equip the American people to judge whether his response to armed secession prudently avoided extremes that would destroy free government not only in America but also the world.”

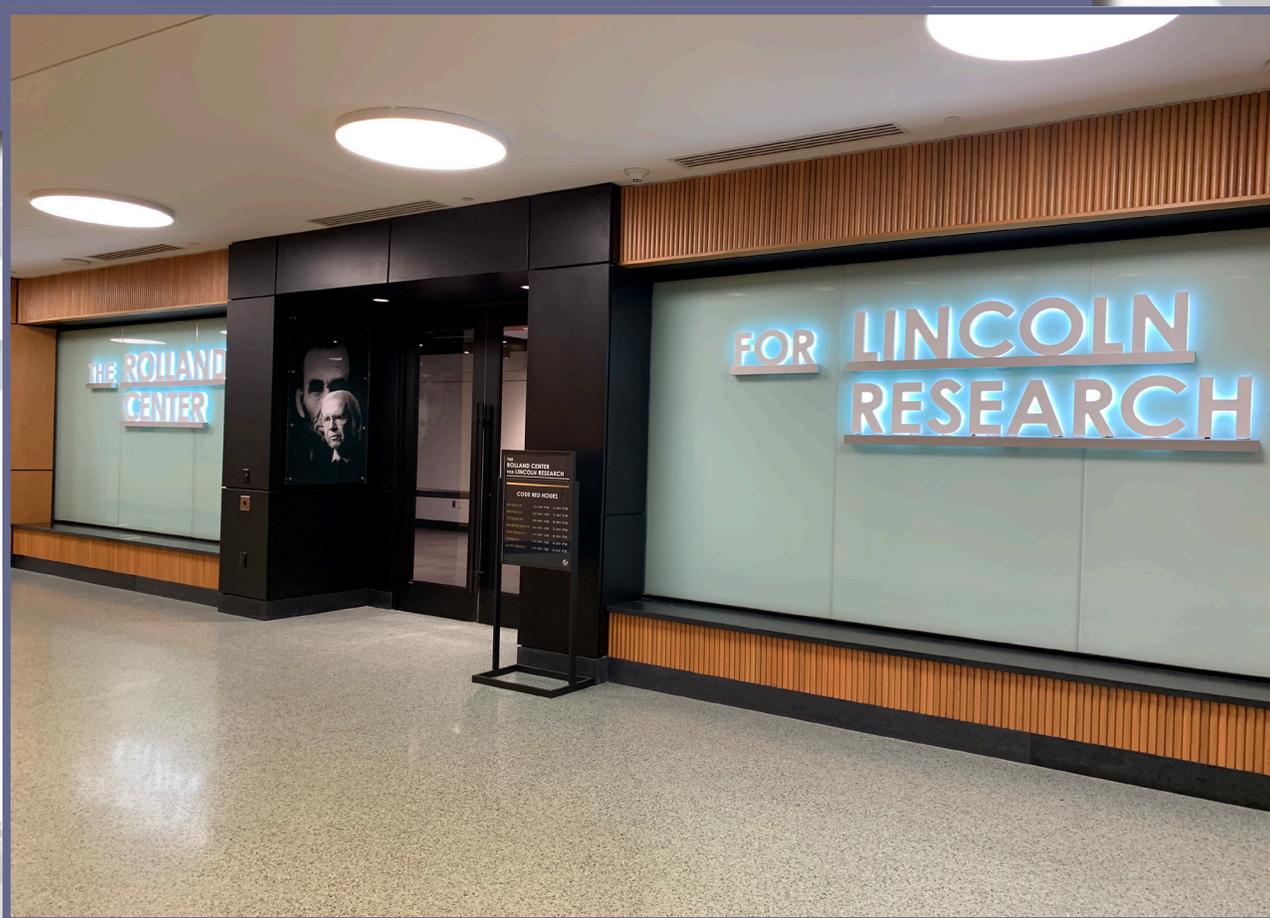
The research and erudition displayed in this short book could easily have supported a work ten times its length. *Lincoln and the American Founding* is nevertheless clearly written and accessible to the general reader. We can only hope that it will be widely adopted in basic history courses as an alternative, or at least an antidote, to the 1619 Project.

*Reviewed by Burrus M. Carnahan, Adjunct Professor of Law, George Washington University*

# THE ROLLAND CENTER FOR LINCOLN RESEARCH

by Emily Rapoza, Senior Lincoln Librarian

On the morning of January 10, 2022, The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research officially opened its doors and ushered in a new chapter for the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection. This new immersive, interactive, and informative space embodies the main goals of the Lincoln Collection: to highlight the many thousands of amazing items in the Lincoln Collection. These items include original photographs of Abraham Lincoln, his family, cabinet members, and generals; letters and documents to and from Lincoln; diaries of Civil War soldiers; and so much more. Located at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Rolland Center is open to the public for exploration of physical items on display as well as virtual items through tech elements that enhance the experience.

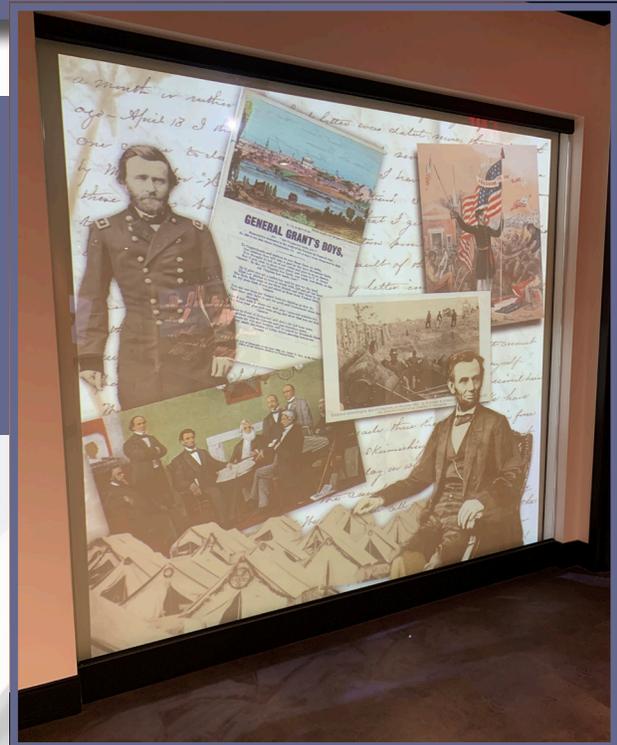


# THE ROLLAND CENTER



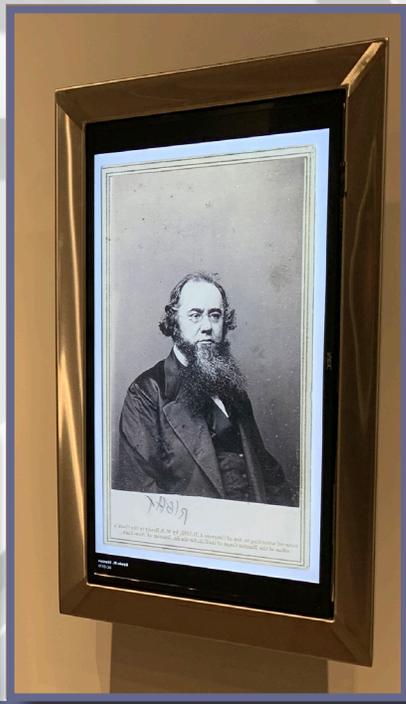
*To compare with Abraham Lincoln is a flawed mission, but unavoidable in this instance. Ian Rolland, who, with his family, made this Research Center possible, owed much to his Indiana nurturing and opportunities, as did Mr. Lincoln. Both were leaders, blessed with firm but gentle persuasiveness. Both were decisive in crucial times and were of firm foundation, strong character and inflexible convictions. Separated by time and place, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Rolland responded when called upon by events to lead in securing the values which they embraced, values which have their roots in Indiana. Each, in his way, has contributed to the essential wisdom preserved and protected here for future generations in this Rolland Center for Lincoln Research.*

When first entering the space, a floor-to-ceiling Welcome Wall projection greets visitors. Highlighting specific collection items and welcoming visitors, this display creates an eye-catching draw into the space. Along with the Welcome Wall, the Rolland Center also has an Expert in Residence projection that allows for specific items to have more context and for colorful collages to attract attention and prompt musings. These images project through glass onto a screen that can be lifted to create a new type of interactive display that continues to evolve with the creation of the Expert in Residence program.



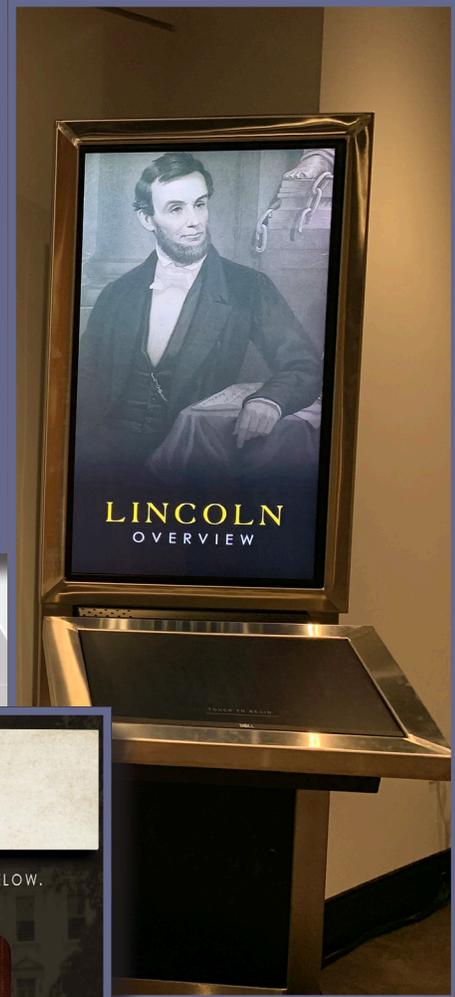
The Rolland Center boasts three state-of-the-art exhibit cases throughout the space. These near-bullet-proof, UV-blocking displays allow more items to be on display than ever before at the library. Current items on display include the Lincoln Family Album, Lincoln's image throughout his life, the assassination, Lincoln's cabinet, and Civil War soldiers and generals.





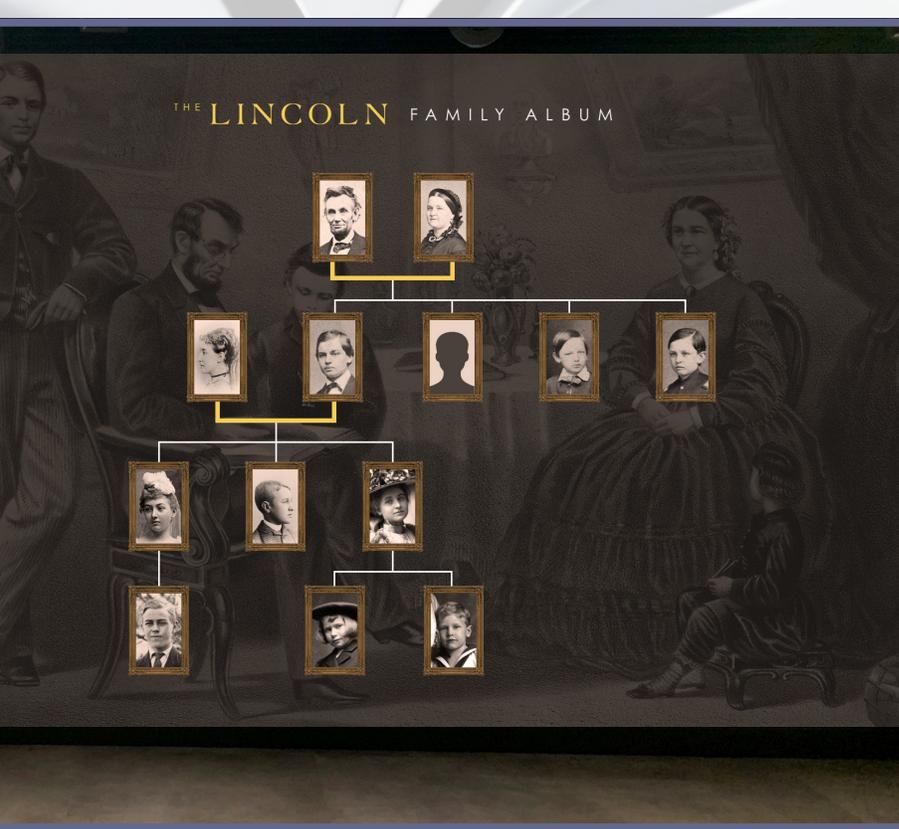
Scattered throughout the space, there are digital frames that show a variety of collection items as a moving picture frame. These digital frames allow for the whole collection, curated jointly by the Allen County Public Library and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, to appear in the space.

The space also boasts two full collection kiosks that allow visitors to explore more deeply items in the collection through a variety of themes and asset types. These exploration tools allow users to discover items that pique their interest and to learn about the items individually.

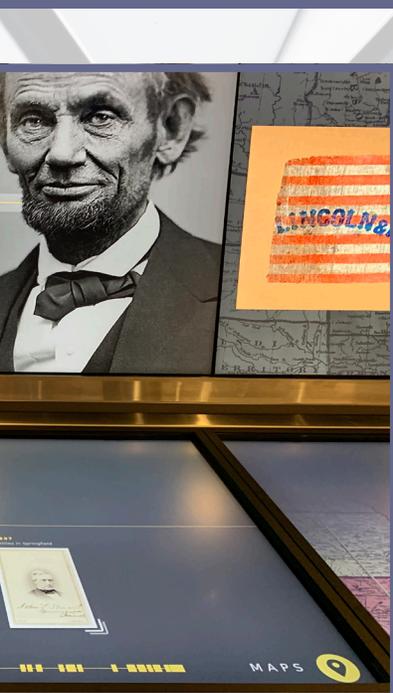


The Rolland Center highlights the Lincoln Family Album in a larger-than-life-way. A kiosk is dedicated to showing the Lincoln family tree. It allows users to select a member of the family, see a biography about that individual, and enjoy associated items from the collections in order to understand each member of the family. The kiosk not only shows a larger version of the image on its top screen, but it also controls the floor-to-ceiling projection of the items from the family.





The largest interactive display in the Rolland Center is the Lincoln's Time and Place feature. The display allows three different users to create their own adventure and explore events as well as places important to Lincoln and the Civil War through timelines and maps. This digital display also flips into a single user mode for classes and large groups to explore together.



In the center of the space is the Immersive Projection Room. In this room, items from the Lincoln Collection are projected 180-degrees around the north end of the room. To add to the immersive feel, soundscapes have been specially prepared for each projection so visitors can “hear” what each image may have sounded like it. Current displays include Lincoln’s second Inaugural Ball, Lincoln and George McClellan at Antietam, Lincoln’s Inauguration, and the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. The space also highlights the Lincoln Collection and its history with an immersive video.



To see the Immersive Projection video, scan the QR code with your smartphone camera or visit [bit.ly/RollandVideo](https://bit.ly/RollandVideo)



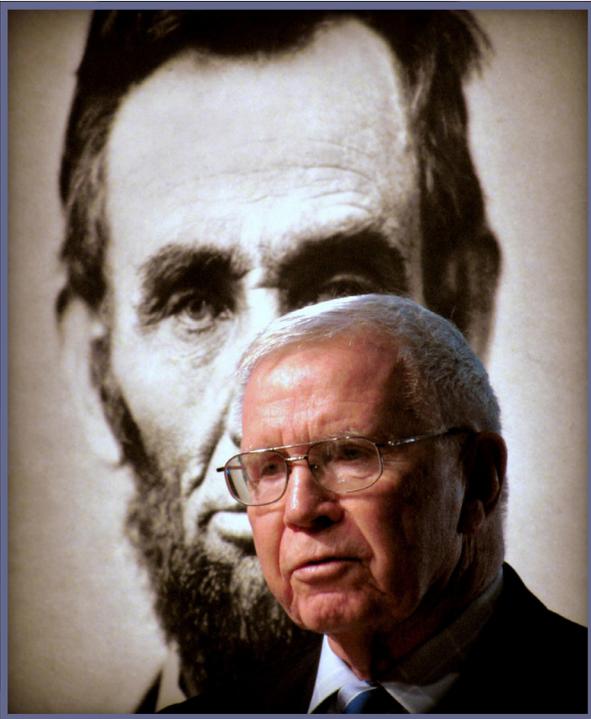


Photo: Ed Breen

The space was made possible through a joint effort of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana, Inc. and the Allen County Public Library. The Rolland Center's current hours are on the Friends of the Lincoln Collection's Rolland Center webpage as well as the Library's webpage:

[www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org](http://www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org)

[www.ACPL.info/research/rolland-center-for-lincoln-research](http://www.ACPL.info/research/rolland-center-for-lincoln-research)

Questions and tour requests can be sent to: [Lincoln@acpl.info](mailto:Lincoln@acpl.info)

*Lincoln* LORE

[ACPL.INFO](http://ACPL.INFO)

[LINCOLNCOLLECTION.ORG](http://LINCOLNCOLLECTION.ORG)

[FRIENDSOFTHELINCOLNCOLLECTION.ORG](http://FRIENDSOFTHELINCOLNCOLLECTION.ORG)