



THE LINCOLN FORUM

BULLETIN

TO ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING AND PRESERVE THE MEMORY OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

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Chairman
Hon. Frank J. Williams
300 Switch Road
Hope Valley, RI 02832
Phone: 401-364-3642
Fax: 401-539-7979
alincoln@courts.state.ri.us

Vice Chairman
Harold Holzer
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10028-0198
Phone: 212-570-3951
Fax: 212-472-2764
hholzer@compuserve.com

Treasurer
Charles D. Platt
14 Blue Heron Drive West
Greenwood Village, CO 80112
Phone: 303-721-8550
Fax: 303-290-0097
cplatt@bigfoot.com

Administrator
Annette Westerby
7285 E. Fremont Place
Englewood, CO 80112
Phone: 303-721-6681
Fax: 303-221-4874
westerby@uswest.net

Jean H. Baker
Michael R. Beschloss
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Don E. Fehrenbacher, 1920-1997
Ralph G. Newman, 1911-1998

SEN. PAUL SIMON WINS 1999 RICHARD NELSON CURRENT AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT

Former U. S. Senator Paul Simon of Illinois — who has enjoyed a distinguished, 50-year-long career marked by a rare combination of scholarship and leadership — is the winner of the 1999 Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement of the Lincoln Group of New York. The award, in the form of a sculpture titled 'Freedom River' created by Robert McClarey, will be presented to Simon at the banquet dinner of the annual Lincoln Forum Symposium at Gettysburg on November 18.

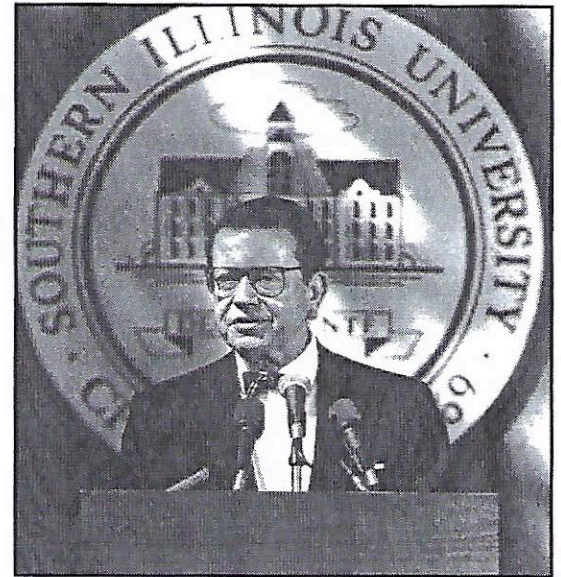
The Forum's achievement award was established in 1996, and renamed in 1998 for founding advisor Richard Nelson Current, the dean of Lincoln scholars. Past winners were: Gabor S. Boritt (1996), Brian Lamb (1997), and John Hope Franklin (1998).

"Paul Simon not only earned a place in America's history books with his consummate integrity, sincerity, and compassion," remarked Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams in making the announcement, "he created the history books as well, contributing a number of distinguished, definitive studies of Lincoln and his contemporaries. As both a devoted a public servant and a gifted scholar and writer, he has earned recognition as one of the great citizens of the Land of Lincoln, and a worthy successor to the tradition of public service that Lincoln himself represented."

Born in Eugene, Oregon, in 1928 — he will celebrate his 71st birthday less than two weeks after receiving the Lincoln Forum award — the Lutheran minister's son was educated at the University of Oregon and Dana College in Blair, Nebraska (he has since earned 40 honorary degrees). At Dana, then an all-white school, Simon led the effort to inaugurate a color-blind admissions policy. After World War II he became editor and publisher (and frequently the only staff writer as well) for the crusading *Troy Tribune* in southern Illinois, fighting, as Lincoln did a century-and-a-quarter earlier, for internal improvements — in Simon's case, for a municipal sewer system, his support for which promptly led his opponents to brand him a socialist. Simon went on to battle prostitution, gambling, and police corruption in southern Illinois. By the end of his newspaper career in 1966 he was publishing 15 weeklies.

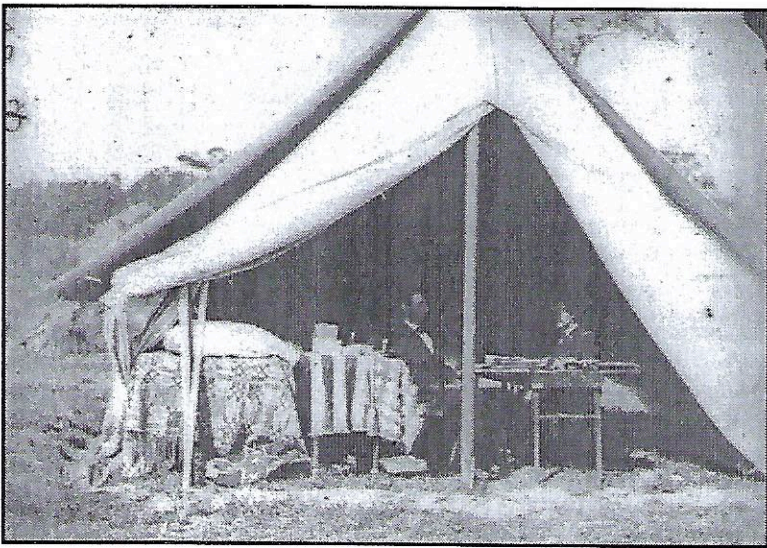
Beginning with his first election at the age of 25, Simon served 14 years as in the State Legislature, where he continued to fight for good government, a mission he documented with a highly regarded, well-read article for *Harper's Magazine*, "The Illinois Legislature: A Study in Corruption."

After winning election to the state senate, the Illinois Democrat ran successfully for the post of Lieutenant Governor, but went on to lose a gubernatorial bid in a campaign still remembered for Simon's widely publicized walking tour from one end of Illinois to the other. The defeat did not stop him from winning election to the U. S. House of Representatives in 1974. Simon served five terms in the House, and then won election to the United States Senate in 1984, and re-election in 1990. In the Senate he was a consistent supporter of both a balanced budget and programs to end poverty and improve education. Simon vied for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988.



Paul Simon (Photo by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; University Photo Communications)

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COMMANDING A GENERAL

President Lincoln posed with General George B. McClellan near Harpers Ferry, Virginia on October 3, 1862, just days after the Union victory at the Battle of Antietam. Alexander Gardner took the famous series of photographs, all of which share an element of careful staging. Note the American flag draping the table behind Lincoln, for example, and the captured Confederate flag on the ground at left. One detail, however, was beyond exaggeration: never before had a commander-in-chief been photographed in the field with his general.

Photo: The Library of Congress.

If you have news to share — on your Lincoln or Civil War organization, activities, or studies — send it for inclusion in the next Bulletin to:

Harold Holzer
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 Fifth Avenue
NY, NY 10028-0198
e-mail: hholzer@compuserve.com

Or contact co-editor David Long
e-mail: Longd@mail.ecu.edu

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THE LINCOLN FORUM has purchased the domain name "thelincolnforum.com" for its web site. Change your bookmarks to: <http://www.thelincolnforum.com> [.] Lincoln scholar Edward Steers, Jr., has acted as volunteer webmaster for the site, and welcomes response and reaction at his own e-mail: niddk@access.mountain.net [.] Others available via e-mail; Chairman Williams at alincoln@courts.state.ri.us; treasurer Chuck Platt at cplatt@bigfoot.com; and administrator Annette Westerby at westerby@uswest.net [.]

MEMBERS FOR LIFE

The Lincoln Forum salutes its roster of life members, whose commitment and generosity sustain the organization.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Abraham Lincoln once famously asked if our government could remain "strong enough to maintain its own existence" without becoming "too strong for the liberties of its people." The Forum named in Lincoln's honor certainly does not face so frightening a prospect. But our great success is presenting us with a challenge of our own: can we continue to grow without growing beyond the capacity of our host city to accommodate us?

As I write this column, we are reaching sell-out status for Lincoln Forum IV — not surprising in the least, considering that our elbow-to-elbow banquet of 1998 attracted 180 guests and left little doubt that we were continuing to expand our reach and appeal. I am pleased to report that when we approached capacity status this fall, our headquarters hotel, the Gettysburg Holiday Inn Battlefield, promptly secured a block of rooms for us at a neighboring inn down the road. Thus we have expanded now into two lodgings, and our dining facilities are stretched to the limit. We faced this year with the unhappy prospect of turning away members who sought to register after September. Be assured that your officers will continue searching for expansion opportunities. And, happily, there are reports of new construction activities at several of the hotels in the Gettysburg neighborhood.

Needless to say, this news is reported without regret. The huge interest in the Forum — now registering some 515 members in 39 states — is gratifying beyond expectation. As Mae West once said, "too much of a good thing is wonderful." The continuing hunger for serious exploration of the American past is irrefutable. Organizations like ours, we hope, answer a national yearning. Our pledge is to continue working to ensure efficiency, comfort, scholarly excellence, and good cheer and camaraderie to the enthusiasts who thankfully have made the Lincoln Forum Symposium an annual habit.

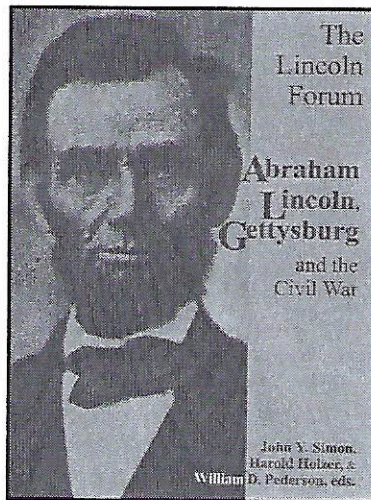
Future mid-year meetings in other venues? Group trips to Lincoln and Civil War sites? A continuing publishing program? I urge you to let us know what you would like us to deliver in the future, and we will continue working to maintain our record, and build on it. We know "where we are and whither we are tending." Ours is a House United. As we build toward the Lincoln Forum's fifth year and second century, we thank you for your support, encourage your input, urge your participation, and above all, welcome you back to our host city of Gettysburg — bursting at the seams though it may be — for the annual symposium!

Frank Williams

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, "WARRIOR"

This wartime caricature by *London Punch* portrayed The Union commander-in-chief as a Roman warrior victorious over a prone Jefferson Davis, armed only with a pistol and cat-o-nine-tails. But in a companion cartoon, *Punch* countered with an image of Lincoln as a man of peace — wearing a flowing dress! This and the other illustrations in this edition of the Bulletin all relate to the theme of the 1999 Symposium — Lincoln as Commander in Chief. Photo: Illinois State Historical Library.

THE LINCOLN FORUM, VOLUME ONE: "ABRAHAM LINCOLN, GETTYSBURG, AND THE CIVIL WAR"

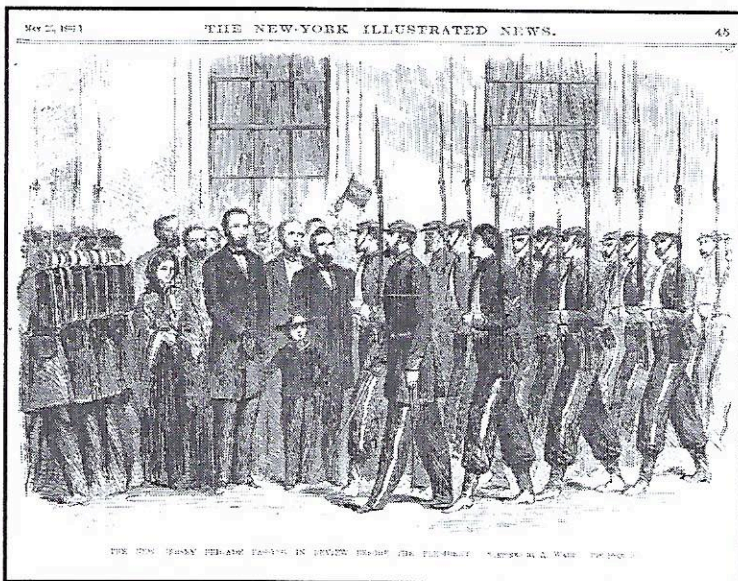


The Lincoln Forum — the new book of essays from the first Lincoln Forum symposium, edited by John Y. Simon, Harold Holzer, and William D. Pederson — has been issued by Savas Publishing Company (ISBN 1-882810-37-6, \$19.95) to excellent advance reviews.

The Library Journal commented: "This collection of essays consists of papers and speeches presented at various events of the Lincoln Forum, a group of Lincoln scholars, students, and enthusiasts throughout the country. These essays

examine Lincoln as a military leader, speechwriter, speechmaker, politician, and family man. Sandra Day O'Connor examines the way Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus. Harold Holzer discusses the initial reception and myths surrounding the Gettysburg Address. Edna Greene Medford examines the Emancipation Proclamation and the controversy it engendered. Other contributors concentrate on the Battle of Gettysburg and Lincoln's frustration at General Meade's refusal to follow his victory with the pursuit and capture of Lee's Army [essay by Frank J. Williams — ed.]. Editors Simon (history, Southern Univ. at Carbondale), Holzer (author or editor of numerous Lincoln-era books, including *Lincoln as I Knew Him*, reviewed here), and William D. Pederson (director of American studies at Louisiana State Univ., editor of several books, and an *LJ* reviewer) have chosen a collection of short essays that offers a nice glimpse of several aspects of Lincoln's wartime life. Recommended for academic libraries and public libraries with Lincoln collections."



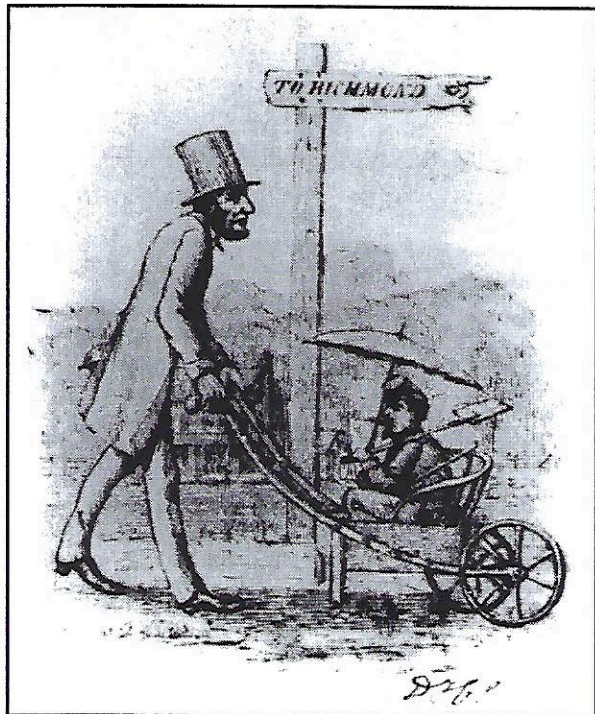


Lincoln — his son at his side — reviews the New Jersey brigade as it parades past the White House in May 1861. This Alfred Waud sketch was engraved for The New-York Illustrated News. Photo: Library of Congress.

(Right) The Confederate picture weekly, The Southern Illustrated News, assailed the Union commander-in-chief as a jester, unveiling his latest puppet, "Fighting Joe" Hooker, as discarded predecessors like McDowell, Fremont, Burnside, Pope, and McClellan lie in a storage bin nearby. Photo: The New York Public Library.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: THE RECORD IN PICTURES

Engravers and lithographers of the Civil War era spent four years depicting Abraham Lincoln as commander-in-chief — in pictures that were both flattering and critical. The pictures on these pages were either published in the illustrated newspapers, or produced for home display as family icons. Like the written record, pictures did not fully appreciate Lincoln's prowess as a commander until late in the war.



Artist David Hunter Strother offered this comic view of Lincoln urging General McClellan on to Richmond in 1862. McClellan's shovel symbolizes his chronic preference for entrenchment over combat. Photo: Harold Holzer.

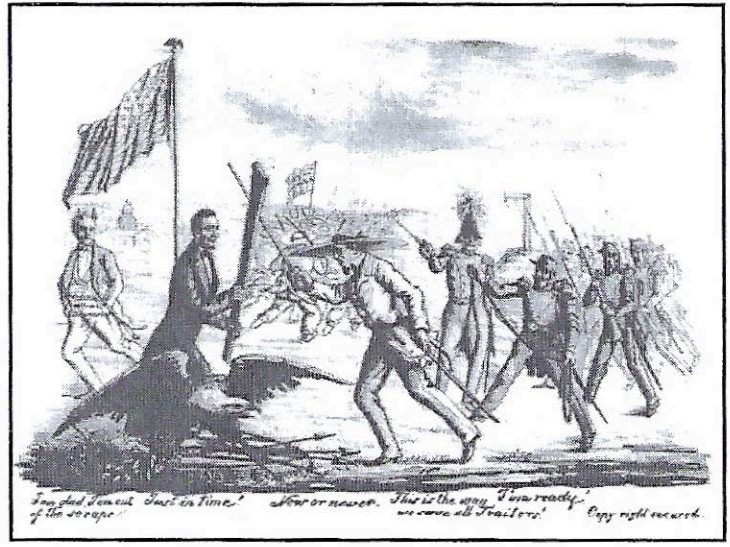


This early, reverential depiction of a White House strategy conference shows Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward, at left, listening as General Winfield Scott outlines strategy. George B. McClellan (center), Benjamin Butler, John Wool, Robert Anderson, and John C. Fremont look on. Photo: Library of Congress.



This 1865 print purported to show Lincoln arriving in triumph at City Point, Virginia. In truth, City Point was a Union supply depot, not a conquered Confederate stronghold. But the point of the lithograph is that Lincoln had emerged as the principal military conqueror of the war – note Grant and Stanton in the background – and that the victory he achieved had ended slavery.

Photo: The Old Print Shop, New York.



Rival presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis engage in hand-to-hand combat in a print that reduced the Civil War to a battle of gladiators. Davis, wearing a plantation owner's hat, charges with a sword, while Lincoln defends himself – along with the American flag and eagle – with a log rail.

Photo: Library of Congress.

WORKS IN PROGRESS:

FORUM SPEAKERS, ADVISORS, GOING TO PRESS WITH NEW TITLES

- Craig L. Symonds has just published *Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin Buchanan* (Naval Institute Press).
- David Long is working on a book about the Dahlgren Raid (*Jeff. Davis Must Be Killed*) as well as his eagerly anticipated “prequel” to *The Jewel of Liberty (Ain't You Glad You Joined the Republicans: The 1860 Presidential Election)*.
- Gabor S. Boritt's new book is *Jefferson Davis's Generals* (Oxford University Press), the latest in his series of Civil War Institute lecture collections. This volume includes essays by Forum veterans James McPherson, Harold Holzer, and Craig Symonds. Prof. Boritt is also working on a comprehensive study of the Battle of Gettysburg.
- James M. McPherson has edited and contributed to a “What If?” book of intriguing speculations about alternative outcomes that might have changed history – due soon.
- Frank J. Williams is working on a *Facts on Lincoln* book for Savas Publishing.
- John Y. Simon is completing volumes 23 and 24 of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, due next year from Southern Illinois University Press.
- Mario M. Cuomo is publishing an inspirational children's book based on his own father's insistence that the family save a tree downed in a rainstorm.
- Mark E. Neely, Jr.'s new book is *Southern Rights: Political Prisoners and the Myth of Confederate Constitutionalism* (University Press of Virginia, November). With Harold Holzer, he is also bringing out *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (University of North Carolina Press).
- Harold Holzer's other new book is *Lincoln as I Knew Him* (Algonquin Books), and coming next year, *Lincoln Seen and Heard* (University Press of Kansas), and a children's collection, *Abraham Lincoln, The Writer* (Boyd's Mills Press).
- John Marszalek is working on a biography of Henry W. Halleck.

Lincoln the Assassin?

By David E. Long

By the third winter of the Civil War, traditional notions of chivalry in battle and civility in relations with the enemy had suffered as the number of atrocities on both sides escalated and the remorseless conflict continued unabated. Southern hatred of Abraham Lincoln intensified as a result of an otherwise insignificant military incident. From February 28 to March 2, a large Union cavalry force had attempted a raid on Richmond in order to free Federal soldiers in the Belle Isle and Libby prisons of that city. This was one occasion when Lincoln had intervened directly in the planning of a military operation, having called for the raid despite opposition to it by both army commander General George Meade and cavalry corps commander Alfred Pleasonton.

Part of the operation involved Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, son of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren, whom Lincoln greatly admired. Lincoln's friendship with the elder Dahlgren would later give rise to Confederate accusations that the president had personally sponsored the raid. Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick, commander of the raid, had left much of the detailed planning to the younger Dahlgren. The raid failed and a number of Federal troopers were captured; the young colonel was killed in an ambush.

The raid would most likely have been a back page story except that Confederate authorities claimed they found incriminating papers on Dahlgren's body. The papers, in the colonel's handwriting, purported to be the orders and instructions for the raiders once they had gained control of Richmond. They contained a grisly message:

The bridges once secured, and the prisoners loose and over the river, the bridges will be burned and the city destroyed. The men must be kept together and well in hand, and once in the city it must be destroyed and **Jeff Davis and Cabinet killed.** (emphasis added)

Controversy over the authenticity of the document was front-page news North and South for weeks following the raid. It was widely believed that Lincoln had not only sponsored the raid but that he had approved of the goals to be carried out by the raiders once they had entered Richmond. James Headley, a Confederate officer who rode with John Hunt Morgan, wrote after the war:

It appears that General Kilpatrick and Colonel Dahlgren came directly from a conference in Washinton with President Lincoln and acted by his authority and approval, just as the army commanders were doing who were burning the homes and property of the people of the South.

He felt that these papers "will not admit of a doubt of the murderous intention of the Federal commander." Headley said that many Southerners hoped that the day would come when there would be a chance to retaliate." It particularly bothered the soldiers that the Northern public "gloried in the...total devastation of homes and all personal property, and especially the subjugation and degradation of the Southern people." The people in the North seemed to be "convinced that the South could only be conquered by ruin and starvation."

The Richmond press had no doubt who was to blame. "Let Lincoln and Kilpatrick remember that they have bidden their subordinates give no quarter to the Confederate chiefs," wrote one editor. In a disparaging reference to the disguised and undignified manner in which Lincoln had entered Washington in 1861, a Richmond writer warned, "Perhaps even a Scotch cap and a military cloak will not prevent a just and stern vengeance from overtaking them."

The Dahlgren papers presaged the stark reality of future war. They were a warning of impending destruction by Major General William T. Sherman's armies in Georgia and South Carolina, and Major General Philip Sheridan's army in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. They were a warning of Southern cities in flames and refugees wandering a wasteland made desolate by "war so terrible."

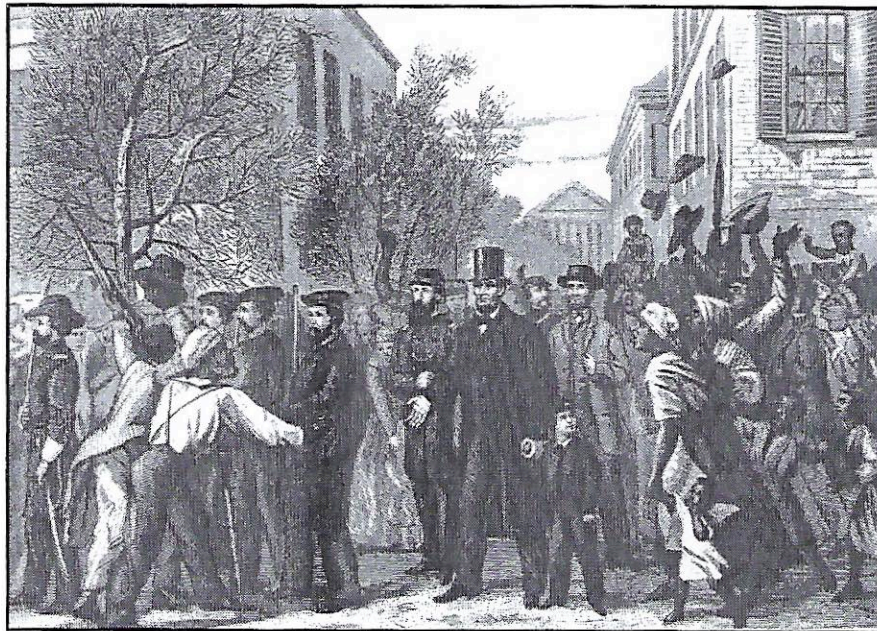
Though it has never been shown that he knew about Dahlgren's purpose on the raid, and the authenticity of the papers has never been firmly established, his role was really irrelevant. What was important was that Southern leaders believed that he knew and that Dahlgren's orders represented a new policy by their enemy. That perception helped drive the Confederacy to respond desperately as defeat became increasingly apparent. Was there merit in the rebel belief that Lincoln knew the purpose of the raid and sanctioned its goals? Because no official documents exist that provide any reliable answers, it is necessary to look at the circumstances which influenced government policy at this point in the war.

For more than a year prior to March 1864, some Confederate officers and many soldiers had routinely killed wounded black Union soldiers or summarily executed those who attempted to surrender. Those not killed were almost always returned to slavery. The white officers who led black soldiers often received similar treatment. At a dozen different sites, from Fort Pillow, Tennessee, to Olustee, Florida, and the sea islands of South Carolina, reports of the battlefield execution of black soldiers and their white officers had posed a problem for Lincoln.

On July 31, 1863, he drafted a retaliatory decree stating that it was "the duty of every government to give protection to its citizens of whatever class, color, or condition," and especially so when those citizens were soldiers in the public service." The order claimed that it was "a relapse into barbarism and a crime against the civilization of the age" for a warring power "to sell or enslave any captured person on account of his color, and for no offense against the laws of war." He ordered that for any soldier sold or enslaved by the enemy because of his color "the offense shall be punished by retaliation upon the enemy's prisoners in our possession."

It is therefore ordered that for every soldier of the United States killed in violation of the laws of war, a rebel soldier shall be executed, and for every one enslaved by the enemy or sold into slavery, a rebel soldier shall be placed at hard labor on the public works, and continued at such labor until the other shall be released and receive the treatment due to a prisoner of war."

Lincoln, who had placed black soldiers in the position to suffer those atrocities, did not follow through on the order. The Cabinet struggled with framing an appropriate response during several meetings following the Fort Pillow massacre. Welles insisted that the government not follow such a "barbarous inhuman policy." Lincoln agreed that blood cannot restore blood, and governments should not act for revenge. It was a source of tremendous frustration to him, however, that he could not do more to protect those soldiers for whom he felt a personal accountability. That he gave serious consideration to retaliation is an indication of the extent to which the war by 1864 had diminished the humanity of all who were caught up in its vortex. Even if Lincoln could not justify an eye-for-an-eye policy on rebel prisoners, he might have felt no such restraint toward their leaders. Davis and Seddon, after all, had authorized the vicious policy toward black troops and their officers. The assassination of the authors of such a heinous policy was a more humane response to the barbarism than the slaughter of helpless prisoners of war. And if it discouraged the rebel policy toward black prisoners, then the lives of untold numbers of newly enfranchised citizens might very well be saved.



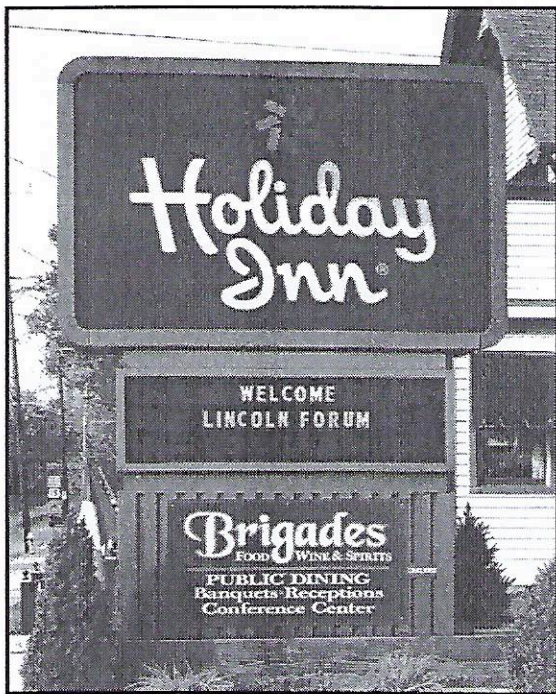
Lincoln enters Richmond, the conquered capital of the Confederacy, on April 4, 1865, hand-in-hand with his son Tad, and reportedly accompanied by only 12 armed escorts, six in front, six behind. This 1865 engraving is by Benjamin H. Russell of Boston. Photo: Library of Congress.

Did Abraham Lincoln know about and sanction the proposed actions of Colonel Ulric Dahlgren if the officer successfully entered Richmond? The answer to that question will never be known with any certainty. However, the evidence that the Federals intended to raze the city and kill the leaders of the Confederate government is both credible and compelling. And if that was the purpose of the raid, it is difficult to imagine that a junior officer, particularly one as steeped in military tradition as Ulric Dahlgren, would have performed such acts with authorization from a source high in the civilian government. In a letter to his father before the raid began, young Dahlgren had written, "If successful the raid will be the grandest thing on record; and if it fails, many of us will go up, and it is an undertaking that if I were not in I should be ashamed to show my face again"

That the youthful cavalryman regarded the mission as hazardous, yet one having potentially great consequences, is clear from the language of his letter. His description hardly comports with the claims of the government that the raid was made for the purpose of distributing leaflets announcing Lincoln's proclamation of amnesty or freeing Federal prisoners on Belle Island and in Libby Prison. Ulric Dahlgren foresaw a raid that might change the course of the war. Might that vision have included Jefferson Davis and James Seddon dead in the streets of Richmond, assassinated by Federal troopers on a mission of death and destruction.

In the aftermath of the raid and Dahlgren's death, Washington insiders recounted a conversation at Willard's bar one evening in late February, when the youthful colonel had whispered, "Rightly used, a few handguns could end this bloody business." It didn't mean much in February, late at night in a tavern spoken by a young soldier full of derring-do and directed to other officers likewise probably well in their cups. But in March, with both Northern and Southern presses hurling accusation and counteraccusation arising out of the failed raid, the statement suddenly took on a new and ominous meaning. Were those handguns to be the tools of assassination? And if they were, was Abraham Lincoln the ultimate arbiter whose sanction would allow the event to proceed to fruition? It is a premise so out of character with everything we know and believe about this president that we are wont instinctually to reject it. However, when considered in the context of a leader deeply angered and offended by the heinous treatment of black soldiers by the enemy; a man extremely frustrated and distressed by his inability to protect uniformed heroes whom he had been responsible for putting in that vulnerable position; is it so inconceivable that Lincoln might have covertly approved an operation intended to destroy the authors of that odious policy?

We will never know for certain. But even if we could, it should change nothing about the way we regard this man and his presidency.



LINCOLN FORUM RETURNS HOME

For the third consecutive year, the Lincoln Forum is returning to the Holiday Inn Battlefield in Gettysburg, which last year posted this welcome to guests on a site only a few hundred yards from where Jennie Wade, the only civilian to die in the battle, lost her life; and only a block from an intersection past which President Lincoln rode en route to deliver the Gettysburg Address that November.

FIRST ESSAY CONTEST WINNER TO BE ANNOUNCED AT FORUM SYMPOSIUM

The first winner of the \$1,000 Lincoln Forum college essay contest will be announced at the 1999 Symposium. Finalists come from Rutgers University, Howard University, Otterbein College in Ohio, Arizona State University (two applicants), the University of Pennsylvania, UCLA, and the University of Illinois.

Applicants were asked to write a 1500-word essay on the subject, "Abraham Lincoln the myth vs. Abraham Lincoln the man."

Judges for the competition were: Don McCue, director of the Lincoln Shrine in Redlands, California; Michael Maione, historian at Ford's Theatre National Historic Site; Thomas R. Turner, professor of history at Bridgewater College in Massachusetts; and George M. Craig, the chairman of the Baroness-Lincoln Award Committee of the Civil War Round Table of New York, and former, longtime Treasurer of the Lincoln Group of New York.

The winning essay will be published in the next edition of the Bulletin.

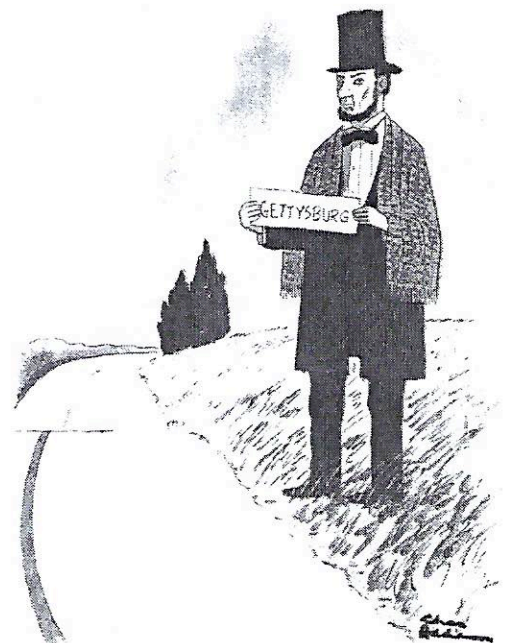
Simon, continued from page 1

Since leaving the Senate nearly three years ago, Simon has served as director of the Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, where he lives with his wife, Jeanne Simon, an attorney (the Simons are parents of a son and daughter).

Remarkably, throughout his long and demanding career in education, publishing, and politics, Paul Simon has also made major contributions as a writer of books on both history and current events. He is the author of the biography *Lovejoy: Martyr to Freedom* (1964), and the still-definitive study, *Lincoln's Preparation for Greatness* (1965), an acute examination of the future president's political education in Illinois. Simon returned to his first theme in 1994 with the highly regarded, *Freedom's Champion: Elijah Lovejoy*. It is surely no accident that the former Senator has twice written about a man who, much like himself, was a crusading Illinois newspaper editor battling for freedom and opportunity.

In a remarkably prolific writing career, Simon also contributed: *A Hungry World* (1966), *You Want to Change the World, So Change It* (1971), *The Tongue-Tied American* (1980), *The Once and Future Democrats* (1982), *The Glass House: Politics and Morality in the Nation's Capitol* (1984), *Beginnings* (1986), *Let's Put America Back to Work* (1986), and *Advice and Consent* (1992). He also co-authored *The Politics of World Hunger* (1973), and, with his wife Jeanne Hurley Simon, *Protestant-Catholic Marriages Can Succeed* (1967). Senator Simon's most recent books are *Tapped Out: The Coming World Crisis in Water and What We Can Do About It* (Welcome Rain Publishers, 1999), and the much-praised *P.S.: The Autobiography of Paul Simon* (Bonus Books).

"This last title is perhaps the only one to which his admirers can object," noted Chairman Williams. "After a half century of contributions to both the body politic and the historical bookshelf, the Lincoln Forum rebuts the notion that he is now in the "postscript" phase of life. For a man of such accomplishment and ability — truly in the Lincoln tradition — the past is surely prologue."



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