



# THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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#### Chairman

Hon. Frank J. Williams  
300 Switch Road  
Hope Valley, RI 02832  
frankjwilliams33@gmail.com

#### Vice Chairman

Harold Holzer  
Metropolitan Museum of Art  
1000 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10028-0198  
harold.holzer@metmuseum.org

#### Treasurer

Russell H. Weidman  
6009 Queenston St.  
Springfield, VA 22152-1723  
treasurer@thelincolnforum.org

#### Administrator

Betty Anselmo  
59 Hurst Lane  
Tiverton, RI 02878  
Phone: 401-624-3722  
admin@thelincolnforum.org  
bettyanselmo@cox.net

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## LEGENDARY ED BEARSS—‘PIED PIPER OF CIVIL WAR HISTORY’—EARNS RICHARD NELSON CURRENT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The annual Richard Nelson Current Award—The Lincoln Forum’s highest honor for lifetime achievement—will go this year to the legendary Civil War military historian, battlefield guide, preservation champion, and living Civil War treasure Edwin Cole Bearss. This year’s 16<sup>th</sup> annual award will be presented November 18 at The Lincoln Forum symposium closing banquet at the Wyndham in Gettysburg.

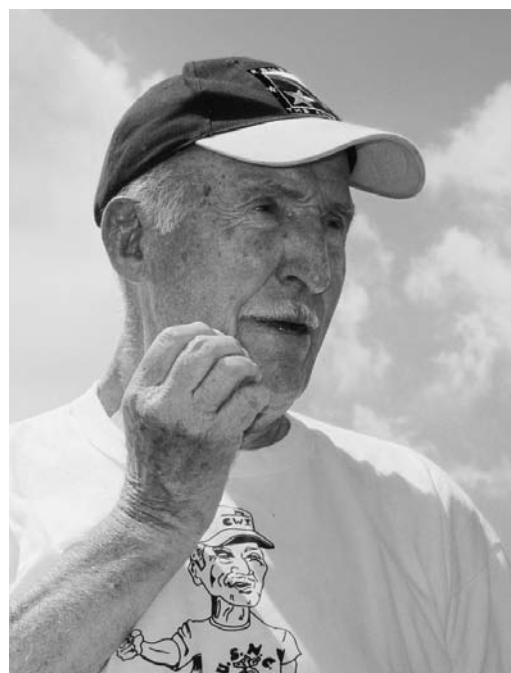
The 87-year-old Bearss, who served with distinction as Chief Historian of the National Park Service from 1981 to 1994, is universally acclaimed as the pre-eminent Civil War tour guide of the last half century. Since the 1950s he has offered dramatic, vivid, much-imitated, but unsurpassable commentary at every major battlefield of the conflict to the delight of tens of thousands of enthralled devotees. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that Bearss has evoked “almost hallucinatory sensations” on these unsurpassed tours. His combination of encyclopedic knowledge, dramatic flair, booming voice, and extraordinary memory for rich and colorful anecdotes, has made him the greatest-ever of all on-site interpreters of the Civil War. He continues to spend some 200 days a year on the road in the U. S., the Pacific, and Europe, giving tours about both the Civil War and World War II.

Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams commented: “For many of us who have been fascinated since childhood by both the small human dramas and the massive scale of the American Civil War, Ed Bearss is nothing less than one of the greatest and most inspiring teachers of our time—someone who lives and breathes military history and evokes awe and excitement from generation after generation of enthusiasts. Ed Bearss is nothing less than the voice of Civil War battlefields, and we are thrilled to honor him for his lifetime of magnetism and commitment to their understanding and their security. It is an additional privilege to acknowledge Ed Bearss as a war hero who gave so much for his country as a young man—and throughout his life has remained a true patriot.”

Even among those who have never toured with him personally, Bearss is a familiar face and voice from such television specials as Ken Burns’ *The Civil War* on PBS, *Civil War Journal* on the A&E Network, *Civil War Combat* on the History Channel, and *Smithsonian’s Great Battles of the Civil War* on the Learning Channel. Notably, he has also championed the protection and preservation of the sacred ground of the Civil War, battling development and overbuilding in the quest to preserve thousands of acres of historic ground in all parts of the country.

Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer, who by tradition presents the annual award at the closing banquet, added: “Ed Bearss’ unique gift is that he is not only capable of making us believe we are walking amidst the smoke of 19<sup>th</sup>-century battle, but that he has helped make sure that 21<sup>st</sup>-century students can enjoy the privilege of walking the same historic landscape—and that it will be there for others, always. He has invested a lifetime in understanding, interpreting, and protecting this hallowed ground, and we are all in his debt for it.”

A scholar and historical detective as well as a guide and interpreter, Bearss’ long career includes such major research discoveries as locating, along with colleagues, the lost Union gunboat *USS Cairo* near Vicksburg, and unearthing the forgotten forts at Grand Gulf, Mississippi. Later, he was an active supporter of the effort to raise the Confederate submarine *Hunley*. He also helped develop such new Civil War parks as Pea Ridge and Wilson’s Creek. After spending the first few years of his National Park Service career at Vicksburg, he **continued on page 2**



Living Legend Ed Bearss to Deliver Keynote Address.  
(Photo: Henry F. Ballone)

## THE CIVIL WAR-150 YEARS LATER

The war that interests Americans most profoundly, the war with which they identify most intimately, even personally, is the Civil War. Thousands of books—in fact, 65,000 volumes in all—have responded to that abiding interest over the years, and the flow continues unabated. Authors of some of the newer releases will be among our speakers this year as we continue following the five-year-long 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the war.

Adam Goodheart's *1861: The Civil War Awakening*, for example, focuses on the fateful opening year of the conflict by allowing us to enter the lives of little-known, but significant, actors in the dramatic effort to remake the country. While President Lincoln's lack of military experience weighed heavily against him when he entered office, according to many historians, Harold Holzer's new *Lincoln on War* collects all the president's writings on issues military, and what emerges is that the President knew far more than we give him credit for. Jason Emerson continues his quest for understanding Robert Lincoln in his forthcoming biography from Southern Illinois University Press and Michael J. Kline and Thomas Craughwell discuss their books on the first plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln in 1861 in Baltimore. William C. ("Jack") Davis shares his great knowledge of the Civil War after publishing numerous volumes on the war, Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy, including the trenchant *Lincoln's Men: How President Lincoln Became a Father to an Army and a Nation*. Craig Symonds' prize-winning *Lincoln and His Admirals* has given us a new view of the real "Neptune" in the North—Abraham Lincoln. He, with Harold Holzer, edited the *The New York Times Complete Civil War*. And John Marszalek's *Sherman: A Soldier's Passion for Order* remains the standard biography of this irascible Union stalwart.

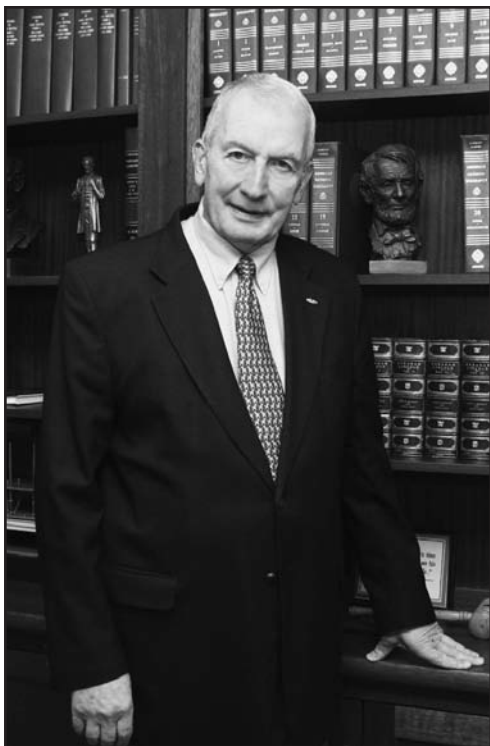
Our beloved Ed Bearss, who has entertained and educated so many through his writings and battlefield tours, will deliver the keynote.

All these scholars—and all their recent works—make it clear that the Civil War has no ending.

The Lincoln Forum continues to examine the war and its effect on all of us. We acknowledge the immensity of this conflict and always attempt to understand Abraham Lincoln and the war over which he presided with good history, good research, nuanced knowledge—and the irreplaceable opportunity for sharing information that our symposia offer to all of us. 📖



Frank J. Williams  
Chairman



MESSAGE  
from the  
CHAIRMAN

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## LEGENDARY ED BEARSS—‘PIED PIPER OF CIVIL WAR HISTORY’

*continued from page 1* was transferred to Washington in 1961—the year the national Civil War centennial began. He retired as Chief Historian and Assistant to the Director in 1995, after which he was named Chief Historian Emeritus, a title he still holds.

Born in Billings, Montana, in 1923, he enlisted in the U. S. Marines before his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and served with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Raider Battalion at Guadalcanal and the Russell Islands. Then he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division at New Britain, where he was severely wounded in 1944. Bearss spent the next 26 months recovering from his injuries in military hospitals, and then attended Georgetown University on the G. I. Bill. He received an M. A. in history from Indiana University in 1955 and worked briefly for the Office of the Chief of Military History for the U. S. Army.

Widely published over the past 50 years, his books include *Decision in Mississippi* (1962), *The Battle of Wilson's Creek* (1975), three volumes in a Vicksburg Campaign trilogy (1985-6), *River of Lost Opportunities—the Civil War on the James River* (1995), *Fields of Honor: Pivotal Battles of the Civil War* (2006), and many more. He has edited and co-authored a number of other books and articles, and is a contributor to the popular website *The Civil War Battlefield Guide*. In 2003, Lincoln Forum member and frequent

speaker John C. Waugh paid tribute to him with the book *Edwin Cole Bearss: History's Pied Piper*. Among Ed Bearss' many previous honors are the Bruce Catton Award, the 1963 Man of the Year Award in Vicksburg, the Distinguished Service Award from the U. S. Dept. of the Interior, the Harry S Truman Award for Meritorious Service in the field of Civil War history, and a commendation from the Secretary of the Army.

The 15 previous winners of the coveted Richard Nelson Current Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement have been: Gabor Boritt (1996), Brian Lamb (1997), John Hope Franklin (1998), Senator Paul Simon (1999), David Herbert Donald (2000), Garry Wills (2001), James M. McPherson (2002), Sam Waterston (2003), John Y. Simon (2004), John McClarey (2005), Doris Kearns Goodwin (2006), Jeff Shaara (2007), Ken Burns (2008), Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (2009), and Mark E. Neely, Jr. (2010).

The award is named for the dean of Lincoln scholars, the revered historian Richard Nelson Current, prize-winning author of such classics as *Lincoln and the First Shot*, *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*, and many others. The prize itself is in the form of a statuette, *Freedom River*, created for the award by Decatur-based Lincoln sculptor (himself a Current Award laureate) John McClarey. 📖

# LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES NEW ROUND OF GRANTS FOR LINCOLN-RELATED PROJECTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation (ALBF) announced in August its latest round of grants to museum exhibitions, symposia, education programs, preservation efforts, and other projects around the country that plan to emphasize the Lincoln theme during the Civil War Sesquicentennial.

Support will go to the following organizations:

The Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D. C., to co-sponsor its forthcoming Civil War sesquicentennial exhibition, *The African-American Experience During the Civil War*, particularly to fund professional development workshops for the show; and also funding to produce a family guide for another forthcoming Portrait Gallery exhibition on Civil War-era photographer Alexander Gardner.

The Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation in Chicago, to help fund preliminary archaeological investigation at the site of the Civil War training and prisoner-of-war camp built on land owned by, and named for, Senator Stephen A. Douglas.

The College of Charleston in South Carolina (the city where the Civil War began 150 years ago with the firing on Fort Sumter in April 1861) to co-sponsor a 2013 conference of the African Literature Association focused on the sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Lincoln Monument Association in Springfield, Illinois, to support preliminary outreach, fundraising, and marketing for the rehabilitation and preservation of Abraham Lincoln's tomb and other historic monuments at historic Oak Ridge Cemetery.

The Huntington Library in San Marino, California, to co-sponsor its 2012 exhibition: *A Strange and Fearful Interest: Death, Mourning, and Memory in the American Civil War*.

The Newberry Library in Chicago, to co-sponsor a two-day seminar, *Teachers as Scholars: Abraham Lincoln*.

The National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to help fund the creation of an interactive component of its recently introduced virtual exhibit, *Meet Mr. Lincoln*.

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in New York, to re-print its acclaimed "History in a Box" on Abraham Lincoln, and distribute it to history departments in schools across the country.

The Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois, to co-sponsor a number of initiatives, including new educational outreach programs, document transcription, and sesquicentennial symposia.

The New York State Archives Partnership Trust in Albany, New York, to support Civil War sesquicentennial events, particularly a 2012 Albany Law School scholarly conference on Lincoln and Civil Liberties.

President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home in Washington, D.C., to support and co-sponsor its annual *Cottage Conversation* lecture series.

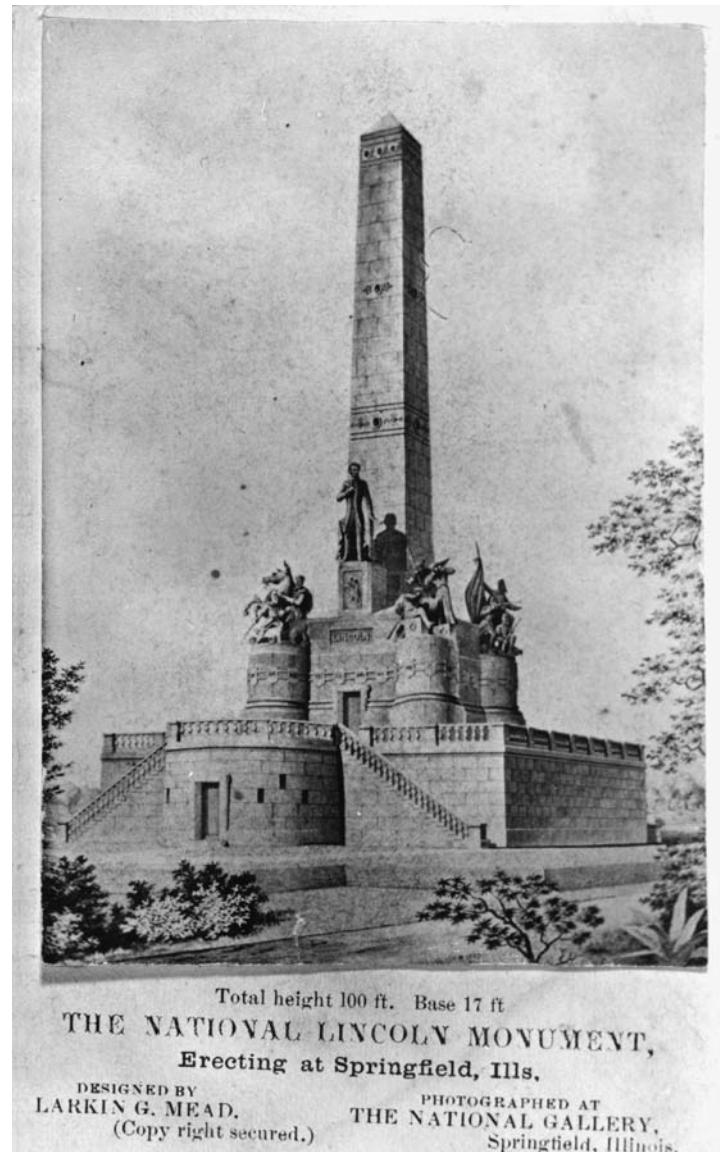
The Lincoln at the Crossroads Alliance to co-sponsor its forthcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary re-enactment and conference to commemorate the Grand Review of the Army at Bailey's Crossroads, Virginia in 1861.

Commented Foundation Chairman Harold Holzer: "We are delighted to support these institutions and initiatives, and to endorse their compelling plans to keep Abraham Lincoln at the forefront of the national conversation during the Civil War Sesquicentennial. Their efforts promise to galvanize significant

numbers of scholars, students, and enthusiasts to further explore the Lincoln legacy and its significance to both historical commemoration and the national future. The Foundation remains committed to stimulating that dialogue."

The ALBF is the official successor organization of the U. S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, which oversaw observances of Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. Members of the foundation are: Orville Vernon Burton (vice chairman), Thomas Campbell (treasurer), Charles Scholz (secretary), Darrel Bigham, David Lawrence Jr., Antonio Mora, Edna Greene Medford, Jean Powers Soman, and Hon. Frank J. Williams, who serves also as Chairman of the Lincoln Forum.

Applicants for future funding are encouraged to log onto the ALBF website ([abrahamlincoln200.org](http://abrahamlincoln200.org)) to consult guidelines, or to write the chairman for further information at 205 East 78<sup>th</sup> Street, #14E, New York, NY 10075. The next meeting and funding cycle are scheduled for January 2012. 📌



Lincoln's Tomb in Springfield, photographed in the 1870s.

# FORUM'S VOLK AWARD TO RECOGNIZE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS SOCIETY IN FREEPORT, ILLINOIS

The annual Leonard W. Volk Award—The Lincoln Forum's prize for institutions and organizations that perpetuate the Lincoln story—will go this year to the Lincoln-Douglas Society of Freeport, Illinois. Over the last decade-and-a-half, the group has transformed the site of the second 1858 Lincoln-Douglas senatorial debate. Lily Tolpo's statue of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas now adorns the historic setting, visitation has increased, and an adjacent public library has become the scene of exhibitions and historic programs.

The prize is in the form of an exquisitely rendered copy of the 1860 Volk life mask of Lincoln, mounted on a marble base. The sculptures are donated by the generous Forum members Dr. and Mrs. Mark Zimmerman.

The particular hero of the Freeport effort has been Lincoln Forum Secretary George Buss, who has evolved from educator and Lincoln re-enactor (roles he continues to play with great success) to champion of Freeport history, Stephen A. Douglas collector, exhibit curator, and historian.

The *Bulletin* invited George Buss to provide a brief history of the Society and its efforts in anticipation of its award recognition at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Forum symposium. 📖



From Lincoln's own scrapbook: a page from the debate at Freeport. (Photo: Library of Congress)

## By George Buss

For decades, the site of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates in Freeport, Illinois, was a municipal parking lot with a large stone and bronze tablet dedicated by Theodore Roosevelt on June 3, 1903. The neighborhood which encompassed the grove of trees a couple of blocks from the Brewster House from which Lincoln rode and Douglas walked to their "joint meeting" had long since disappeared

from the downtown landscape. Occasionally, over the years, the idea of a celebration would muster the citizens of Freeport to commemorate that rainy August 1858 day as a reminder that, as Roosevelt noted, "here was sounded the key-note of the struggle which after convulsing the nation, made it united and free."

The Lincoln-Douglas Society was founded in 1929 for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of the 1858 debates between Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln in their race for the United States Senate. That work was the brainchild of Freeport businessman W. T. Rawleigh, who proposed to celebrate the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary with the unveiling of the heroic statue *Lincoln the Debater*, designed and executed for a park miles from the actual debate site by Leonard Crunelle and presented to the people of Stephenson County, Illinois. The keynote speaker at that event was populist Senator George Norris of Nebraska. Rawleigh had been the national treasurer for the La Follette-Wheeler ticket in 1924, so it was fitting and proper that Norris speak in Freeport for an event which would make the pages of the *New York Herald Tribune*.

Sparsely attended events, noted only in the local press, would continue over the next 25 years until planning for the 1958 centennial of the debates began in earnest. Each of the seven sites in Illinois vied for speakers and events. President Dwight D. Eisenhower initially accepted an invitation from event chairman Bob Schmelzlebut, but when all seven events occurred, Eisenhower failed to make any of them. Illinois' U.S. Senators Paul Douglas and Everett McKinley Dirksen completed the canvas just as Lincoln and Douglas did before them. *Life Magazine* covered the event with a photo essay covering many pages in their traditional large format.

It was here that a 20-year-old Knox College student named Rich Sokup was ordered by his onetime high school drama coach to portray Stephen Douglas for the very first time. Discovering his extensive talent, Knox in turn asked Rich to be "its" Douglas as well. That work would lead Rich to portrayals on C-SPAN, to Gettysburg, and to the Lincoln Forum some 40 years later. Had Rich stayed with us just a few years longer he would have done Douglas longer than Douglas did Douglas! He is much missed.

Annual commemorations began in the early 1980's, when speech and debate coach Dr. Edward Finch and Rich Sokup joined forces. It was determined by a coffee shop discussion that a parking lot was no longer befitting as the site for the Freeport Doctrine. It was Sokup's view that a campus setting should be developed on the site where the second meeting of the joint canvas took place. Sokup would author a script titled "A Discussion with President Lincoln and Senator Douglas," which is still produced today (and was also on the program for Lincoln Forum III with Rich again bringing Douglas to life and me in the role of Lincoln, which I've played since 1986).

Local attorney Robert Plager was president of the Society at that time and threw himself into the project. With Finch and Sokup on the board, plans moved forward to request the city to vacate one row of parking spaces to allow for seating, a flagpole, and landscaping. A total of three phases were put into a master plan, with phase two calling for expanding landscaping in making the site match the original description of "a grove of trees a couple of blocks from the Brewster House." In a separate venue, Alderman Mickey Martin generated the idea for funding a statue of *Lincoln and Douglas in Debate* which was designed and executed by Lily Tolpo. With the statue dedication completed **continued on page 5**

*continued from page 4* and the expansion of phase three in the works, Rich Sokup and Bob Plager spearheaded the final fund drive to the community. Fate smiled on Rich and Bob when Harold Holzer's *The Lincoln Douglas Debates: The First Complete Unexpurgated Text* was published. Brian Lamb of C-SPAN aired an interview with Harold on *Booknotes*, spurring Lamb's decision to broadcast re-creations of all seven debates and commentary from each site. Although Phase Three was not completed until after the C-SPAN project, it was Holzer and Lamb who took the City of Freeport, the State of Illinois, and the county by storm. Phase Three funding allowed the addition of 14,000 paving blocks, lighting, seating, a flag pole and water fountain.

After the donation of the block immediately west of the debate site to the Freeport Public Library, a new library took its place on the downtown campus Rich envisioned. Rich would live to see the library open its doors with the east windows overlooking nearly \$325,000 of the fully developed Lincoln Douglas Debate Site now named Debate Square. The city vacated the street between the two entities and Society President Edward F. Finch would lead the organization in landscaping the vacant street and the addition of two

adjoining lots donated by the local Furst-McNess Company and the family of Ned Furst.

With the project completed and a grant from the Howard Newspapers, the Society continued by adding self-interpreting signage telling worldwide visitors about that fateful day in August 1858, its roots in the Ordinance of 1787 and the Civil Rights Voting Act of 1965—all from the pages of Freeport Newspapers. Later, the Springfield, Illinois-based *Looking for Lincoln* coalition supported the work at Freeport by adding a wayside at the site which is nationally publicized. Speakers over the years have included Lincoln Forum chairman Frank J. Williams.

The Lincoln-Douglas Society is alive and well, four phases of expansion now completed and paid for with nearly all money coming from private sources. Back in 1988 Rich Sokup had a dream for a campus setting in downtown Freeport where generations would come to learn of Lincoln and Douglas and contemplate the discussion and doctrine that changed the social and political landscape of our county forever. 📌

## EARTHQUAKE, HURRICANE THREATEN LINCOLN SITES

It is not known whether Abraham Lincoln ever lived through an earthquake or a hurricane. But America's eastern seaboard endured both in a single week in August, and the impact of these natural disasters extended to several sites associated with Abraham Lincoln and his contemporaries.

First the good news: Historian Darrel Bigham, professor of history emeritus at the University of Southern Indiana, member of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, and 10-year veteran of the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, reports that Simon Cameron's riverfront home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, escaped flooding. So did another site near his summer home in New England. As **Darrel Bigham** reports:

"The home of Jacob Collamer escaped damage during the recent flash flooding in Vermont. It is located on Elm Street, a few hundred feet from the Ottauquechee River bridge over State Route 12 in Woodstock, Vermont.



**Spared: Home of Civil War Jacob Collamer in Woodstock, Vermont.**  
(Photo: Darrel Bigham)

"Collamer (1792-1865), Woodstock's only U. S. Senator, is perhaps best known to Lincoln scholars for two events. He received all of Vermont's 10 votes on the first ballot at the Republican national convention in Chicago in 1860, although at the opening of the second ballot all 10 were cast for Lincoln. Collamer chaired the Senate delegation that met with Lincoln in December 1862 to demand the removal of William H. Seward from the cabinet. He was one of two moderate anti-slavery senators among the nine

selected by the Republican caucus for that task. He also opposed Lincoln's plan of Reconstruction, insisting that the Congress should be in charge of that task.

"Collamer was considered one of the Senate's leading experts on land and tariff issues. Previous to his election to the Senate in 1855, he had served in the Vermont legislature and the U. S. House of Representatives. He was postmaster general under President Zachary Taylor. His statue, given by the people of Vermont in 1881, is located on the first floor of the Senate wing of the Capitol."



**Damaged: Lincoln's Summer Home.**

A worse fate struck the Soldiers' Home, Lincoln's hilltop summer retreat in upper northwest Washington. Although the presidential cottage itself was spared, Scott Hall—opened in 1857 and named for General of the Army Winfield Scott—suffered millions of dollars in damage. Now known as the Sherman Building, the iconic neo-Gothic marble structure boasts a tower that rises 320 feet, making it the third-highest structure in the capital.

The jury is still out on possible damages to the tallest of the city's famous structures, the Washington Monument, which has a Lincoln connection of its own: as a Congressman, Lincoln attended the dedication ceremonies.

*Darrel E. Bigham, Professor of History Emeritus, University of Southern Indiana - Member, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation and former member of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (2000-2010).* 📌

# ADAMS COUNTY'S CIVIL WAR: BEFORE THE BATTLE

By Jerry Desko

Since it is the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War, it is appropriate that we take a look back in time at Adams County during the period between Lincoln's election and the beginning of the fighting. The purpose is to find out how our predecessors in the county felt about unfolding events.



**Bucolic town of Gettysburg long before Union and Confederate armies descended on the town in late June 1863.**

(This image is from *The Gettysburg Gospel* by Gabor Boritt.)

The county had three weekly newspapers at the outbreak of the war. All three were published in Gettysburg, the county seat. Two of the publications are examined here. The pro-Republican *Adams Sentinel* supported the election of Abraham Lincoln, while the Democratic paper, *The Compiler*, supported John C. Breckinridge, who was represented by a fusion ticket (the so-called "Reading Ticket"), in conjunction with supporters of Stephen Douglas. The agreement was that one could vote for Breckinridge or Douglas and the final votes would be tabulated for whichever of the two Democrats had the most total votes to beat Lincoln. This essentially meant it was an anti-Lincoln coalition. The two other choices on the ballot in Pennsylvania were the straight ticket for Stephen Douglas and the Union Party ticket for John Bell.

On Election Day, Lincoln won a majority of the popular vote in Pennsylvania and therefore received all 27 of its electoral votes. The vote count for Lincoln was 268,709, with 178,871 for Breckinridge (the Reading Ticket) 16,765 for Douglas, and 12,776 for Bell. The result in Adams County was somewhat different. Lincoln and the Reading Ticket combined to capture from 97% to 99% of the popular vote cast in the county, depending on which newspaper numbers you were trusting. *The Compiler* reported 2,724 votes for Lincoln and 2,676 for the Reading Ticket, a difference of only 48 votes. *The Sentinel* also reported 2,724 votes for Lincoln and 2,644 for the Reading Ticket, a difference of 80 votes. This was a far tighter race on the county level than it was on the state level.

*The Compiler* begrudgingly gave the victory to Lincoln but predicted, "The reign of Black Republicanism in the country will be short—and it will be a glorious privilege to assist in wiping it out, with all its nefarious principles."

Southern states wasted no time in expressing their own objection to the election and on December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union.

*The Adams Sentinel* published an article that stated: "Taking possession of Government fortresses, of the Custom House, and the Post Office at Charleston, is an overt act of war upon the Federal authority, and is therefore treason." *The Compiler* took a somewhat different stance and thought that war could be averted if the Congressional Republicans were "disposed to favor just and harmonizing measures, the trouble might be healed. But they will not. Rather than abate their anti-slavery war-cry, they will let the country go to the wall."

On April 12, 1861, Confederate forces began shelling the United States forces that garrisoned Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, thereby signaling the beginning of the American Civil War.

Both papers carried the news of President Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops to suppress the rebellion. In Pennsylvania, Governor Curtin called on the state legislature to improve the state militia in terms of manpower and equipment necessary to meet the president's demand.

*The Compiler* carried a report of a "Great Stampede of Fugitive Slaves for Canada" in the Detroit and Chicago areas due to the uncertainty of coming events. Reports were published in both papers soon after the secession of Virginia, that the capital was in danger of being taken over by southern forces owing to the fact it was surrounded by Maryland and Virginia. The movement of Union troops to secure the city was widely reported.

*The Compiler* also stated that although it was firmly against President Lincoln's policies since his inauguration, the editor declared, "we will stand by the old flag" in this time of national crisis. As history would show, Adams County did exactly that.

Lifetime member Jerry Desko spent 27 years as a police officer in New York State. Now retired and living in Cashtown, PA, he contributes a monthly history column to the *Gettysburg Times* on behalf of the Adams County Historical Society. 📖



Lincoln was beardless in 1860—the year Adams County, PA voted for him by a whisker.

**The Lincoln Forum Bulletin welcomes contributions from members and historians—articles and photos alike. Send to editor Harold Holzer at [harold.holzer@metmuseum.org](mailto:harold.holzer@metmuseum.org). The editor particularly thanks the contributors to the current issue.**

# LINCOLN VISITS NEW JERSEY

By Henry F. Ballone

A large crowd gathered around the New Jersey State House in anticipation of President-Elect Abraham Lincoln's February visit to Trenton on his way to his inauguration. This time, however, the crowd gathered in February 2011, when the New Jersey Civil War Heritage Association Sesquicentennial Committee (NJCW150) welcomed Lincoln portrayer Robert Costello to a re-creation of the original event 150 years earlier.



**"Lincoln" (Robert Costello) greeted by "Governor Olden" (Bruce Sirak) and Color Guard at the New Jersey State House.**  
(Henry F. Ballone)

Planning for New Jersey's role in the Civil War Sesquicentennial began in October 2008, when historically minded New Jerseyans gathered to form the NJCW150 as a committee of the *New Jersey Civil War Heritage Association* (NJCWHA), an already existing 501C (3) corporation founded to commemorate the state's role in the Civil War. From the start, the committee advocated a diverse and open forum, coordinating with other historical and commemorative groups and interested individuals. The committee saw its primary missions as educating the state's people on New Jersey's Civil War experience through public history events and publications and assisting educational institutions in curriculum development on the state's role in the Civil War. To this end, the committee established an official website: [njcivilwar150.org](http://njcivilwar150.org).

New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine issued an official proclamation on January 5, 2009 commending the NJCW150 committee for undertaking the task of creating and publicizing commemorative activities and educational programs during the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War, between 2011 and 2015. His proclamation requested that state and local government agencies cooperate with the Committee. The New Jersey State Assembly followed with a ceremonial resolution on October 25, 2010. The committee publicized these proclamations through press releases and continues to publicize events with regular releases to the press and a growing email list of interested citizens.

Since its inception, about two dozen dedicated members have attended more than 20 meetings to plan and coordinate various sesquicentennial projects that include website development, public relations, education, events and publications. The committee web site, "[njcivilwar150.org](http://njcivilwar150.org)," gets about 500 hits a week. In addition to updates on committee activities, it serves as a primary and authoritative information source on New Jersey and the Civil War, and includes features on the state's Medal of Honor awardees and the story of Lincoln's relationship with New Jersey. A visitor can "Ask the Experts" New Jersey Civil War questions, join the committee's Facebook Community, and subscribe to email updates on committee events. Contributions can also be made online and there's an online store with hats, shirts, vests, NJCW150 pins, car magnets, and several books published by the committee available for purchase. The Gilder Lehrman Institute has asked to cross link with its own website.

A film was produced of the first 2010 NJCW150 public history event, the *Allaire School for the Soldier*, a living history encampment at Allaire State Park which drew over 1,700 spectators in 2010. The success of this event inspired a more ambitious affair for 2011, and several hundred reenactors and Beck's Brass Band of Philadelphia attended the May 2011 *Allaire School of the Soldier*.

Books and other commemorative materials will be sold at the committee's information table at the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) conference that will be held at Princeton University in November 2011, and some members will also take part in an afternoon workshop at the conference. The committee looks forward to collaborating in future events with the NJHC and other historical groups.

The committee has accepted an invitation from the Fairfax County, Virginia Sesquicentennial Committee to participate in the observation of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Chantilly. The ceremonies, held on the field where New Jersey General Phil Kearny was killed in 1862, will be a major 2012 event for the NJCW150 committee. The committee, in coordination with MacCulloch Hall Museum in Morristown, NJ, will present "Gone for a Soldier", an exhibit of NJCW artifacts that will open on November 6, 2011 and run to June, 2012. A key exhibit item will be the regimental flag of the 26th North Carolina Regiment, once captured by New Jersey soldiers and later returned, on loan from the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. The NJCW150 committee aided the museum with expertise and with locating artifacts borrowed from private collections, the Gettysburg Battlefield Museum, and other sources for display. This will be the best New Jersey-connected artifact exhibit in history. Committee members also designed a high quality catalog of the exhibit that will be available for sale at \$20 per copy.

New Jersey was not scarred by any Civil War battles, but it did play an important role in Lincoln's war to preserve the Union. According to the 1860 census, the state had a population of 672,035 people, including 21,797 native-born African Americans and 18 slaves, with 56,000 people employed in manufacturing and providing services. As many as 88,000 New Jerseyans served in the Union army, and thousands more produced uniforms, guns, railroad engines, and other goods that helped win the war. The committee's first book, *Jersey Goes to War* (2010, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2011) is a collection of 150 biographies of diverse individuals connected with New Jersey and the Civil War, researched and written by committee members. The committee's second book, *Discovering Your Community's Civil War Heritage* (2010) is a research guide to uncovering the personal stories of Civil War soldiers. One complimentary copy was donated to each New Jersey county historical society.

Following the success of the first two books, the committee published *New Jersey's Civil War Odyssey* (2011). Dr. James McPherson of Princeton said this book is "A rich potpourri of articles and stories about New Jersey in the Civil War—soldiers at the battle front, nurses at army hospitals, factories at home producing war material, political leaders, reunions and commemorations after the war, and much, much more. Especially notable is the attention paid to Jersey African-Americans in the war. The authors explode a number of myths about Jerseyans and the war, and offer many little known facts." A manuscript for a New Jersey Gettysburg Battlefield Guide is currently in progress. New Jersey fielded 267 officers and 3,963 enlisted men at that famous battle. This may be followed by similar guides for Antietam and Monocacy as the committee rolls out its four-year publication plan.

These books are available online at: [njcivilwar150.org](http://njcivilwar150.org).

Henry F. Ballone, photojournalist, is a member of the NJCW150 committee and serves on the Board of Advisors of the Lincoln Forum. ■

# APRIL 2, 2011 - LINCOLN'S TRANSITION AT WILLARD'S HOTEL

By John T. Elloff

Early Saturday morning, February 23, 1861, President-elect Lincoln arrived at Willard's Hotel in Washington. He did not plan to spend the transition days until his March 4 inauguration at a hotel. Illinois allies in concert with Senator Salmon P. Chase of Ohio had arranged for Lincoln to reside temporarily in a private house. After an 11-day journey across country, ending at a residence made sense. While completing cabinet selections and his inaugural address, Lincoln could rest before assuming the burdens of the presidency.



Willard's Hotel in the Lincoln era.

The option of staying at Willard's was proposed by Thurlow Weed, political manager of Secretary of State-designate Senator William H. Seward of New York. Weed argued that the hotel would be more accessible to the public—but more was at stake politically. Seward was leading an effort to find a compromise to prevent civil war or at least keep in the Union the slave states that had not yet seceded. Chase opposed compromising antislavery principles and might join Seward in Lincoln's cabinet. The prospect of the president-elect staying at a residence under the influence of Chase presented a problem for Seward that could be avoided by re-directing Lincoln to Willard's.

Weed went so far as to contact Henry and Joseph Willard to start making the arrangements for Lincoln's arrival. The occupant of the prime second floor corner suite was New York businessman William Dodge, who shared Seward's interests and was told to prepare to hand over his lodgings. Dodge was a delegate to the "Peace" Convention that was meeting at Willard's auditorium in an effort to find a compromise. Weed's plan would place Lincoln in the same hotel as the Convention delegates including prominent figures from Southern states that had not seceded.

What today would be called intelligence on terrorist threats changed the political calculus. On February 21 in Philadelphia, Lincoln received reports of plans for an attack when he passed through Baltimore. Detective Allan Pinkerton laid out the risks; and Frederick Seward, son of Senator Seward, brought corroboration from General Winfield Scott. After receiving these warnings Lincoln realized he might have to travel clandestinely through Baltimore at night. He also decided to stay at Willard's in Washington.

Why did Lincoln change to Willard's? His trip was undertaken to build public support and make him more familiar as a national leader. Entering Washington secretly would project an image of fear and weakness. Lincoln was reluctant to do it. At one point later he called it his worst mistake. A close reader of the press, Lincoln probably anticipated the ridicule that followed in political cartoons and editorials. If he had to pass through Baltimore at night, ending up at Willard's would help restore an image of confidence and accessibility to the people. It was one of the most crowded venues in Washington and a location where Lincoln would be almost overwhelmed by constant visitors and meetings.

Lincoln was escorted from Illinois—and would be accompanied through Baltimore along with Pinkerton—by his friend Ward Hill Lamon. When Lincoln decided to adopt Weed's alternative destination, it was Lamon who conveyed the last-minute message to the Willard brothers. On February 21, Lamon wrote, "We have decided after consultation with Mr. Lincoln that he, his family and party will stay at your house. We have learned here that you were expecting us and had rooms reserved."

Henry Willard also solved one practical problem for the president-elect. Lincoln had left his slippers in Springfield and asked to borrow a pair. Henry remembered that his wife's grandfather, then visiting, had slippers that were large enough. Lincoln returned them with a note of thanks when he left the hotel, and the Willard family later donated them to the Ford's Theatre museum.

Did relocating give greater influence to Seward and other advocates of compromise? The record is mixed. The moment Lincoln arrived at the hotel he was met by Seward, who joined him for breakfast and then escorted him to the White House and General Scott's office. That night he hosted Lincoln for dinner at his home, where Lincoln apparently asked Seward to read and comment on his draft inaugural address. Seward took Lincoln to church the next morning and by the end of the day sent Lincoln detailed comments on the draft speech.

At the same time Chase retained influence. When Peace Convention delegates asked to meet with Lincoln on his first night at the hotel, Chase introduced each delegate to the president-elect, who astonished them with his knowledge of their backgrounds (probably based on a briefing from Vermont delegate Lucius Chittenden). Despite intense pressures at subsequent meetings in his hotel suite, Lincoln did not publicly endorse any of the compromises considered by the Convention. However, he probably influenced Illinois delegates behind the scenes to support the final proposal in order to avoid a deadlock that might tip key states towards secession. The Convention plan went nowhere in Congress where Republicans supported Chase's national convention alternative.

Chase's cabinet nomination was another issue that had to be addressed at Willard's. After much intraparty conflict Pennsylvania Republicans met with Lincoln to urge the appointment of Simon Cameron as Secretary of the Treasury. Pennsylvania's electoral vote and switch to Lincoln at the Chicago convention gave it a strong claim for a cabinet seat. But Lincoln was determined to have Chase at Treasury and polled Republican Senators to show that Chase had wider support. Cameron had to settle for the War Department.

Chase's appointment then became the target of Seward and Weed, who feared the addition of Chase to other cabinet opponents of compromise, Montgomery Blair and Gideon Wells. New York delegations visited Lincoln to object to Chase, and Seward went so far as to give Lincoln a letter declining *continued on page 16*



# THE ART OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN: MODERN PAINTERS CRAFT NEW VISION OF AN AMERICAN ICON

Ever since journeyman artist Thomas Hicks visited Springfield, Illinois in early June 1860 to paint the newly minted Republican presidential candidate for the very first time—“this is the first time that I have had this specific sort of picture made,” the subject shyly confided to the painter as he unpacked his easel and palette—Abraham Lincoln never after lacked for artistic attention. In fact, notwithstanding his well known homeliness and persistent self-mockery where his appearance was concerned, Lincoln managed to sit for a surprisingly large number of life portraits during his campaign and his subsequent time in office. Painters have repaid him in kind ever since—making him arguably the most widely and persistently portrayed of American icons.

Although interest in Lincoln as a subject of portraiture waned a bit in the anti-heroic 1970s and 80s, as art moved firmly from the representational ideal to the abstract, he has since come roaring back as a pre-eminent inspiration for painters and sculptors

alike. The Forum’s own John McClarey, for example, earned prestigious Lincoln sculpture commissions throughout Illinois. Portrait artists began specializing in the Lincoln image. And today—judging from the proliferation of extraordinary pictures in all media, on canvas, on paper, and online—Lincoln continues to inspire some of the most creative and appealing portraiture in the culture.

For this issue, the *Bulletin* asked four artists to put into words their fascination with Lincoln as a subject for visual interpretation, and to provide illustrations of their latest work. We feel privileged to be presenting this portfolio of ideas and images, and of course remain particularly grateful to our members Richard Wengenroth, whose muscular and dynamic Lincolns have adorned many of our symposium display rooms; and to the dazzling Wendy Allen, whose endlessly imaginative applications of paint and passion have inspired a fascinating body of work for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. 📌



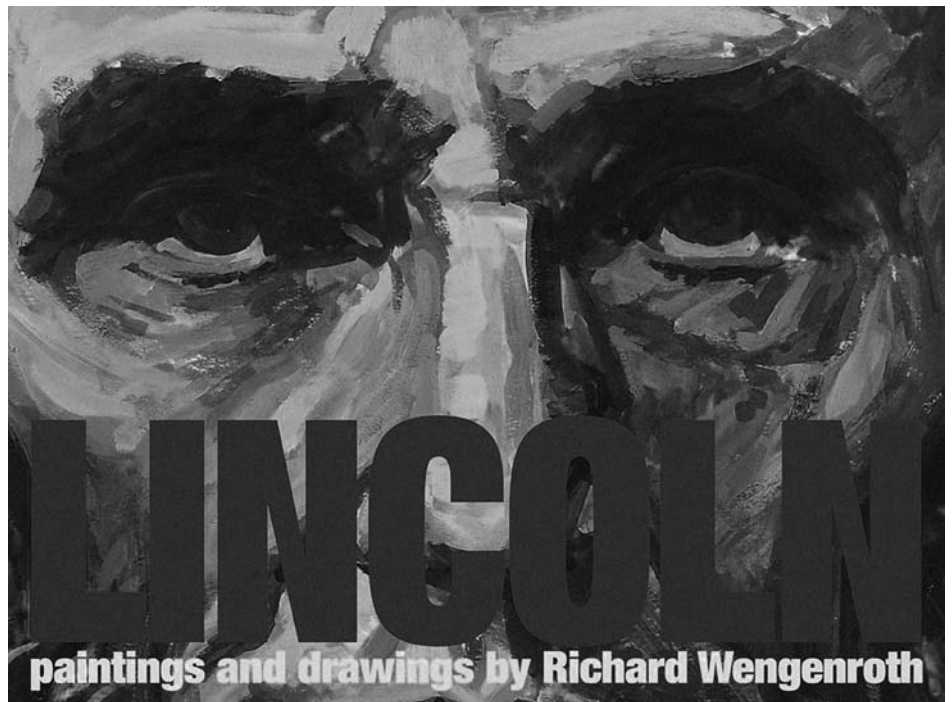
## Richard Wengenroth

I more or less “backed into” my Lincoln paintings. A visit to my new website, [www.richardwengenroth.com](http://www.richardwengenroth.com), will demonstrate that in a lengthy painting career I have done very little work that could be called Realism or Portraiture let alone that genre known as “history painting.” American art has little of the French grand gesture of Delacroix’s “Liberty Leading the People.” (“Washington Crossing the Delaware” was painted by a German.) Perhaps the closest we have come is American Scene painting of the 1930s: But Grant Wood’s “American Gothic” is not exactly “Hero on Horseback” material. We have had plenty of jingoism surrounding our military adventures, but the kind of deep belief in military conquest as a noble expression of national glory and majesty has been historically rare. I don’t think this is a bad thing.

What we seem to do well is reportage. Homer and Waugh’s on-site Civil War paintings and drawings for *Harper’s Weekly* are pretty well devoid of capital “G” glory. Instead we have a fairly direct line from Mathew Brady and the birth of photojournalism to Ernie Pyle, Bill Mauldin, and the videographers of Vietnam and Afghanistan all attesting to General Sherman’s “War is Hell.”

So, for the contemporary American artist, addressing Lincoln as a subject for painting instead of as a problem in historical reconstruction presents esthetic challenges and limitations. Since most of my current work is landscape-derived I was attracted to the idea of using the changes so evident in photographs of wartime Lincoln metaphorically. The Civil War changed us from an agricultural to an industrial nation. The changes so dramatically evident in Lincoln’s visage I would use to demonstrate the damage industrialization was doing to a previously bucolic landscape. That was the grandiose idea. And, as it turned out, utterly beyond my capacity to execute in one painting. Instead I, like so many others before me, became captured by the emotional complexity and spiritual grandeur of this very singular, very essential American.

Pictured here is a test cover for a self-published monograph which I hope to have ready for examination at our annual November meeting.



Lincoln Cover (Richard Wengenroth)

*portfolio continues on page 10*

# THE ART OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN: MODERN PAINTERS

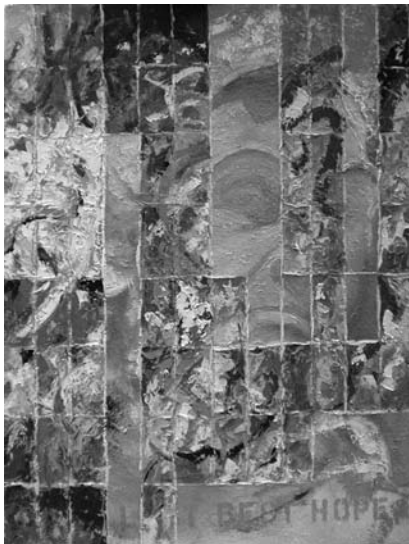
## Wendy Allen

When the calendar clicked over to 2011, I vowed to myself that, going forward, I would uphold three major requirements for all of my work: I would:

1. Never paint another boring painting;
2. Take full advantage of being in Gettysburg to practice true “immersive” artwork;
3. Make sure to not abandon my basic painting statement—that is, to rebel against the exclusion of history in contemporary art and obsessively show that Lincoln is still an incredibly relevant figure for today’s world.



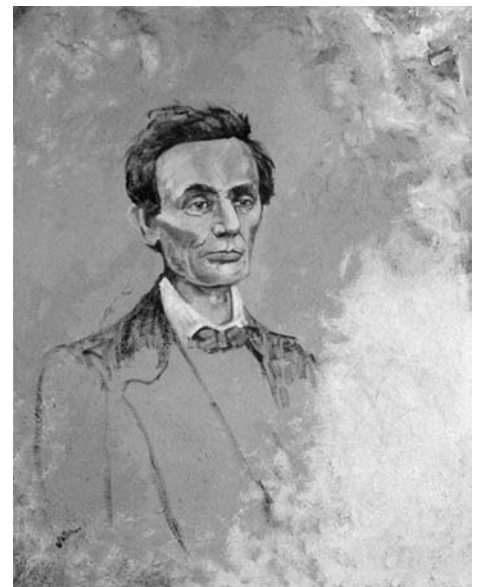
**Lincoln 170 (Lincoln Blue + Black + Red):** This painting is primarily an abstract. No message is intended.



**Lincoln 142: (Last Best Hope):** I have been working on this painting for over a year, and I am now finally finished. I wanted to convey that we are in imminent danger of losing Lincoln’s impassioned warning under the many layers of graffiti that characterize the inequality of opportunity and varieties of intolerance that continue to plague us.



**Lincoln 169 (Lincoln’s Peaces):** This collage took me about two years to complete. I achieved the effect by pasting a cut-up oil-on-canvas painting onto another painted canvas. It is primarily an abstract work.



**Lincoln 172 (1860, photographer unknown):** Here I just wanted to paint a beautiful portrait of Lincoln’s beautiful, gentle face.



**Lincoln 162 (based on ambrotype by T. P. Pearson, 1858):** This painting was a test for me to paint a familiar photo-portrait of Lincoln from memory as quickly as possible with my hands. I also challenged myself to create new colors by mixing unlikely combinations. I discovered a beautiful silver gray color by mixing a light green paint with a light pinky-peach. It took approximately one hour to create the colors and about three hours to complete the painting. I was happy to have achieved my goal.

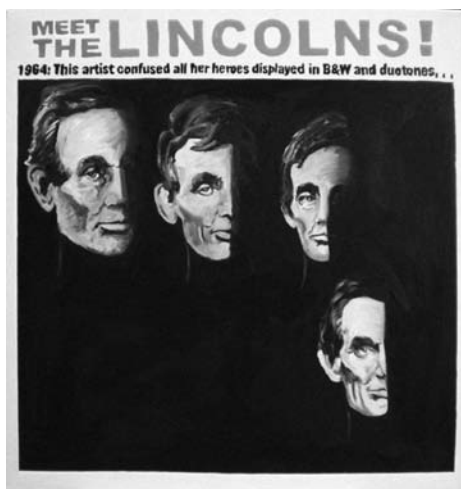


**Lincoln 165 (Triptich):** This painting was a design test for me. The different facial angles and close crops achieved the stark, contemporary effect I wanted.

**Lincoln 151 (Birth of Modern):** I had the opportunity to visit the Matisse Museum in Nice, France. Hanging among his modern masterpieces was *The Dead Christ*, a painting by Philippe de Champaigne (c.1694). I was so struck by startling contrast of styles, I knew immediately that I wanted to incorporate them in my next depiction of Lincoln. By juxtaposing the two styles, I wanted to convey my belief that Lincoln's tragic death was the signal transition that propelled us into the modern era. The painting is 6' x 6'.



**Lincoln-171 (Tryal By Fyer):** Based on a photograph by J. C. F. Polycarpus von Schneidau, 1854). Abstract painting.

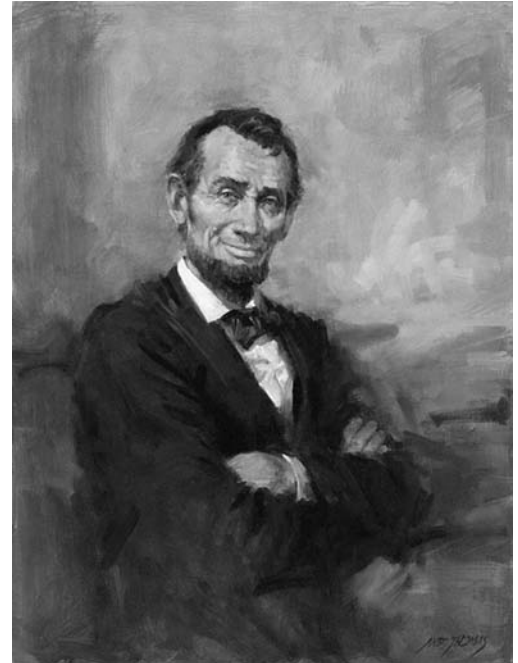


**Lincoln 173 (Meet the Lincolns! 1964):** This artist confused all her heroes displayed in B&W and duotones): The meaning is in the subtitle.

# THE ART OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN: MODERN PAINTERS



Callin the Blue Pool (Andy Thomas)



Smilin Abe (Andy Thomas)

## Andy Thomas

Q: With your work, you join a long and distinguished list of artists who have devoted a considerable amount of their time and talent to Abraham Lincoln—from Leonard Wells Volk and Alban Jasper Conant in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to Chas Fagan and Wendy Allen in the 21<sup>st</sup>. What is it about Lincoln that inspires you?

A: His sense of humor. Much of his life and character is admirable but the incredible wit sets him apart.

Q: Unlike most other artists, your portraits seem free-form—that is, not based on any known photographs or paintings. Was this a conscious decision, and if so, how do you create a living, breathing Lincoln from your own imagination?

A: In Lincoln's case it was necessary since I wanted to show a humorous face. People always comment about how the weight of his responsibilities showed on his sad face but this is misleading. Because of the slow exposure times nobody smiled in old photos. I'm sure the war weighted on him but he still laughed and told many humorous antecdotes. I try to avoid painting directly from photographs because, in my case, it seems to suppress creativity.

Q: Picasso called Lincoln "the great American face." Agree or disagree—and why?

A: Absolutely. Lincoln's face is the very representation of rugged individualism.

Q: Which Lincoln paintings of the past do you admire?

A: There is a painting of Lincoln splitting logs that I like. I don't know who painted it but I believe it is called "The Log Splitter." I like it because it reminds us he was truly a common man who made himself great. He was known for his remarkable physical strength.

Q: Have Americans lost their taste for representational portraits of their heroes?

A: No, I don't think so. We have such good and creative photographers that a memorable portrait is more of a challenge today.

Q: What Lincoln work do you plan for the future? Any commissions or inspirations your admirers would like to know about?

A: I don't plan ahead consistently. I usually start a painting the same day I conceive it. Your question did remind me of a pen & ink I gave to my father. It shows Lincoln sitting, smiling, and leaning toward the viewer in a conspiratorial gesture, as if he has just shared a private joke.

Q: Finally, how can fans access your portfolio—and collect Andy Thomas portraits of Abraham Lincoln?

A: I'll let my wife answer that. Wife's answer: Andy's artwork, including Lincoln, is available via the web site at [www.andythomas.com](http://www.andythomas.com) or by calling the studio directly at 800.432.1581 Thanks! Dina Thomas. 📌

## Peter Campbell

Artist Jasper Johns once referred to his paintings of American flags, maps, and targets as [being] “fascinated with things seen, and not looked at, not examined.”

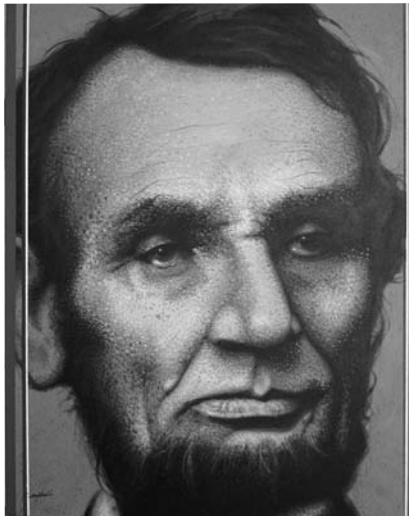
My series of Contemporary American Portraits explore—on a heroic scale—obscure black and white photographs of American faces from the past. These paintings are an attempt to redeem and examine this lost and often forgotten material.

I have explored a number of different subjects in my work: from the urban landscape to space exploration to baseball—the American pastime. But my love for old photographs of historical American figures from the eighteenth hundreds, especially of Abraham Lincoln, has been a constant theme of my painting throughout the years.

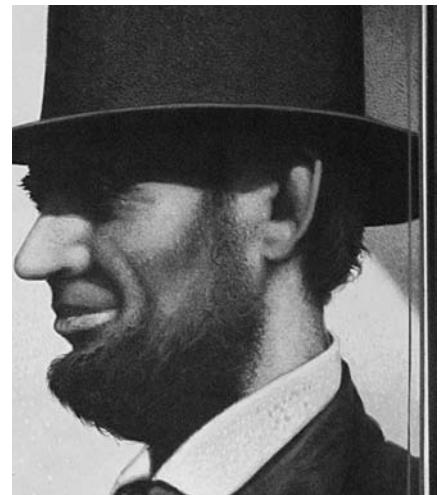
In 1961, I received a book from my parents titled *Meet Mr. Lincoln* as a gift for my thirteenth birthday. The tightly-cropped, enlarged, grainy black and white photographs of President Lincoln and other larger-than-life, mythical Civil War figures seemed to leap from the pages. I believe that this book sparked my life-long interest in Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War and was also the source material that would later inspire me to create the Contemporary American Portrait series.

I still have that book—now yellow and tattered with age, held together with an elastic band—and even today, as I turn the worn, crisp pages, Lincoln comes alive as he once did for a 13-year-old boy back in 1961.

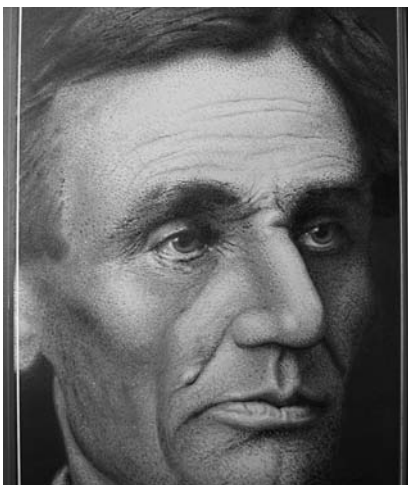
\*Note on the paintings: A majority of the portraits measure 30” x 36”. They are done on stretched high quality cotton canvas and executed in acrylic paint. 🎨



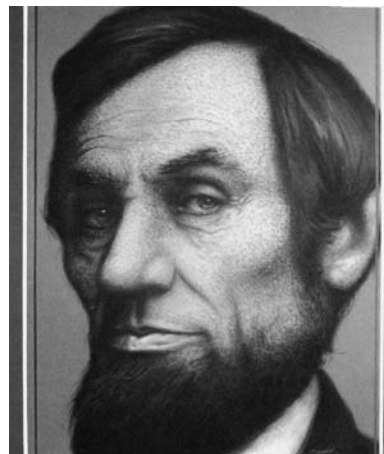
Lincoln 1864 (Peter Campbell)



Lincoln and His Top Hat (Peter Campbell)



Lincoln 1860 (Peter Campbell)



Lincoln 1861 (Peter Campbell)

# 'A SAD SWEET FEELING:' ANALYZING LINCOLN'S

By E. Phelps Gay

Not as famous as the letter to Mrs. Lydia Bixby of November 21, 1864, not as formal as the letter to Colonel Elmer Ellsworth's parents of May 25, 1861, Abraham Lincoln's letter to Miss Fanny McCullough of December 23, 1862, takes its place beside them as a supremely eloquent expression of sympathy extended to someone grieving over "the loved and lost." Like those letters, the McCullough letter is worth examining in detail, both for its underlying story and its unusual literary merit.



Lincoln as he looked not long after writing the McCullough letter.  
(Photo: Library of Congress)

Dear Fanny, It is with deep grief that I learn of the death of your kind and brave Father; and, especially, that it is affecting your young heart beyond what is common in such cases. In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all; and, to the young, it comes with bitterest agony, because it takes them unawares. The older have learned to ever expect it. I am anxious to afford some alleviation of your present distress. Perfect relief is not possible, except with time. You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so? And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again. To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now. I have had experience enough to know what I say; and you need only to believe it, to feel better at once. The memory of your dear Father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad sweet feeling in your heart, of a purer, and holier sort than you have known before.

Please present my kind regards to your afflicted Mother.

Your sincere friend, A. Lincoln

Mary Frances "Fanny" McCullough was the 21-year-old daughter of Lt. Col. William McCullough of Bloomington, Illinois. Born in 1811, Col. McCullough, like Lincoln, was a veteran of the Black Hawk Indian War. For many years he served as sheriff and clerk of McLean County Circuit Court in Bloomington, where Lincoln often practiced law. Lincoln's friend David Davis, also from Bloomington, served as presiding judge of the Eighth Judicial Circuit from 1848 to 1862. He and McCullough shared an office in the Bloomington courthouse. On certain mornings before court opened, Lincoln would linger there and chat with his two friends. Over the years Lincoln became fond of McCullough's two daughters, Namie and Mary Frances, known as Nanny and Fanny. When Fanny was a child, Lincoln held her on his knees.

Having only one good eye and missing his right arm, William McCullough was initially turned down for service in the Civil War. But Lincoln made special arrangements to get his friend commissioned major of the Fourth Illinois Cavalry on August 20,

1861, and on October 3, 1861, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. In 1862, he commanded the First Battalion of the Fourth Illinois Cavalry in several battles. McCullough fought bravely at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth.

On December 1, 1862, General Grant ordered a cavalry force of several regiments on a "sweeping southward scouting" mission deep into Confederate territory. The purpose was to gather information for "the climactic Vicksburg campaign he was then brewing." Five days later, in the Battle of Coffeeville, Union cavalry engaged in a skirmish with John C. Pemberton's infantry. The rebels outnumbered the cavalymen and successfully resisted their advance, prompting a retreat. McCullough's regiment was ordered to serve as rear guard for the retreating Federals.

Riding back to camp on a muddy road, McCullough and his men passed through "a thicket of jack oak and brush on a pitch-black night." Unbeknownst to McCullough, Mississippi infantrymen were traveling on a parallel road to the east of his regiment. They hid in the woods beside the road where a gap had been created between the retreating Federal column and McCullough's rear-guard regiment. Suddenly, McCullough heard someone cry out, "Halt, get down and surrender!" To his regiment McCullough called out, "Fourth Cavalry! Left front into line! Charge!" During the resulting rifle-fire, McCullough was shot in the chest and killed. His men maintained their leader had saved them at his own cost.

According to his colonel, McCullough "fell while covering the retreat of our column with the mounted companies of his regiment." He added, "A better or braver man never fought or fell. He died with his face to the foe, at the head of his command, thus nobly sacrificing his life for the safety of his fellows."

On the receiving end of this news was an old friend of McCullough's, and of Lincoln's as well, Bloomington attorney Leonard Swett. He dreaded the prospect of conveying this "evil" news to the family, whom he knew well. Swett's law partner, Colonel William W. Orme, was married to Fanny's older sister, Nanny. Swett spoke to her first. This was hard enough, but then Nanny and Swett had to break the sad news to Fanny and her mother.

A "guileless, truthful, warm-hearted noble girl," Fanny suffered from a nervous condition. In *Lincoln's Melancholy*, Joshua Wolf Shenk describes her as "slight and pretty" with "chestnut hair and wide, dark eyes." On hearing the news, Fanny cried out, "Father's dead! Father's dead! Poor father! Is it so? Why don't you tell me? Why don't you tell me?" For several days she secluded herself in her room where she "neither ate nor slept."

Fanny's inconsolable condition prompted her mother to write a letter to Judge Davis, whom Lincoln had just appointed to the United States Supreme Court. Mrs. Swett described her daughter as "afflicted—crushed and I fear, broken hearted." Fanny "passes her time in pacing the floor in violent grief, or sitting in lethargic silence."

Learning of Fanny's despair, David Davis wrote a four-page letter to Mrs. Swett dated December 21, 1862. "Would that I was in Bloomington," he wrote. "I could do much to sooth my poor friend, Fanny McCullough... I love her as I would a child... will see Mr. Lincoln again and prompt him to write her—He promised the other day that he would... The cares of this Government are very heavy on him now, and unless prompted the matter may pass out of his mind." Two days later Lincoln wrote his famous letter of condolence. The letter, which has been called "one of the finest in the Lincoln literature," produced a "very good effect in soothing [Fanny's] troubled mind."

# LETTER TO FANNY McCULLOUGH

In this letter, as in so many others, Lincoln demonstrated perfect pitch. He joins Fanny in grief over her father's passing, yet seeks to soften that grief with a few words of wisdom, drawn from his own experience and delivered in a sensitive, fatherly tone. He winds up expressing optimism about the young woman's future. Few writers could have achieved such a remarkable effect in the space of 187 words.

*"It is with deep grief that I learn of the death of your kind and brave Father. . . ."* Seemingly ordinary, this opening sentence exemplifies Lincoln's gift for expressing sympathy in simple, well-chosen words. The first 16 words each contain one syllable. A naturally rhythmical writer, Lincoln repeats vowel sounds ("deep grief") and consonants ("deep...death") so that the words read easily and sound soothing to his young reader. He establishes a tender tone—calm, wise, straightforward, never overwrought, never condescending. Simple adjectives ("kind and brave") capture the character of Fanny's father. Nothing more is needed.

*"[A]nd, especially, that it is affecting your young heart beyond what is common in such cases."* Consonance and assonance came naturally to Lincoln (note the "y" sounds: "your young" heart segues into "beyond;" and "c" sounds: "common" links with "cases"), and yet there is no hint of artifice or straining after effects. Evident also is the writer's dignified distance, his almost a clinical perspective on Fanny's situation. This wise man, who has seen his share of suffering, knows what is common in such cases and what is not. Experience enables him to offer relief to his young friend.

With the next sentence the letter takes on a philosophical tone. *"In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all."* The first six words establish intimacy with his grieving reader. (This sad world, he tells Fanny, is "ours.") The phrasing remains lyrical and resonant: the repeating "s" sounds of "sad" and "sorrow;" the echoing vowels of "world," "ours," and "sorrow." The language is tersely majestic, almost biblical in its force. Without diminishing the pain of her loss, Lincoln assures Fanny she is not alone.

*"[A]nd, to the young, it comes with bitterest agony, because it takes them unawares."* Honest Abe was indeed honest. Fanny may have been a fragile young woman, but to Lincoln, consoling her meant telling the truth about what she had lost and what she was experiencing. At a younger age than Fanny, Lincoln had suffered "bitterest agony" which had taken him "unawares." There is no sense sugar-coating it. Still, Lincoln's point of view remains somewhat elevated and removed. Sorrow, he says, comes to "all" (not just you) and it takes "them" (that is, all young people, not just you) unawares. This wise man possesses perspective. He offers it in consolation to young Fanny.

The lofty perspective continues in the next sentence. *"The older have learned ever to expect it."* In this simple sentence, Lincoln displays his sharp poetic ear. Metrical stresses on "older" and "ever" combine with internal rhymes (e.g., the "er" sounds of "older," "learned," and "ever"; the short "e" of "ever" and "expect") to produce the spare beauty which distinguishes Lincoln's best writing.

Lincoln then comes down from his perch to address Fanny directly. *"I am anxious to afford some alleviation of your present distress."* He states his purpose: not only does he want to help her; he is "anxious" to do so. The alliteration of "anxious," "afford," and "alleviation" is evident to any reader. Less evident, perhaps, is the perfect balance of the two-syllable words: "present distress." Speaking of perfect, Lincoln's alliterative tendencies continue in his next sentence: *"Perfect relief is not possible, except with time."* Once again, Lincoln does not attempt to "beguile" his young friend into thinking he can fully assuage her sorrow. Honesty and modesty enhance his credibility.

*"You cannot now realize that you will ever feel better. Is not this so?"* In these two remarkable sentences Lincoln achieves two purposes. In the first he continues to offer Fanny words of wisdom borne of years, telling her, in pounding "n" sounds and his second use of "ever," that she "cannot now realize" that she will "ever feel better." In the second he steps down from his philosophical pedestal and "talks" to Fanny. He asks: "Is not this so?" With these four words, Lincoln is suddenly *there*. He is in the room. You can hear his voice. It is as if in order to express real human empathy, to make a genuine connection, one has to do more than impart words of wisdom or even heartfelt emotion. One has to touch the bereaved person with a human voice. Having heard Lincoln's question, we can imagine Fanny saying, softly, "Yes, it is so."

The letter then "turns," and the writer answers his own question. *"And yet it is a mistake. You are sure to be happy again."* These statements derive their resonance from the question just asked. The voice just heard gives a direct answer—not simply a wish or a hope that Fanny may one day recover from her grief and carry on with her life, but a categorical declaration that "it is a mistake" and you "are sure" to be happy again. Coming from the president of the country and a cherished friend of her father, these words must have hit home.

*"To know this, which is certainly true, will make you some less miserable now."* Again, this famously honest man will not pretend his words can or will cure Fanny of her present grief. They can only make her "some less miserable." As we know, Lincoln was an instinctively logical, even syllogistic thinker and writer; thus, to his mind when one knows "this," it will cause "that." Lincoln adds, *"I have had experience enough to know what I say; and you need only to believe it, to feel better at once."* It is unknown whether, at the time, young Fanny could appreciate the depth of experience from which this statement sprang—that Lincoln had lost his mother when he was nine years of age, his sister when he was 18, his three year-old son Eddy in 1850, and his beloved son Willie, only eleven, earlier in 1862. Perhaps over time Fanny learned more about the life of her late father's friend, and the letter became more meaningful to her.

At the end of this paragraph, Lincoln composes what is surely one of his most beautiful sentences. *"The memory of your dear Father, instead of an agony, will yet be a sad sweet feeling in your heart, of a purer, and holier sort than you have known before."* Anyone who has ever lost a parent is familiar with this "sad sweet feeling" and its holy nature. Note as well that Lincoln employs the word "agony" for the second time, this time in contrast with the "bitterest agony" young people feel when sorrow hits them unawares. That "agony" is gone, replaced by a sad, sweet feeling.

After asking Fanny to present his regards to her mother, Lincoln closes as "your sincere friend." This nicely captures his respectful and un-condescending tone.

Fanny McCullough kept Lincoln's letter for the rest of her life. When she died in Washington on March 4, 1920, at the age of 80, the letter was found in a secret drawer in her desk. Years later, in 1965, her heirs sold the letter through Chicago dealer Ralph Newman to collector Carl Haverlin for \$60,000, the highest price ever paid for a Lincoln letter up to that time. In 1997, the letter was purchased by Joseph Maddalena of Beverly Hills, as agent for the Benjamin Shapell Manuscript Foundation, at a Christie's auction for the sum of \$400,000. Maddalena was quoted as saying he thought the price "incredibly cheap." One might say the letter is priceless.

*Attorney Phelps Gay is a Lincoln Forum member. ■*

# 150 YEARS AGO: AUTUMN 1861 IN A DIVIDED AMERICA

**October 1**—Jefferson Davis holds war conference with military commanders at Centreville, VA; Lincoln orders complex action against Carolina.

**October 3**—Lincoln signs his latest photograph to old family friend with his most famous inscription: “To Lucy Speed from whose pious hand I accepted the present of an Oxford bible twenty years ago.”

**October 8**—President and Mrs. Lincoln attend military review near Capitol.

**October 11**—Lincoln names William S. Rosecrans to command army department of West Virginia.

**October 17**—Lincoln writes his most famous job reference, to the commander of the Washington Arsenal: “The lady—bearer of this—says she has two sons who want to work. Set them at it, if possible. Wanting to work is so rare a merit, that it should be encouraged.”

**October 19**—USS *Massachusetts* and CSS *Florida* battle near Ship Island, MS

**October 21**—Confederates defeat Union at Battle of Ball’s Bluff, Leesburg, VA. One of casualties is Lincoln’s friend Colonel Edward Dickinson Baker—for whom his late son Eddy had been named. Young Willie Lincoln later writes and publishes a poem in tribute to the martyred officer.

**October 21**—Though unauthorized by law, Lincoln asks NY Archbishop Hughes to name first Catholic military chaplains.

**October 24**—With a final segment of wire installed between Denver and Sacramento, the transcontinental telegraph is completed; Lincoln receives first message on October 26.

**November 1**—General Winfield Scott retires and Lincoln names General George B. McClellan to succeed him as chief of the army.

**November 2**—Lincoln removes General John C. Frémont in Western Department.

**November 6**—Jefferson Davis elected President of the Confederacy by popular vote—unopposed—for a six year term.

**November 7**—Battle of Belmont, MO focuses attention on Ulysses S. Grant.

**November 8**—Captain Charles Wilkes, commanding USS *San Jacinto* in waters of Old Bahama Channel, seizes Confederate envoys James Mason and John Slidell, en route to England and France, respectively, from the decks of British mail packet *Trent*. When British demand their immediate release, the Lincoln Administration hesitates—setting off a diplomatic crisis that comes close to plunging the Union into an international war. (Lincoln will release Mason and Slidell at the end of the year.)

**November 20**—Lincoln and cabinet members attend Grand Review at Bailey’s Cross Roads, VA, “the largest and most magnificent military review ever held on this continent.”

**November 28**—Lincoln and Mary celebrate Thanksgiving with holiday dinner at White House with old friend Joshua Speed and Mrs. Speed.

**December 3**—President issues first annual message to Congress, warning prophetically: “The Union must be preserved, and hence, all indispensable means must be employed. . . . The struggle for today, is not altogether for today—it is for a vast future also.”

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## APRIL 2, 2011 - LINCOLN’S TRANSITION AT WILLARD’S HOTEL

*continued from page 8* nomination as Secretary of State. Lincoln did not budge and finally persuaded Seward to come on board.

A final measure was the inaugural address as revised at Willard’s. Lincoln adopted many of Seward’s suggestions, including deletion of a pledge to “reclaim” federal property seized by Confederate states and addition of a new closing made eloquent by Lincoln’s revisions. Lincoln rejected Seward’s proposal to drop a commitment “to hold, occupy, and possess” federal property (such as Fort Sumter). However, using Seward’s language, he promised to exercise his discretion to change policy “according to circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles, and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.”

The Willard’s environment was one of many factors that

moderated Lincoln’s stance so he would keep his presidential options open.

Lincoln’s biographers report he failed to pay his hotel bill when he left. The amount on the hotel registry was \$773.75. Documents displayed at the Willard InterContinental Hotel on February 12, 2009, tell more of the story. The first is a letter: “Executive Mansion. April 21, 1861. Messrs Willard. I am annoyed to know that my bill at your house has not yet been paid. Receipt it and hand it to Mr. Nicolay & he will give you a check for the amount. Yours truly, A. Lincoln.” The second is a note written along the side of a “Duplicate” bill for \$430.00 dated April 26, 1861: “I will procure the government to pay this bill or pay it myself. April 30, 1861. A. Lincoln.”

In the weeks after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Lincoln could not forget his stay at Willard’s Hotel.

Administrator • Betty Anselmo • 59 Hurst Lane • Tiverton, RI 02878 • Phone: 401-624-3722 • [admin@thelincolnforum.org](mailto:admin@thelincolnforum.org) • [bettyanselmo@cox.net](mailto:bettyanselmo@cox.net)

The Lincoln Forum • 59 Hurst Lane • Tiverton, RI 02878

Harold Holzer - Editor  
[harold.holzer@metmuseum.org](mailto:harold.holzer@metmuseum.org)



Henry F. Ballone - Designer  
[civilwarnut@hotmail.com](mailto:civilwarnut@hotmail.com)