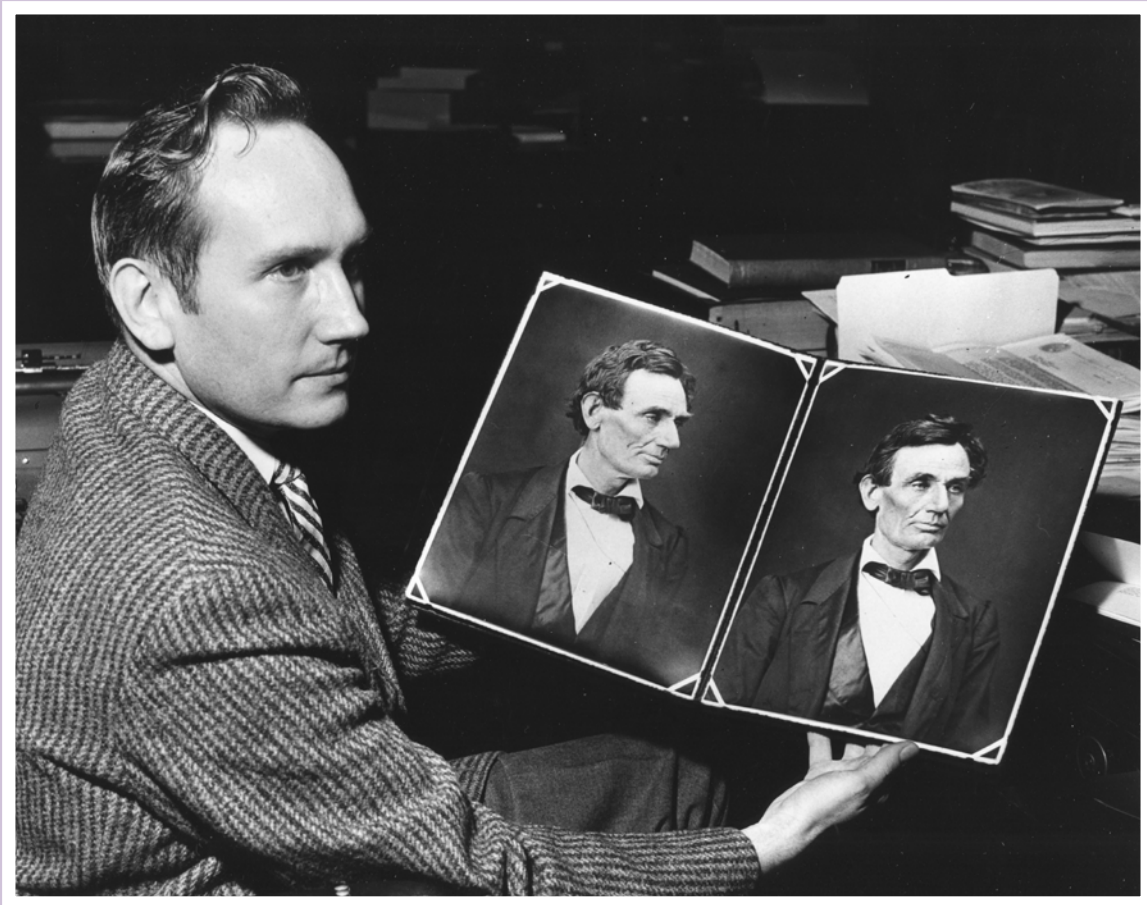

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Editor's Note



I am very pleased to include an interview with Dr. Wayne C. "Doc" Temple in this issue of *Lincoln Lore*. Doc was one of the foremost Lincoln historians of our lifetimes, and I regretted not doing an interview with him before he passed away last year at the age of 101. Fortunately, I discovered that several oral histories had been done with him in recent years, and one of those oral historians graciously permitted us to publish excerpts of his conversations with Doc. Readers interested in

seeing more of these interviews should acquire a copy of *Thursdays with Doc: Dr. Wayne C. Temple's Recollections of Springfield & Lincoln* by Alan E. Hunter.

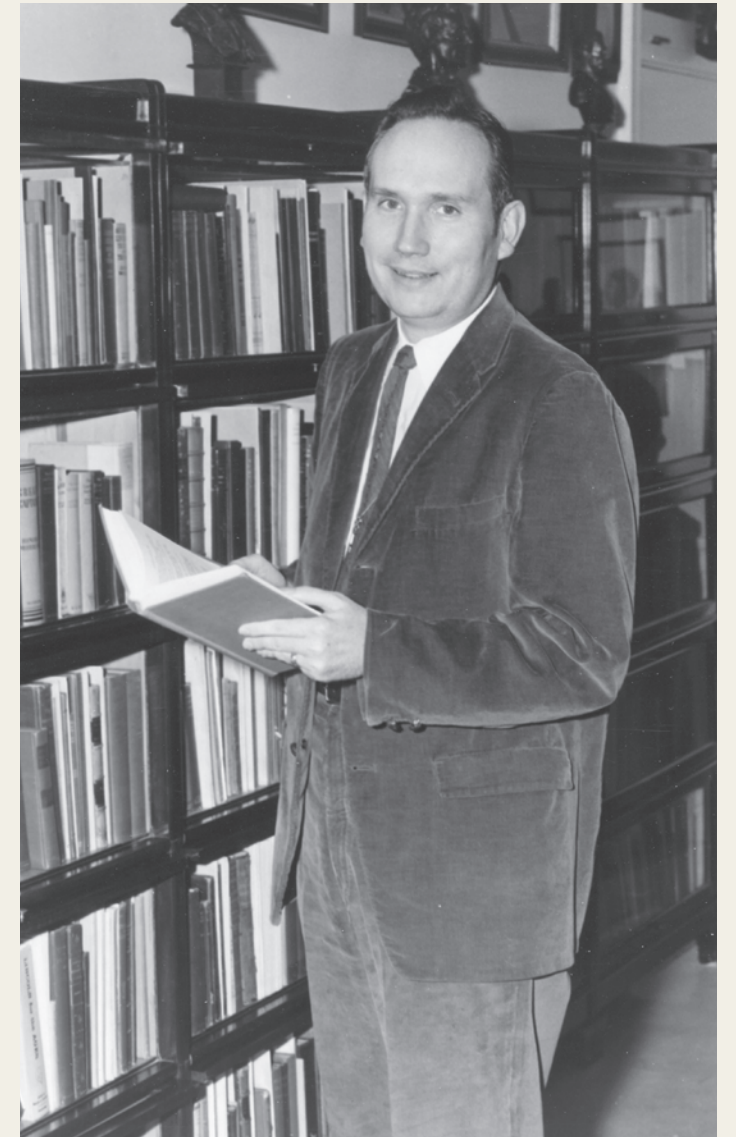
In this issue we also have a wonderful piece by Jessie Cortesi highlighting a few of the many photographs of Robert Todd Lincoln that are housed in the Collection, as well as an interview with Lincoln children's book author Jan Jacobi, who has published the first three books in a five-book series with Reedy Press.

Finally, I'd like to introduce the new executive director of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection, Beth Behrendt. Beth has a BA in history from Miami University (Ohio) and a master's in library science from UNC-Chapel Hill. Her career began in research libraries in Washington, D.C., then evolved to freelance writing and research. She then returned to the library profession, working most recently in the Allen County Public Library's Rolland Center for Lincoln Research where she enjoyed sharing the exhibits with the public and assisting with Lincoln-related research. Her responsibilities will include membership and donor relations, event coordination, and other assistance to the Friends' Board. She welcomes you to connect with her at bethbehrendt@friendsofthelincolncollection.org.

— Jonathan W. White

On the Cover: Wayne C. Temple in the Lincoln Room at Lincoln Memorial University holding a set of prints made from the newly rediscovered glass negatives of Abraham Lincoln by Alexander Hesler of Springfield, Ill. Photograph taken on February 12, 1959. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)

Wayne C. Temple in the Lincoln Room at Lincoln Memorial University in 1962. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)



An Interview with Wayne C. "Doc" Temple

by Alan E. Hunter

Dr. Wayne C. Temple, known affectionately as "Doc," was editor-in-chief of The Lincoln Herald and in charge of the Department of Lincolniana at Lincoln Memorial University from 1958 to 1964. He continued in that editorship post remotely from Springfield, Illinois, until 1973. Temple graduated from the University of Illinois in 1949, studying under his mentor James G. Randall, the "Dean of Lincoln Scholars." Doc served for over half a century with the Illinois State Archives (1964–2016), much of that time as Chief Deputy Director. Doc was an honorary member of the Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission (1959–1960) and served on the advisory council of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission (1960–1966). He authored more than twenty books, mostly on Lincoln, and published over 600 articles, poems, reviews, and papers during his career. He died in 2025 at the age of 101.

Alan E. Hunter: Although you are most associated with Abraham Lincoln and Springfield, Illinois, you were born in central Ohio, a place not generally associated with Lincoln. Can you share how your Lincoln journey began?

Wayne C. Temple: I was born on a small farm near Richwood, Ohio, on February 5, 1924. That's the same birth date as Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, so it's sort of an omen, maybe. I was born an adult. I had no kids around the neighborhood, so I grew up fast. By the time I was nine, I had a Colt 44-40 revolver that I wore all the time. Prospect High School is where I graduated; Spring of 1942. In September, I entered Ohio State University, where I majored in chemistry. I lived in the Buckeye Club along with other athletes and students. I spent much of my time playing football and chasing nurses! I was two quarters there before I was drafted into the Army Air Corps. I made Corporal in the Field Artillery at

Ohio State's R.O.T.C. I was really proud of that. I had previously soldiered as a private with an infantry regiment in the Ohio State Guard. I rather liked soldiering. I was chosen for a brand-new branch of duty, the ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program). Secretly, I think they were trying to get some of their more prominent, intellectual types, not to die in the first days of the war. So instead of going to flight school, they sent us to North Carolina State College, now it's a big university. In the summer of 1943, they put us on a train and didn't tell us where we were going. It took two tedious days of slow travel to get from North Carolina to Champaign [Illinois]. I was in the first group of soldiers assigned to the University of Illinois. All of us carried an almost impossible number of class hours. If you flunked out of ASTP, they shipped you out to Armored Infantry at Camp Polk, Louisiana.

After completing my courses at the U. of I., I was transferred to a military camp in Neosho, Missouri. We finished that training, and I was assigned to the Army communications unit, plant engineering agency in Philadelphia. Our mission was to support the Air Corps and give it communications of all sorts, radar, etc. My shooting held me in good esteem. I qualified as a sharpshooter with the rifle and carbine, but my favorite weapon was the Thompson sub [machine gun]. I practically worshipped that weapon. I had my Colt .45 too. I could throw a case of ammo in the truck and shoot all day because they both used the same ammunition. Our mission citation read "subject to strafing by enemy aircraft." We did get into a little trouble there, and my Thompson was very good at that. A German pilot dive-bombed us as we walked down the road. Came out of nowhere. We dove into the ditch, but I stood up and fired at the guy. I don't know if I hit him or not, but he didn't come back. I wasn't so much scared as I was so damned mad. I thought, here's a young pilot, the war is over as far as he's concerned, the Luftwaffe had been shot out of the air, and he's one of the few left, and he's out here risking his life, and everybody else, when Germany is defeated and on the verge of surrender. I received the Bronze Star Medal for action under fire.



Wayne C. Temple at Camp Crowder in 1944.
(Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)

The war ended while I was in Germany. I served for another year in the Army of Occupation, installing air bases. Our unit ended up rebuilding a German Luftwaffe glider base near Frankfurt. We were informed it was a top-secret project. One day, we assembled on the air strip and were told to prepare for a special visitor. A plane descended, the tires screeched on the grass, and when the door opened, there stood General Eisenhower with a broad smile on his face. He always had a friendly smile for his troops. The supreme commander was quickly whisked off to Frankfurt. No fuss, no fanfare, no ceremony—that was the way it was when Ike used that little strip. The airfield became the official landing site for the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces. Ike kept in touch over the next two decades. We exchanged letters while Ike was Supreme NATO Commander, President, and after retiring to Gettysburg.

I served in the Army from 1943 to 1946. I came back to Ohio, and the Dean of Admissions said your scholarship is still good, you don't have to do anything, just do whatever you want to. I drove down to the Buckeye Club, which was built up above the football stadium about 10 to 12 feet off the ground, and I couldn't find any of my buddies. I found out that nearly all of them were dead, and I thought "Oh my God," they're all gone. So sad that they never got to live to see what might have happened in their lives. I went home, and Dad asked if I was going back. I told him, "No, I don't think I'll ever go on the campus again. I'm not superstitious but it's just full of ghosts." Dad asked me what was I going to do now. I said, "I don't know." Dad said, "Well, you were out in Illinois during the war, why don't you ask them if you can come back?" So, I called the admissions office and asked if they would accept me as a returning veteran working his way through college on the G.I. Bill. I said, "I'm Wayne Temple and I was there in engineering." He said, "You want to come back?" and I said, "Yes, I do." They welcomed me back. I was so delighted because I knew the campus and the buildings. While I was there in the service, I had a course with [James G.] Randall and I liked him right away. He was a wonderful teacher; he had a rattrap mind you know. He took a liking to me, so I took all the courses he was teaching. When my G.I. Bill was almost running out in '49, and I was home helping dad make hay that summer, he said he knew I'd never be a farmer. Dad said, "Whatever you are, Wayne, you be a good one." About that time, I got a telegram, unusual, not a phone call but a telegram. It was from Randall, and

it said, "Would you consider being my research assistant this fall?" Here I was, just a poor Ohio farm boy working his way through college on the G.I. Bill and the privilege of a lifetime just landed in my lap: to work closely with Dr. Randall. The offer was like a fairy story come true.

AH: Can you share some of your recollections of J. G. Randall while you were at the University of Illinois?

Doc: Prof. Randall remembered me from my Army days on campus. I switched from English history to Lincoln studies even though Randall didn't push me to do it. We soon became close friends. On February 22, 1949, I had asked Prof. Randall to sign the first two volumes of his *Lincoln the President*, and I suppose it was at that moment when Randall realized my interest was genuine. Soon, I was teaching Randall's classes whenever he left campus or could not teach his class for one reason or another. And I was still an undergrad. Ironically, one of my duties was to assist Randall in completing his *Lincoln the President* series, the very series of books that I had gotten Randall to personally autograph. I served as Randall's right-hand man from 1949 to 1953. During those years, I tended to try and get some of my papers published, which Randall liked to no end. He really took a liking to me, and I just admired him so much. He was so well known. He would give me his cards and say you know what the class is, you know where it's at, you know the hours, and so forth, so I taught his classes. He was wonderful, I spent every day, generally even Saturday, over at his house. Of course, I had Sundays off. I did research for him and checked things.



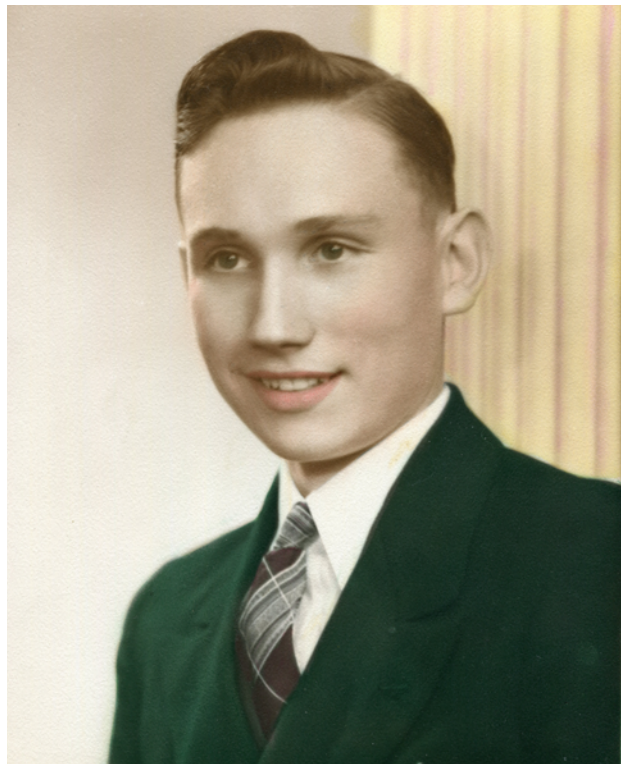
Wayne C. Temple in April 1951.
(Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)

AH: Did you and Professor Randall share other interests outside of Lincoln?

Doc: We often talked about politics. In the presidential campaign of 1952, my old boss, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, was running as a Republican against Illinois Democratic Governor Adlai Stevenson. Randall was a Democrat; I knew that Randall fell in love with Adlai Stevenson's ideas though he never really got involved in politics. He liked Adlai Stevenson which went against the grain for the Lincoln field. He always signed his name "J. G. Randall" because of it. He was named after President James Garfield, a Republican, but never signed his name that way. One day, Randall said, "You know Ruth is trying to do this biography of Mary Lincoln and I don't drive, do you drive?" I said, "Yeah, I've got a little Champion six-cylinder Studebaker." He said, "Could you drive Ruth and me down to Lexington to do some research?" We knew that Squire [Bill] Townsend had the biggest Mary Lincoln collection in private hands and that Squire [J. Winston] Coleman had the biggest Kentucky collection. Townsend bought Helm Place. Squire Townsend let Ruth copy all his Mary Lincoln letters. Holman Hamilton was on the University of Kentucky faculty, he was a journalist and a wonderful historian, so he'd get us into the places associated with Mary Lincoln.

Finally, Ruth said she wanted to see the old Mary Todd home. It's on West Main Street. They tried to talk her out of it. She said, "I just want to walk on the floorboards where Mrs. Lincoln walked." They said that it was in deplorable condition now, but she just wouldn't take no for an answer. Coleman drove us down there and we parked in front of the place. Coleman said, "You sure you want to go in?" She said, "I absolutely want to go in." And he said, "I just wouldn't advise it unless we were customers." She looked at everybody and said "Customers?" Coleman said, "Well, it's a bordello." Now she was a southern lady from Virginia, and she didn't know what a bordello was. She said, "I don't understand that." Bill Townsend was too genteel to mention it, but Coleman wasn't. He said, "Well Madame, it's a whorehouse!" All the time Jim [Randall], her husband, is standing over there secretly laughing to himself about her embarrassment. And she said, "Oh my." So, she didn't get to walk on the floorboards. Still, it was a very successful trip and that's how I met two of the men who were going to be trustees at Lincoln Memorial University. That trip stood me in good stead. That house was the subject of a character in *Gone with the Wind*. Margaret Mitchell's husband was from Lexington and knew the story about Belle Brezing, she was the madame of the house. Bill Townsend wrote a book about her, it had a bright red cover, limited edition, very hard to find nowadays. Governors, Congressmen, and Senators all came to the parties at the bawdy house downstairs and then headed upstairs with the girls afterward. Margaret Mitchell used that story in her book. But instead of calling her Belle Brezing, she called her Belle Watling.

Randall was a person of rather short physical stature. He walked with a quick step and his eyes always had a sparkle in them. I found him to be a good lecturer and most thorough. His counsel was wonderful, he advised his students about research methods and sources, he met with them individually as needed, and he guided their papers and theses in minute detail. He was probably the kindest man I ever knew. Dr. Randall was indeed a rare person. He could draw, paint, and write poetry. For a hobby he raised tulips, getting bulbs from Holland. If he had not turned to history, painting would have been his field. In his early years, he had smoked a pipe, but when I knew him, he did not use tobacco in any form. He loved to sit in a rocking chair, rocking and organizing his thoughts for chapters of a book. He composed his chapters at first in longhand and then copied them on a typewriter, first draft—as I do. He typed fast but hunted and pecked. He had a wonderful research library, but he was not a Lincoln collector. Randall wrote for the scholars and his wife wrote for the general public. Ruth wrote all the "I Books": *I Jesse, I Mary, I Varina, I Elizabeth*, and all that. Randall died at 10:49 pm on the 20th day of February in '53 at McKinley Hospital on campus, the same date that Willy Lincoln died in the White House [in 1862]. Randall was in the last stages of Leukemia right before that. It was cancer of the blood, one of those pernicious things that attacks the bones too. They kept giving him blood transfusions, but it just never took. Randall knew so many people. He knew all the people in the Lincoln field. I owe so much to Randall.



Wayne C. Temple's senior photograph at Prospect High School in Marion County, Ohio. He was valedictorian of the class of 1942. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)

On the first of September 1954, I came to Springfield. I went to work at the Illinois State Historical Society. They put me on the fifth floor of the old Centennial Building [now the Howlett Building] and gave me a nice room there, a typewriter and all that stuff, and any secretarial help I needed. It was there that I wrote my first book, *Indian Villages of the Illinois Country: Historic Tribes*. I met Lois while I was finishing that book. Lois Marjorie Bridges, a supposed descendant of the General Ulysses S. Grant family, worked as cashier at Johnny's Drug Store restaurant and cigar stand that was on the basement level of the old Abraham Lincoln Hotel. September 22, 1956, we were married. We never had children, and I remained childless for my entire life.

I was walking down Fifth Street crossing Capitol. In the middle of the street, I met Ralph Newman [owner of the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop in Chicago]. He was one of the trustees of Lincoln Memorial University. I'd met him too through Randall and he said, "Oh Wayne, Gerald McMurtry's gone, he's back in Fort Wayne and we want a real scholar with a Ph.D. in Lincoln." He said Gerald had an honorary degree and he was all right, but he's gone now, and we really want one. And I said, "Well I'll have to talk to my wife." So, I asked her, "Would you mind if we went down to Harrogate, Tennessee? I'd have an endowed chair of history, the John Wingate Weeks Chair of History as a full professor, and the salary is pretty good I guess." And she said, "Whatever you want to do is fine with me." So that's how I got to LMU.

AH: Can you share some of your recollections of your time at Lincoln Memorial University?

Doc: When Lois and I arrived on the LMU campus on May 3, 1958, it was deserted. I will never forget, Robert Lee Kincaid was the President; he was a journalist at Middleboro. He was very cordial, but we couldn't find anybody there on campus, not anybody. It was Derby Day. So, when the race was over, they all started coming back, and they said, "We're sorry, we knew you were coming, but we just had to go and see the race. We knew you'd find your way around." So, they put us up at the Munson House. At the time, it was a test school for home economics majors. It was a fine, brick place furnished as a complete household so home-ec students (girls, of course) could live and perform all the work it takes to run a home—purchasing, cooking, cleaning, etc. At the time, there were no students there. I loved the students, of course, and I guess they liked me. Kincaid said, "You're in charge of anything you want to do, anything you want." I was employed in a dual capacity as a member of the administrative staff and a member of the faculty. My title was Director of the Department of Lincolniana. In that position, I was in charge of the Lincoln and Civil War collections. I also became the Director of the LMU Press. I made my office in the Lincoln Room in Duke Hall.

AH: Do you recall those early years as Director of the Lincoln Memorial University Press?

Doc: I became editor-in-chief of *The Lincoln Herald* on May 3, 1958, the same day I arrived at LMU, and I moved the office right into the Lincoln Room in Duke Hall, which was a sacrosanct place. So, I put typewriters in there. Mrs. [Lanta Opal Strunk] Livesey was the Dean of the women's business department, and she always picked out the best of her students to give me help. So, for the full eight hours, I had student help; when the girls weren't in class, they worked with me. One would leave, and another one would come in. They could sit there and take shorthand like a demon. Some of them said I typed better than they did, but that was an exaggeration. Lois fell in love with the Zetas, the ZTKs, the sorority. She became their sponsor. And she just loved it. When they'd go on a spring vacation, we'd both go with them, and we kept them out of trouble. Lois fit in just like a glove. Kincaid said, "You know, we're so tickled that you and Lois could come down here in the mountains." And I said, "You know, I'm a flatlander, but it's a beautiful country." So, I'm a full professor and have full rein over it. When I moved down to LMU in '58, President Kincaid had been editing *The Lincoln Herald*; he was a good newspaper man, but he didn't do it like you and I as scholars would do it. He started every issue with page 1, so luckily, that was the first issue of the year, Spring, so I decided to

start the summer issue with the page number after the last issue page to continue it. I looked at it; and here's this beautiful cover. I asked Kincaid who did that. He said, "That's Lloyd Ostendorf of Dayton, Ohio. He'll be back here for commencement." I asked if he made any commitments with him, and Kincaid said, "No, Lloyd had just submitted it as a cover, and I put it on there." So, when he came back for commencement in June 1958, I asked Lloyd if he would like to be the art editor of the *Herald*. Oh God, he really jumped at it. That was the first time I met him. Lloyd was such a talented guy. He had worked with Al Capp [a nationally syndicated cartoonist] in New York. So, we became very close, and from then on, I did research for him. Anyhow, that's how we met. As the years went by, I continued to research and write the captions for his drawings. If he needed a photo of a building or a person, I'd try and dig one up for him. We worked that way and remained good friends until he died in 2000.



Wayne C. Temple in the Lincoln Room at Lincoln Memorial University on June 2, 1958. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)



Wayne C. Temple stands attired as a general in the Illinois militia and an officer of the 114th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, as Gov. Daniel Walker reads a proclamation dedicating Lincoln's Post Road to New Salem on January 23, 1976. Behind the governor stand two Lincoln presenters, one with a beard and one without. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter.)

In 1959, because of my Lincoln writings, I was named an honorary member of the National Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission and secretary-treasurer of the National Lincoln-Civil War Council. Down at LMU, I taught English history and American history. I remember some of the other professors down there said, "I'm not taking over 25 students." But I didn't think that was fair, so I never put a limit on my classes. I learned from my days at U. of I. not to give multiple choice questions; I always gave essay questions, so you can imagine how much time it took to read all those essays. The students appreciated that, and several times they voted me teacher of the year, but I don't know how I did it all. I guess it was because I was younger and worked day and night. At the time, I was teaching class, grading essays, answering correspondence, and editing *The Lincoln Herald* simultaneously. I handled the book reviews in the mail and all that stuff. They treated me well; they gave me the Lincoln Diploma of Honor while I was still on campus. They rated that higher than an honorary doctorate degree. Now, there's a medal that goes with it, which they later sent me. That workload and changes on the Board of Directors made it harder for me to stay. That LMU board had too many preachers on it. By the end of the Fall term in 1963, I had made up my mind: I was leaving LMU. By then, Lois had developed some heart trouble and wanted to go back home. Lois still had family in the area. She said, "I'd like to die in Springfield," and I said, "I miss Springfield too." So, on May 8, 1964, we left LMU. I didn't even say goodbye or anything, called a moving company, and came back to Springfield. It was a sad day, but

they kept me on the board, and I continued to edit *The Lincoln Herald* after we moved back to Springfield, over 15 years if I recall.

AH: Can you talk about your return to Springfield?

Doc: In '64, they called me and asked me to come back. Fortunately, for my whole life, I've never had to ask for a job. I'd been at the State Museum, of course, while writing that Indian book, and they asked, "Would you come back and replace Marion Pratt, Harry Pratt's wife?" She'd worked there as their Lincoln expert. She died, and they wanted me back. It happened just like that, and I said, "Thank God." Anyhow, that's how I got back to the archives. They had so much Lincoln stuff in the archives, all the papers from when he was in the legislature there, correspondence he had with the governors and other people, and so, they wanted a Lincoln person. They treated me very well, and I enjoyed it, and they didn't play politics with me. From 1964 to 2016, I worked for nine different Secretaries of State and ten different Governors representing both parties. I settled into the business of the archives with relative ease. I worked with surveyors, lawyers, libraries, museums, and other organizations in Illinois every day. I enjoyed my job. I continued working on *The Lincoln Herald* from Springfield until 1973. During those years, with the help of my friend Lloyd Ostendorf, I think we really boosted the quality and readership of *The Lincoln Herald*. I was able to work with so many luminaries during my time with

The Lincoln Herald: Carl Sandburg, Bruce Catton, Shelby Foote, David Donald, U.S. Grant III, Otto Eisenschimmel, Vachel Lindsay, Elwell Crissey, Allan Nevins, Ruth Painter Randall, Jesse Stuart, Adin Baber, King Hostick, Cliff Egan, General William Westmoreland, Norman Rockwell, and so many more.

Although I backed away from the *Herald* editorship, I continued to write articles for them. I concentrated on Lincoln books, a few of which I had started at, or before, LMU. I also found time for other projects in Springfield. I worked to remap the Boy Scout trail, organized the Boy Scout pilgrimages to the Lincoln Tomb, researched and plotted the Lincoln Post Road and Grant's March to Fame highways, and helped create the Long Nine Museum in Athens, Ill. I also helped reorganize the 114th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment in 1969. That's how I got my 4-star General rank. It's official, it's not a make-believe thing. My wife Sandy became my personal chauffeur and Aide-de-Camp with the military rank of Colonel. They issued commissions on the same forms as the Governor gave Ulysses S. Grant back in 1862. We did a lot of official programs, dedication ceremonies, and escorted the Governor and Congressmen to events, especially out at the tomb and the Old State Capitol like we did for Richard Nixon in 1971. The 114th is still active out at the tomb.

By the early 1970s, my wife's health was failing; she suffered from high blood pressure for the last decade of her life. After three or four heart attacks, Lois died on April 21, 1978. She was a good girl and a very nice lady. She now lies in Oak Ridge Cemetery, where the immortal Lincoln rests. After a very tough year, I married Sunderine Wilson Mohn [aka Sandy], a tour guide at the Old State Capitol, on April 9, 1979. She was a young little thing, and it made my life complete once more. I've had a storybook life. Sunderine was one of the greatest things in my life when I met her by chance. It was like I'd been dealt a Royal Flush in spades. She was perfect for me, and I guess I was perfect for her. Our hobby became traveling. We traveled all over Europe, and she loved the architecture and the art. We were married for almost 43 years. She worked 41 years at the Old Capitol, and she'd always say, "Doc, we've done things people only dream about." Sandy was so good about everything, never had a problem with anything. Everything was so damned smooth.

AH: You wrote most of your books after you returned to Springfield, right?



Wayne and Sandy Temple standing outside of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield. Sandy rose to be head docent at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, where she worked for forty years. She passed away in 2022. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter.)

Doc: Yes, you might say that moving back to Lincolnland fueled my urge to write. In 1986 I wrote a volume for the National Commission, *Lincoln's Connection with the Illinois and Michigan Canal, His Return From Congress in '48, and His Invention*. One about the Lincoln Home, *By Square and Compasses: The Building of Lincoln's Home and Its Saga* in 1984, and another in 1982, *Stephen A. Douglas: Freemason*, both for the Masonic Book Club and The Illinois Lodge of Research. One book holds a special place in my heart. Every time we passed the building Sunderine would say, "We've got to write a history of MY building. MY building." So, we wrote *Illinois Fifth Capitol: The House That Lincoln Built and Caused to be Rebuilt (1837-1865)* in 1988. In 1995, I wrote *Abraham Lincoln, from Skeptic to Prophet*. The book was written over a 30-year period, so I changed things quite often. Things came in that weren't discovered chronologically. I think it will last forever. That book made the top 100 Lincoln books of all-time. I'm especially proud of that. I wrote *The Taste is in My Mouth a Little: Lincoln's Victuals and Potables* in 2004. It is a book on Lincoln's food. I call it "Lincoln and his eats" and I started it while I was at LMU. In 2007, I wrote *Lincoln's Travels on the River Queen During the Last Days of His Life*. In 2015, I wrote *Lincoln's Surgeons at His Assassination and Other Interesting Figures with a Lincoln Connection*. In 2017, I wrote *Lincoln's Springfield / Pittsfield Connection: A Tale of Two Cities*. And in 2019, I published the

book that took me the longest to write: *Lincoln's Confidant. The Life of Noah Brooks*. I started working on Brooks in 1949 as my master's thesis under Randall at the U. of I., so it was 70 years start to finish. That might be some kind of record, I don't know.

AH: Do you have any advice for the authors of today?

Doc: Always use primary sources whenever possible. You may have to dig for them, but they're out there if you keep looking. Diaries, letters, logs, newspaper articles, family papers. Try for discovery and you will not be disappointed. Write truthfully and in your own voice, don't varnish the facts. Most importantly, don't worry about attribution any more than you have to. Cite your sources but remember that the goal is always to get the information out there.

AH: After a lifetime of Lincoln scholarship, do you have any reflections you'd care to share?

Doc: I'm so lucky, I've achieved more than I ever dreamed I would: Member bibliography committee *Lincoln Lore*, since 1958. Major Civil War Press Corps, since 1962. Trustee, regent Lincoln Academy Illinois, 1970-1982. Fellow Royal Society Arts (life). Life Member National Rifle Association. Knight Templar (Red Cross Constantine). Lincoln Group District of Columbia (honorary). Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin. Military Order Loyal Legion United States (honorary companion). Masons (33 degree). Member: Kappa Delta Pi, Phi Alpha, Phi Alpha Theta, Chi Gamma Iota, Phi Beta Kappa, Tau Kappa Alpha, Alpha Psi Omega, Sigma Pi Beta, Sigma Tau Delta, Zeta Psi. At the 150th sesquicentennial celebration of the University of Illinois, I was selected as one of the school's 150 most distinguished graduates, which I consider one of my greatest honors. I've had a wonderful life. I've enjoyed every bit of it. I look back at those moments and dream about them. I've managed to do a lot of interesting things in my life, more than I could have ever imagined doing as a poor farm boy back in Ohio. But without question, marrying Sunderine was the greatest thing I ever did. I just miss her so. Well, there you have it. That's the story of my life. I've had a wonderful life, but it's narrowing down now.



Doc lasted over 56 years with the state of Illinois, a record that may never be equaled. Illinois politics can be a challenge for any citizen, let alone a public servant. Can you imagine having to navigate those political waters? Every few years, a regime change. Doc had a special skill. He could get along with anybody, regardless of party. His record is simply amazing.

This article is a result of hundreds of hours of recorded conversations with Doc Temple in his home at 1121 S. 4th

Street Ct. in Springfield. Doc lived in the house from 1971 until his death on March 31, 2025. These informal meetings were arranged by Dr. James Cornelius, who began meeting with Doc in 2019. The excerpts here were gathered for my book, *Thursdays with Doc: Dr. Wayne C. Temple's Recollections of Springfield & Lincoln*. Although I first met Doc and James in 2010 while working on a book about Lincoln collector Osborn H. Oldroyd, my participation began in the summer of 2022 and continued until Doc's death. The generous invitation from Dr. Cornelius was first billed as an informal chat about Abraham Lincoln over Pabst Blue Ribbon and beer nuts. How could anyone resist such an invitation?

Alan E. Hunter has written a column for the *Weekly View* newspaper in Indianapolis for twenty years. He is the author of several books, including two on the Historic Indiana National Road as well as *Osborn H. Oldroyd: Keeper of the Lincoln Flame* (2024), *The Petersen House: The Oldroyd Museum and the House Where Lincoln Died* (2020), and *Thursdays with Doc: Dr. Wayne C. Temple's Recollections on Springfield & Lincoln* (2024). He is currently writing a book about Jewish Lincoln scholar Emanuel Hertz.



Wayne C. Temple in the Illinois State Archives. (Courtesy of Alan E. Hunter)

From the Collection ROBERT LINCOLN THROUGH THE LENS

by Jessie Cortesi, Senior Lincoln Librarian

The numerous photographs of Robert Todd Lincoln in the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection together depict a young man finding his way in the world and growing into a mature patriarch at the height of his success. These twelve photos are a selection of Robert's formal and informal portraits spanning sixty-four years, which provide a peek into major turning points of his life.



Robert Lincoln, 1858 (LFA-0564)

In 1858, the high-profile Lincoln-Douglas debates drew press coverage around the country, bringing Abraham Lincoln to the national stage after an uneventful term in Congress. With the media's growing interest in Abraham, as well as his improving finances, sons Robert and Tad were photographed in Springfield in 1858. If Willie was also photographed at this time, there is not a matching cased photo of him from 1858 in the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection. However, all three Lincoln boys were photographed in the subsequent year (the younger two in Springfield, Robert in New Hampshire), the cased ambrotypes all precious additions the family photo album. This photo of Robert shows a dapper young man of fifteen years in the last months before he'd fail the Harvard entrance exam and set off for New England to attend Phillips Exeter Academy in preparation for his college studies.



Robert Lincoln on August 24, 1861. (LFA-0089)



Robert Lincoln in March 1864, shortly before he graduated from Harvard. (LFA-0085)

Having completed studies at the academy, Robert was at last admitted to Harvard in 1860. His attendance at university kept him from his family at the White House for long periods; he would, however, make trips from Cambridge to Washington to visit whenever he had a break. Mary wrote that she cherished Robert's company in this season of their lives and relied on him as a male escort in her travels to New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, and the seaside town of Long Branch, New Jersey, to name a few. From lavish shopping excursions to social entertainments and simply escaping the bustle of the nation's capital, mother and son were close companions during the war years despite the demands of Robert's studies.



Mary Lincoln with Robert and Tad at "the Flume," 1863 (LFA-0077)

Taken in August 1863 during one of Mary Lincoln's trips outside of Washington, D.C., this trimmed mounted photograph shows a touring group, including Robert (far left), Tad (center), and Mary Lincoln, at "the Flume" in Franconia Notch, New Hampshire.



Robert Lincoln, 1865 (LN-1069)

Robert was occupied with his education for most of the war, but he'd long sought to join the military and the effort to save the Union. His wish would not come to fruition until the dawn of 1865 when his mother finally relented and Robert was given a position on General Grant's staff close to the action. He witnessed General Lee's surrender, but the joy of the coming end of the war would not last long, and soon Robert was sitting at his father's bedside through the long night of April 14th. Following Abraham's death, the northern public clamored for photographs of the family together, but they had never sat for one. In this composite image, the artist took a photo of an unknown soldier, cropped the man's head out, and pasted Robert's on top as he'd never been photographed in uniform, having only served in the last four months of the war.

When Robert was photographed in September of 1867, life had drastically changed for him since his 1858 portrait. After his father's murder, Robert, now twenty-four years old, was then juggling being the head of the Lincoln family, caring for his grieving mother, establishing a burgeoning law career, and courting Mary Harlan. Robert first met Mary, a senator's daughter, in 1864, and the match was enthusiastically approved of by both of Robert's parents. The young couple's marriage was postponed by Abraham's assassination, but the two would finally say their wedding vows one year to the month after this photograph was snapped. He's pictured with that same perfectly coifed hair he'd sported nine years prior and had begun sporting facial hair he'd keep for the rest of his life.



Robert Lincoln, 1867 (LFA-0088)



Robert Lincoln, c. 1874 (LFA-0473)

The 1870s were a busy time in Robert's life. Like his parents, Robert was a family man. His first child, Mamie, was born in 1869, and he and Mary sent a baby photo to Mamie's proud grandmother. Next to come along was Abraham II, known as Jack, born in 1873. Seen here as a toddler with his proud father, aged thirty-one, Robert appears to be helping Jack stand or walk. The youngest Lincoln of this generation was Jessie, born in 1875, the year following this snapshot. During these years, Robert's own family of origin saw dark times. His only surviving brother, Tad, died in 1871, and his mother's health was in decline.



Robert Lincoln, 1877 (LFA-0511)

With her deteriorating sense of mind, in 1875 Robert believed it necessary to have his mother committed to an asylum against her will, which naturally put great strain on their relationship. Yet still Robert remained active in his Chicago community and in his career. In 1877 President Rutherford B. Hayes sought him out for appointment as assistant secretary of state, a position Robert declined. He kept up with connections in Washington despite his refusal, and in that same year sat for a photo with old friends Edgar T. Welles and Edwin L. Stanton (sons of two of Abraham Lincoln's Cabinet secretaries) in Mathew Brady's studio. Although seated, he strikes a Napoleon hand-in-jacket pose.



Robert Lincoln, c. 1880 (LFA-0583)

At thirty-seven in 1880, the mustache Robert had in 1867 had by this time grown into an impressive full beard, with his mustache fashionably curled up at the ends. The year after this photo was taken, Robert accepted appointment as secretary of war under President James A. Garfield. Shortly after his appointment, Robert witnessed Garfield get shot at a train station in the capital, and Garfield died a few months later. As a result, Robert served out the remainder of his appointment under President Chester A. Arthur.



Robert Lincoln, 1896 (LFA-0510)

The final two decades of the nineteenth century were difficult for Robert. He grieved the loss of his mother in 1882 and teenaged son, Jack, in 1890. Professionally, he reached the heights of a successful law career, serving as Minister to the Court of Saint James in London (1889-1893) and as general counsel for the Pullman Palace Car Company during a trying time for the company—the 1894 Pullman Strike, the fallout of which would forever change U.S. labor law. (He would assume the presidency of Pullman in 1897.) In this 1896 photograph, Robert, now fifty-three, speaks before the crowd in Galesburg, Illinois, at the 38th anniversary commemoration of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, flanked by busts of the two statesmen. For all the years of his life after April 15, 1865, Robert Lincoln was inseparable from his father's memory in the eyes of the public.



Robert Lincoln, 1913 (LFA-0560)

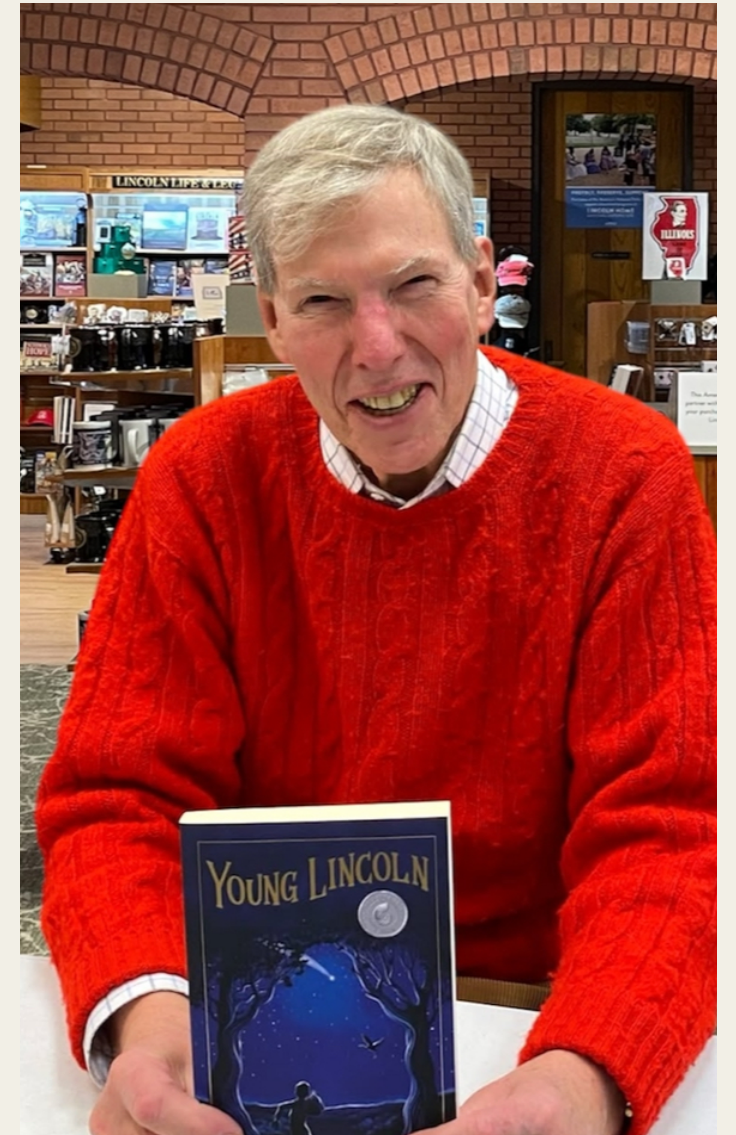
Grandchildren entered Robert's life between 1892 and 1904. Of the three of them, Robert was by all accounts most fond of Mary Lincoln Beckwith, or "Peggy," to whom Robert addressed this photograph in 1913, signed "her affectionate grandfather, Robert T. Lincoln." At seventy years old, Robert had for nearly two decades been dodging calls for him to be considered for presidential nomination. He is seen here as a refined man of great renown, and he retains the dignified air he'd possessed since that 1858 ambrotype.



Robert Lincoln, 1922 (LFA-0509)

Aged seventy-eight, Robert's final public appearance was at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., in 1922. He'd asked that no special notice be taken of him, but organizers directed him to a place of prominence for the event. In this photograph, he stands between President Warren G. Harding and former Speaker of the House Joseph Cannon. Four years later, Robert passed in his sleep and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. But Robert would live and die in his father's shadow. Often looked to to carry the torch of his father's memory, it's light outshone Robert's own achievements. When he died in 1926, Robert was identified simply as "Son of Lincoln" in the opening line of one obituary.

Jan Jacobi during a book signing at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. (Amy Devaisher)



An Interview with Jan Jacobi

by Jonathan W. White

For fifty years, Jan Jacobi served as middle school head and taught English at three schools in St. Louis. He developed his interest in Abraham Lincoln by taking his students on field trips to Springfield, Illinois. His first two Lincoln books—Young Lincoln (2018) and Lincoln in Springfield (2021)—both won Nautilus and Best of Illinois History Awards. He recently published his third young adult book, Lincoln and Douglas (2025). His mission is to give young adult readers a human portrait of our nation's greatest president.

Jonathan White: You spent most of your career educating kids. When and how did you decide you wanted to write books?

Jan Jacobi: When I attended a boarding school (Kent School in Connecticut) for five years, I learned how school could

be a life-changing experience. I graduated with the goal of becoming a teacher and eventually a headmaster. I ended up a middle school English teacher and middle school head at three schools. In 1982, I moved from New York to St. Louis to take a position at St. Louis Country Day School. I joined the other seventh grade teachers in taking our students on field trips to the Lincoln sites in Springfield. I was hooked, and since then I've been reading extensively about Lincoln. When they learned there was no book about Lincoln for middle schoolers, my students said, "You should write one." The result has been what will be a five-book series of young adult novels about Lincoln's life for middle and high school students.

JW: Your first book took some time to get in print—and even involved one of your former students. Tell us about that experience.

JJ: So I wrote the young adult novel on Lincoln's early years and sent it to agents I knew in New York. Rejected by all. I sent it to agents I didn't know in New York. Rejected by all. My backup was a small publishing company in St. Louis that was run by one of my former students, a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop. I sent it to him. Two days later he rejected it—too many rabbit holes where kids would get lost. "If I take them out, will you look at it again?" I asked. He said yes. After resubmission, he called me and invited me to coffee. His first words were, "Jan, you're a teacher, not a writer." I came home and put it in the bureau drawer. Three months later he had lunch with my daughter, who is a writer, and who was working with him on a Missouri River project. They both agreed there was a story in it, but it was not getting out. They came to me and said, "You should change it to first person." "Nonsense," I said, "no one can write in the voice of Abraham Lincoln."

JW: But that's exactly what you've done. How do you strive to capture Lincoln's voice?

JJ: Perhaps burying myself in our local library uncluttered my mind, but the voice I've used in all three books came magically to me. Perhaps it's because I've grown older or it's the call from all I've read about Lincoln. I write in a voice in which Lincoln is thinking about himself and observing the world around him. He learns from his experiences. I do not try to imitate the Lincoln of the *Collected Works*, but there are places in the books, annotated of course, where Lincoln speaks his own words. I rarely use dialect, although Mark Twain was my model for the dialect in *Young Lincoln*. When my book club read *Lincoln and Douglas*, one of our friends commented, "He

thinks like a trial lawyer." If I achieved that, it really is magical. And then, even though I had a manuscript, my publisher put me through another hoop—a young adult editor in Chicago. When it came back two months later, I had half a manuscript. At this point, I almost gave up. The project sat for two months. When I finally went back over the editor's slicing and dicing, I realized she was right about 90% of it. Six months later we had a publishable manuscript. My editor and I have forged a relationship that has lasted through three books and seven years. She is my partner and without her my books would be tinkling cymbals.

JW: Tell us about the research you do for your books.

JJ: Because I am writing for young people, with an eye toward an adult audience, I am telling a story. That means I'm not doing original research. I am standing on the shoulders of the scholars who make my project possible. As a primary source, *Herndon's Informants* has been my bible. I rely on the standard secondary sources, mostly biographies and histories, but when I find a tidbit, I'll track it to the primary source. I always give attribution to the writer who was there before me. I read the newspapers, letters, diaries, and journals to give me a sense of the time period.

JW: What is it about Abraham Lincoln the appeals to young adults?

JJ: Everything about Lincoln appeals to young adult readers. They see themselves in his struggles and challenges. Lincoln's early life is the definition of adolescent turmoil. He struggles

with identity issues, self-doubts, depression, loss, and failure: issues that will continue on into adulthood. A recent study showed that many young people lack purpose in their lives. In *Young Lincoln*, Abe tells us, "The most I'd say for myself is that I became an instrument of purpose."

It was a lifelong struggle, and he forged through it just in time to become president at the worst time imaginable. What a role model for all of us. It's a great story.

JW: What do you see in Lincoln's boyhood that foreshadows who he would become as an adult?

JJ: The fundamental thread here is that he learns to rely on himself. He will do this all his life, and as president it is essential. How does he become self-reliant? It's in part because he spends so much time alone (sometimes with his dog), and in that aloneness, he develops his habits of mind. He becomes reflective and an astute observer of human beings and human nature. In *Young Lincoln*, he asks himself, "From what and from whom can I learn about the world?" How do we know this? It's from all the voices in *Herndon's Informants*—from Sarah Bush Lincoln to Anna Roby Gentry to Dennis Hanks and many others. As a boy he learns to live with his sadness which mysteriously appears from nowhere. Most likely it's from loss, and it will become garden variety depression in his adult years. He loves being with friends; he entertains them by mocking the preacher and telling them stories. This will emerge full blown in the adult Lincoln. The humor and the frontier stories will keep him going during the times of unimaginable stress. He has a tender and empathetic side as a boy, and he loves animals. He returns birds to their nests, and he stops his friends from burning turtles. As president he will rescue three kittens and bring them to the White House.

JW: What surprised you most in your reading and writing about Lincoln as a boy and a young man?

JJ: I was surprised and dismayed that Thomas Lincoln left Abe and Sarah virtually to fend for themselves when he left them to search for a new wife in Kentucky. Thomas was gone for several months and Abe and Sarah, under the erstwhile care of Sophie Hanks, suffered from physical and emotional neglect. When Thomas arrived with his new wife, Abe and Sarah were dirty, emaciated, and dressed in rags. Of all the struggles that Lincoln underwent, it was one of the worst. Michael

Burlingame speculates that Thomas' lack of care for Abe after the death of his mother may have deepened his depression.

JW: How do other characters, like Joshua Speed and Mary Todd, come across in your books?

JJ: That's the fun of writing fiction about Lincoln—although as you and I have talked—fiction that hews closely to the historical record. The fun comes in bringing to life the people in his life. Joshua Speed is an endearing character in *Lincoln in Springfield*, and he is also the human being to whom Lincoln was the closest in his life. There is an intensity to the relationship between two young men who are poised on the brink of adulthood. My editor liked the scenes around the fireplace in Speed's store where John J. Hardin, Stephen Douglas, Lincoln and Edward D. Baker, the rising young men of Springfield, gathered with Speed in the evening to talk about politics, poetry, and local gossip. She called them the "fireside chats" and wanted me to include more of them. I thought she'd surely cut the scene where Speed casts his friends as the mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but she loved it.

The relationship between Lincoln and Speed is the heart of *Lincoln in Springfield*. Speed is very empathetic. When Lincoln breaks off his engagement to Mary Todd and experiences serious depression, Speed nurses him through it. Lincoln is a marriage counselor for Speed when he has cold feet about marrying Fanny Henning, and Speed returns the favor when Lincoln is wary of committing himself to marriage with Mary Todd. Although we don't have Speed's letters to Lincoln, Lincoln's letters to Speed give me the chance to use his own words to deepen his character. At the end of *Lincoln in Springfield*, Lincoln tells us, "It was the last burst of youth



"Home of Abraham Lincoln in Spencer Co. Ind.," engraving by R. Hinshelwood from a photograph by James A. McGill. This cabin might have been the last one the Lincolns built just before they moved to Illinois. (71.2009.081.1778)



Joshua F. Speed (Lincoln Memorial University)



Following their wedding on November 4, 1842, Abraham and Mary Lincoln moved into the Globe Tavern on Adams Street between 3rd and 4th Streets. (William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Abraham Lincoln: Story of a Great Life* [1888])

that brought us together.” Sadly, in adulthood, the friendship will fade. Distance keeps them apart, and it is hard for them to overcome their differences on slavery.

When I started to write *Lincoln in Springfield*, a friend asked me, “Will you actually have Abe and Mary talking to each other?” Of course I do! Dialogue is a key element in establishing character. What do they say to each other? Well, the same kinds of things that any married couple say to each other, but, as we well know, each marriage is different, and no married person can really know the true dynamic of anyone else’s marriage. With that as a caveat, I decided to go down a middle path in portraying the marriage. It had good moments and bad moments. They were fond of each other, but neither gave the other what the other truly needed. Mary needed affection and reassurance, and Abe needed a softer, kinder, Ann Rutledge-like presence in his life. He had deep emotional wounds. When I visit the Lincoln Home in Springfield, I always ask the ranger for his or her take on the marriage. One said, “Without Mary Todd, he doesn’t make it to the White House.” I agree. She kicked him into motion several times in the 1850s when he was at low ebb. Another ranger commented, “I wouldn’t have wanted to be married to either of them.” That’s probably the best commentary I’ve heard on the marriage.

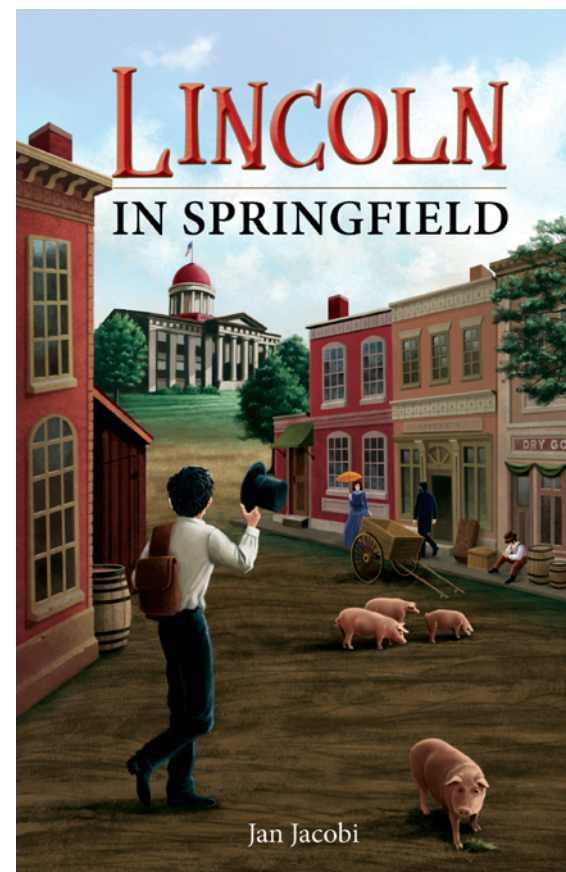
I try to show the best moments of the marriage along with some of Mary’s angry outbursts—throwing a cup of coffee in Abe’s face at the Globe Tavern, for example. The marriage is at its best in the 1850s, when Mary, comfortable with and knowledgeable about the Illinois political scene, provides intel and support. She is his confidante and political partner.

She is better at working a room than he is. When they get to Washington two things will break her heart. She is way out of her league, and he has to shut her out; and the death of Willie will cause her to become an emotional burden. In the evenings when they are together, he will read the Bible.

JW: William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* is central to *Lincoln in Springfield*, and *Hamlet* is an important thread in *Lincoln and Douglas*. Tell us about that.

JJ: I always challenged my students with classic literature in my classroom. I found they could enjoy it, and they were surprised to see that the issues in their lives were the same ones faced by Telemachus, Hamlet, Robinson Crusoe, and Huck Finn. My books have allusions to classical poetry, drama, and nineteenth-century novels. It’s a way to keep this literature alive.

Lincoln loved Shakespeare. He read it constantly, and he performed soliloquies for anyone who would listen—often for John Hay and John Nicolay in the middle of the night. It wasn’t a stretch for me to include it in my Lincoln books. In *Young Lincoln*, Jack Kelso recites Shakespeare and Burns when he fishes in the Sangamon River. Abe is sitting next to him on the riverbank absorbing it all. Abe asks Jack about Shakespeare’s tragic heroes, “Why are they so noble, so misguided, and so miserable at the end?” Jack replies, “Probably because they’re exactly like us.”



In *Lincoln and Springfield*, Abe and Joshua Speed attend a production of *Macbeth*. As Macbeth’s ambition gets the better of him, Lincoln is haunted by his own “vaulting ambition.” Speed says Abe’s ambition is balanced compared to Douglas’s, but Abe is not so sure. Abe asks his friend, “What if my ambition knows no rest?” Speed tells him, “No one can answer that but you.” Abe replies, “Speed, I am afraid it is very dark.” Speed then asks him, “Are you asking if you can have deep ambition and still remain good?” When Abe says, “Yes,” Speed replies, “Then you must wrestle with it.” Abe finishes, “I do each day.”

The thread from *Hamlet* goes deeper in *Lincoln and Douglas*. David Davis and Lincoln go to a traveling production of *Hamlet* in Bloomington to take time off from the political wars. After the play they discuss it in Davis’s study. Davis sees Hamlet as a ditherer, but Abe does not agree. For Lincoln, the play is Hamlet’s struggle to face his impending death, the martyrdom he will have to accept to cleanse Denmark of its rotteness. Only Hamlet’s blood can wash the kingdom clean. It foreshadows what Abe will have to face in his presidency.

JW: Lincoln and Stephen Douglas had a twenty-five-year relationship in Illinois politics. What aspects of that story did you find the most compelling when writing *Lincoln and Douglas*?

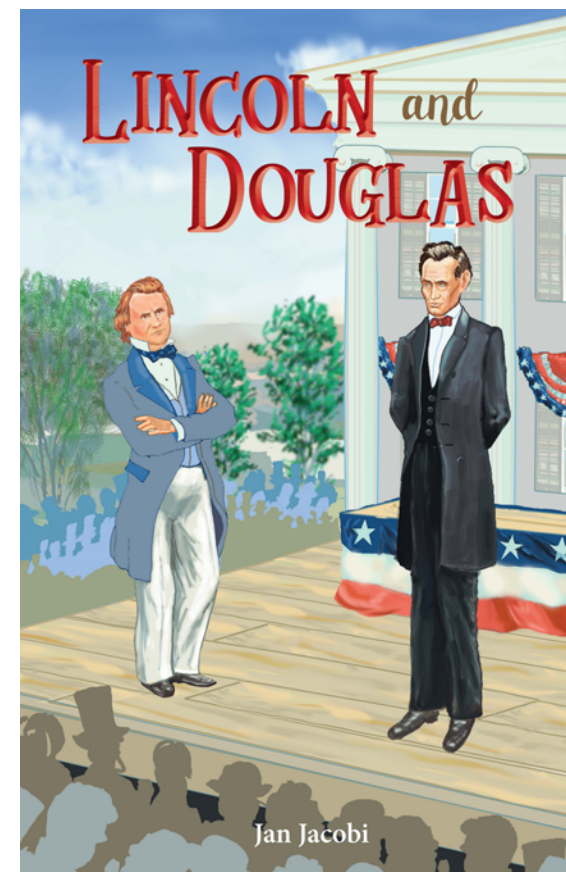
JJ: When they hear the name Stephen Douglas, most people think of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and that’s it. They don’t realize that Lincoln and Douglas had a long relationship which began when they met in the Illinois legislature in 1834. They were friends, political rivals, rivals for the hand of Mary Todd, eventually bitter enemies in the late 1850s, and finally friends again, in 1861, united in the cause of saving the Union. Their rivalry is really Aesop’s story of the tortoise and the hare. Douglas was the hare who streaked to the top of American politics in the late 1840s and the 1850s while Lincoln was the plodding tortoise left behind in the dust. Eventually the hare (and Stephen Douglas) self-destructed (Kansas-Nebraska Act), and the tortoise, having developed character through his struggles, won the race.

Lincoln and Douglas are two very different people. It was fun to write the conversations they must have had. They parry with each other throughout the book. The moment that I find most poignant in their relationship is the reconciliation after the war begins. It’s the epilogue of the book. Douglas tells Lincoln he is the human being who understands him the best. After their conversation, Lincoln says, “Douglas is a noble man.”

JW: When writing for younger readers, how do you deal with difficult concepts, like racism and slavery? I’m thinking not only of Douglas’s blatant and vicious racism, but his “don’t care” attitude toward slavery.

JJ: I wanted to like Douglas. He was charismatic and charming. He was a brilliant legislative politician, the equal of Henry Clay. However, there is a serious problem. As you point out, Douglas was a blatant and vicious racist. Frederick Douglass said no one was more responsible for “hatred of the negro” than Stephen Douglas. It’s an interesting factoid that Douglas dropped the second “s” in his name around the time that Frederick Douglass published his first autobiography in 1845.

I can’t answer this question without a little background. For my entire professional career, I taught English to seventh and eighth graders. They were in their early teens. Schools underestimate the cognitive capabilities of these children, and they also underappreciate the deeper emotional levels on which they function. I always aimed for the 75th percentile in my classes. One student commented, “Mr. Jacobi’s class is really a philosophy class.” Now with students able to operate on that level, you can confront some of life’s ugliness. It’s an important lesson. We confronted slavery and racism. We read *Huck Finn*. It’s an antislavery text. We watched *12 Years a Slave*. (We also read *Night* by Elie Wiesel and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.) If I can puff out my feathers slightly, I was honored to be the Gilder Lehrman Institute teacher of the year for Missouri several years ago.



I do the same thing with my books. In *Lincoln and Douglas*, Abe sees a slave auction where a semi-naked young woman is fondled by a man on the auction block. He will become her owner. Abe is shocked and overcome—and the reader is too. I include Lincoln’s racist statement at the opening of the Charleston debate, but I also include his ringing antislavery statement at Alton where he calls slavery a moral wrong. I include Douglas’s summation where he says he doesn’t care about all the N-words in Christendom. To be true to the historical record, I spell out the full word in the text.

My readers understand why that material is in the books, and they appreciate the historical accuracy.

JW: One of the themes that emerges in your writing is Lincoln as a man alone. Can you talk about why you think that was important to Lincoln, and why it has been important for you to include in your books?

JJ: This harks back to where I began with Lincoln. I’ve been interested in the aloneness question all my life. It started in boarding school when I studied David Riesman’s book, *The Lonely Crowd*, which was published in 1950. It seemed such an utter paradox: that one could be engaged in life and really be alone.

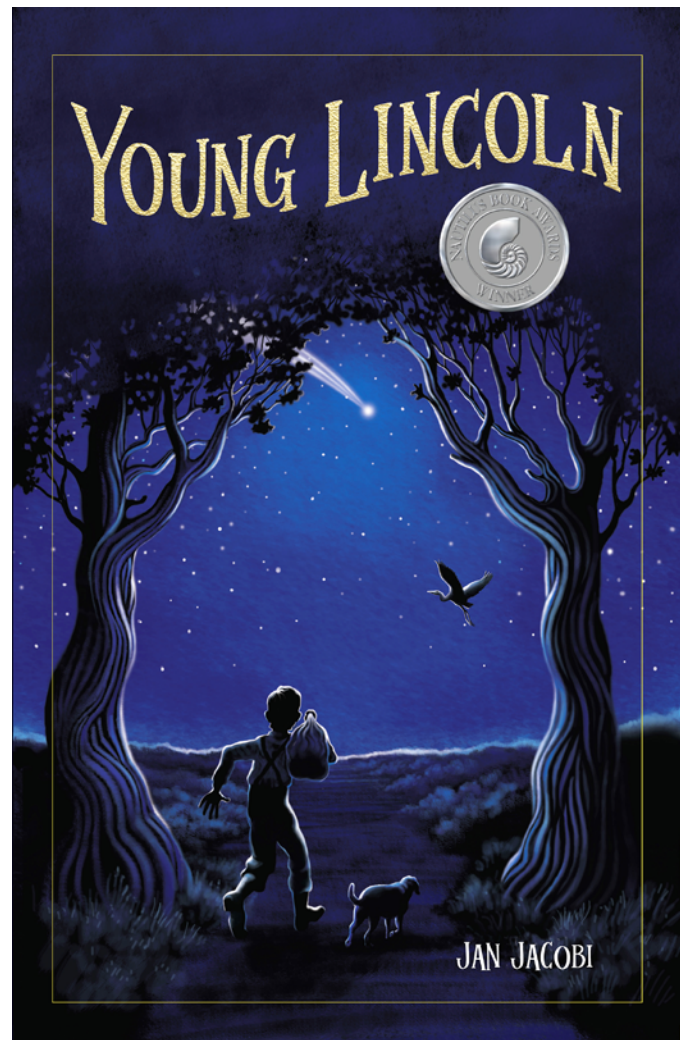
In the mid-1990s, as part of our curriculum, my seventh-grade students were reading *Newsweek* (when it was edited by Jon Meacham). There was a weekly piece called “My Turn,” and when they saw one written by a teacher, they said, “You should write something about Lincoln for *Newsweek*.” I did. It was rejected three times, and I shared the rejection letters with them. One finally suggested, “You should send it to the [St. Louis] *Post Dispatch*.” I did, and it was published on Lincoln’s birthday. The article was entitled, “Lincoln and Stress,” and in it I speculated about how Lincoln handled stress when he was president. The only intimate friendship he’d known had eased away, and anyway, Joshua Speed was back in Kentucky. He had no Bebe Rebozo or Harry Hopkins. He did have colleagues, some of whom like Seward were close to him, but they always wanted something from him. He couldn’t trust them. His favorite child had died, which caused his wife to withdraw into her own world. He was completely alone. It was a recipe for stress, and I wondered how he’d survived it. There were five ways, one of which was going to the theater.

Over the years I’ve come to believe that Lincoln was not lonely and he was not a loner, but as a person he was existentially alone. He was a Melvillian “isolato.” In chapter 27 of *Moby Dick*, speaking about the crew of the *Pequod*, Ishmael tells us, “They were nearly all Islanders in the *Pequod*, *Isolato*es too, but each *Isolato* living on a separate continent of his own.” What Lincoln does, which is lifesaving, is that he transcends his isolation and immerses in solitude. Solitude is enormously healthy. It’s what we all need, time to reflect and review. We

need to think about who we are and what we are doing. I’m convinced that Lincoln did this, and it is a model for all of us—young or old.

In the pre-presidential Lincoln of my first three books, I’ve tried to track this thread through his early years. He learns it when he is young, and it is central to his ability to deal with his struggles, challenges, and defeats. Through it he develops resilience without which he will not survive the presidency.

In my fifty years of work with seventh and eighth graders, I also became convinced they could convert their loneliness into solitude. It’s a lifelong project, but it can and should begin in adolescence. Your wife Lauren gave me the magic word for what adolescents can do in solitude. They can *muse*. I love that concept. It’s not a heavy duty “who am I and what is my purpose in life,” although that can be part of it. It’s musing—thinking about life experiences—mostly about home life and friends at that age—but also dreaming. It becomes a habit of mind that gives life a rich fullness.



The educational psychologist, Howard Gardner, theorized that there are eight intelligences: linguistic, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, musical, natural science, and, most important, interpersonal and intrapersonal. The last is how you get along with yourself. I believe Lincoln had spades in intrapersonal intelligence.

JW: You and I first met when you were signing books at the Lincoln Home in Springfield. You seem to delight in interacting with the general public. What are some of the best experiences you’ve had with your readers?

JJ: I’m a teacher. I love interacting with children and their parents. The Lincoln Home is an ideal place for me to sign books. Since I’m not Doris Kearns Goodwin or Jon Meacham, I spend time chatting with each person who buys a book. I get to know them. In buying one of my books, I feel that my readers are trusting me to tell a good story. I feel as if I’m giving them a small piece of myself. I hope I’m fostering my mission to keep Lincoln’s legacy alive for the younger generation. Adults sometimes buy a book for themselves. For that reason, the books are known as “crossovers”—books that appeal to young adults and adults as well. I put my email in the back inside cover for each reader. I always respond to the emails I get. James McPherson taught us that. He sent handwritten notes to the first three thousand readers of *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

I have three favorite stories about my readers. One boy from Wisconsin sent me an email about the ending of *Young Lincoln*. He told me it made it feel so sad. I could have told him, “Wait till you read book five,” but I did my best to console him. A month later I received an email from a girl in Japan. She told me she loved the ending. When a boy from Michigan learned that there would be sequels to *Young Lincoln*, he said, “Ooh, it will be the *Harry Potter* of Abraham Lincoln!”

JW: So you’ve written three books now, but you have two more in the works. Would you give us a sneak preview of what you have in store?

JJ: You are kind to ask, Jon.

There will be two books for the presidency. The first one will end with the loss at Battle of Fredericksburg (“What will the country say?”) and the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation (the event for which Lincoln thought he’d be

remembered by history). The second one will start in January 1863 and end on the afternoon of April 14, 1865, with Abe and Mary’s carriage ride.

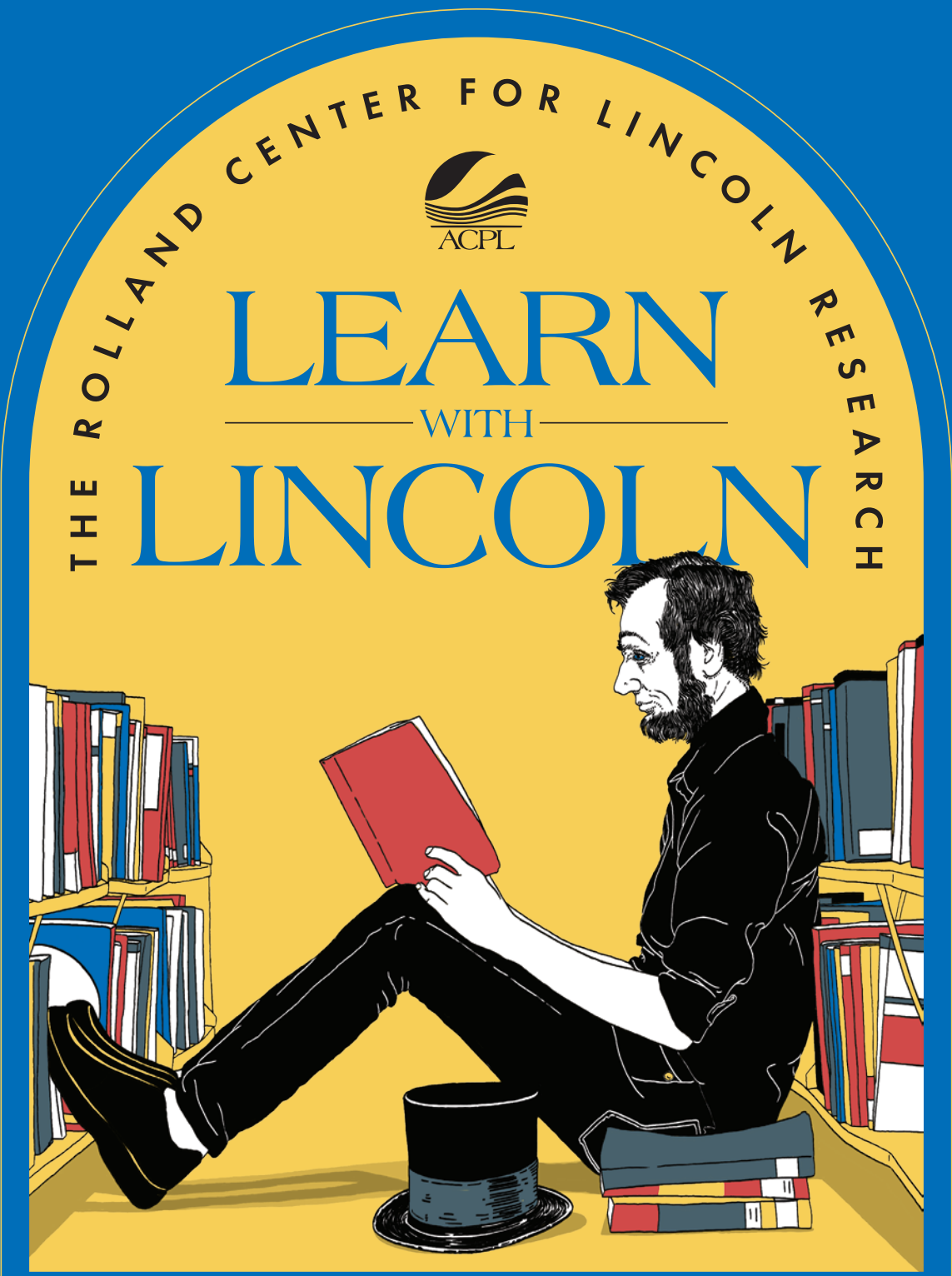
At this point I am still marinating (David McCullough’s word) on who Lincoln is in the fourth book. When I get a better sense of that, I will begin.

I do want to finish by saying that I am so appreciative of the support I’ve received from the Lincoln community as I’ve written these books. It is such a warm and welcoming group. I could not have embarked on and continued with this project and adventure without their kindness, receptivity, and support. Thank you, Jon.

JW: It’s been wonderful hearing from you today. Thank you so much for joining us!

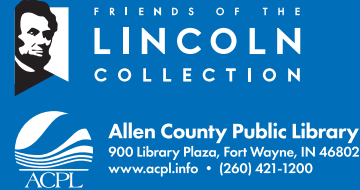


Jan Jacobi at the spot of the final Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Alton, Illinois. (Jan Jacobi)



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