THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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WAS LINCOLN GAY?

By Michal F. Bishop

Bishop in the Lincoln Memorial

By now it has probably happened to you. Whether greeting an old friend or meeting someone for the first time, the subject of your interest in Lincoln is always greeted by a raised eyebrow and sly smile. "So," the question inevitably goes, "what do you think of *that* book?"

"*That* book," of course, is *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln* by the late C.A. Tripp. Published amidst a torrent of publicity the likes of which most Lincoln authors can only envy, the book is an attempt to prove that our sixteenth and greatest president was a closet homosexual. Seizing delightedly upon Carl Sandburg's observation that Lincoln had "a streak of lavender and spots soft as May violets," Tripp set out to prove that the lavender streak ran deep. The author passed away soon after completing the manuscript, leaving scholars, reviewers, and the public to ponder and debate Tripp's findings.

C.A. Tripp was a psychologist, sex researcher, and former colleague of Dr. Alfred Kinsey, who was recently portrayed on film by actor Liam Neeson. (Coincidentally, the actor will soon portray Lincoln in a major motion picture.) Himself a gay man, Tripp was intrigued by what he considered to be telling evidence in the story of Lincoln's life. But his enthusiasm led to a book that ignores the rules of scholarship and imposes a modern perspective on an age quite different from our own.

The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln opens with an approving introduction by Jean Baker, who writes that "while Tripp may be wrong in his interpretation of some particulars, he may still be right on the larger question... .I believe that Lincoln was bisexual." In a dissenting afterward, Michael Burlingame acknowledges that Lincoln's inner life must ever remain shrouded in mystery, but points to the abundant evidence of Lincoln's heterosexuality and rightly accuses Tripp of ignoring it entirely. A more favorable afterward is provided by Michael Chesson, who considers the book "a hurricane of revelation." Rarely does a work of history contain so much built-in commentary, both positive and negative.

This advance commentary was soon to be followed by a "hurricane" of media coverage. What follows is an overview of the journalistic reaction to Tripp's controversial work.

Immediately upon the publication of *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln*, the *Weekly Standard* featured a harshly critical cover story by Philip Nobile, Tripp's former collaborator. The cover illustration was of Lincoln, stereotypically homosexual in appearance, and complete with earring. The details are murky, but evidently Tripp and Nobile once agreed to work together on a book exploring what they believed to be Lincoln's homosexuality. They parted ways after a dispute about plagiarism, and Nobile worked successfully behind the scenes to delay publication. The scathing *Weekly Standard* article succeeds in damaging Tripp's credibility, but the editors may have been uncomfortable with Nobile's conclusion that "The Gay Lincoln Theory, for all its jagged edges, may be a more satisfying explanation for the president's weird inner life than the Utterly Straight Lincoln Theory." Philip Nobile is a controversial figure who for years has been on record as believing that Lincoln was homosexual, and most of the reviews of *The Intimate Lincoln* paid no heed to his charges. The book is ripe enough for criticism.

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MESSAGE *from the* **CHAIRMAN**

Growth and Change at the Forum

Let me start with news about change in the publication of our *Bulletin.* Harold Holzer, who has edited the Lincoln Forum *Bulletin* for the last 10 years, has become managing editor, assisting our administrator, Annette Westerby, in the production of the *Bulletin.* We are grateful to Harold for his excellent work. We are pleased to report that Steven Lee Carson has assumed the duties of editor. This is the first issue from Steve, an Advisory Board member who, for many years, served as editor of *The Manuscript Society News.* Don Pieper continues to serve as a contributing editor.

As you can see, this issue is chock full of stories. Steve reports about our 9th Annual Lincoln Forum held November 16-18, 2004 including the award of The Richard Nelson Current Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement to John Y. Simon. Michael Bishop, Advisory Board member, asks, "Was Lincoln Gay?" believing that those with today's political agendas cannot help using the past to press their opinions and positions of the present. Bishop has written a digest of all the reviews, pro and con, of C.A. Tripp's *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln.* John Marszalek, author of *Commander of all Lincoln's Armies* has contributed a story about Abraham Lincoln and his "Chief of Staff" Henry Halleck.

A copy of President George W. Bush's letter to The Lincoln Forum celebrating our ninth year is also reproduced along with a discussion of our forthcoming Forum X this November 16-18. The 140th anniversary of Lincoln's assassination occurred on April 14-15, 2005 and this will be the theme of our next Forum. Participants include Edward Steers, Jr., Michael W. Kauffman, Elizabeth D. Leonard, Richard Sloan, James L. Swanson, Thomas Reed Turner, Thomas Goodrich, Thomas P. Lowry and Louise Taper who will present a slide lecture on the assassination items in her great Lincoln collection. The keynote speaker will be Jay Winik, author of *April 1865.*

Last year's winning Platt Family Essay is included as an insert in this issue along with an array of photographs taken by Henry Ballone and others. An account of my Dedication Day Address at the Gettysburg National Military Cemetery on November 19 is also included.

On February 11, actor Sam Waterston and Harold Holzer presented an encore of their *Lincoln Seen and Heard* for President and Mrs. Bush and guests in the East Room of the White House. Many members of the Forum were present for this great performance that was aired live by C-SPAN.

The Lincoln Forum was also a co-sponsor of the Mariners' Museum Symposium, *The 1862 Peninsula Campaign* held March 3-6, 2005, and is a co-sponsor of *Hildene's* 5th Symposium, *In the Shadow of Greatness,* which will be held July 5-7, 2005. For information, e-mail Brian Knight at brian@hildene.org or call (802) 367-1225. The Lincoln Forum was also a co-sponsor of *The Statesmanship of Lincoln* presented by The Rochester Institute of Technology, Department of Political Science and College of Liberal Arts, April 1-2.

Lincoln continues to fascinate in every area – politics, religion, and our culture – and he remains at the top of the latest polls.

All of this leaves us with a deeper understanding of Abraham Lincoln and a host of new and unanswered questions about what history is all about: the truth as best we know it, or some convenient idea of the truth. In any event, we are always in Lincoln's presence asking him, "Mr. Lincoln, are we doing the right thing?"

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 17, 2004

I send greetings to those gathered for the Ninth Annual Symposium of the Lincoln Forum.

President Abraham Lincoln's leadership and moral clarity united Americans and left behind a better and stronger Nation. He inspired our country to live up to the founding principle that all men are created equal. And he expressed America's resolve that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

I commend participants for your dedication to understanding the life and accomplishments of our 16th President. By remembering the principles of liberty and tolerance for which President Lincoln stood, we can help strengthen the foundations of democracy and build a world where all people can live in freedom and peace.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America.

Guelzo, Holzer Win the Lincoln Prize

The highest award in the world honoring Abraham Lincoln was bestowed upon Allen C. Guelzo, Henry R. Luce professor of history at Gettysburg College, with second place going to Lincoln Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer, author, editor and senior vice president for external affairs at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. With this award Guelzo becomes the first two-time winner of the annual Lincoln Prize, which is endowed by Richard Gilder and Lewis Lehrman and administered by Gettysburg College. Guelzo's first prize consists of $35,000 and a bronze replica of Augustus Saint-Gaudens life - size bust, "Lincoln the Man." Holzer's prize is $15,000.

Guelzo was honored with this latest award for his book, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (Simon & Schuster). Holzer's book, *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech That Made Abraham Lincoln President* (Simon & Schuster) earned him his prize. This was the 15th year the Lincoln Prize has been awarded.

In announcing the prize on Lincoln's birthday last February 12, Gilder and Lehrman said, "It is a privilege to recognize Guelzo's long - awaited book on the Emancipation Proclamation - the first study of this important subject in forty years - a masterpiece of compelling scholarship and elegant prose. It should stand the test of time as the definitive treatment of the most society - altering event of the entire 19th century."

Guelzo's 2000 Lincoln Prize - winning book was Abraham *Lincoln: Redeemer President* (William B. Eerdman's Publishing Co.) and he is currently director of Gettysburg College's Civil War Era Studies Program. He is the author of five books.

For Holzer, Gilder - Lehrman said his "penetrating work on the pre-presidential Lincoln at his oratorical zenith - finding his voice before a demanding New York audience at a crucial moment in his pre - White House career - vividly re-creates the lost culture of political oratory at its best."

Holzer is also co-chairman of the United States Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and recently entertained President George W. Bush in the White House with a dramatic reading of Lincoln's works with actor Sam Waterston. Among very many awards some of his latest ones are the Barondess/Lincoln Award of the New York Civil War Round Table and the Lincoln Group of New York Achievement Award, both for this most recent work. He has recently been honored with the Lincoln Award of the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia. Holzer, a frequent historical commentator on television, is the author, co-author or editor of 23 books.

Named as Lincoln Prize finalists were Jonathan D. Martin for his work, *Divided Mastery: Slavery Hiring in the American South* (Harvard University Press), and Jane A. Schultz's *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America* (University of North Carolina Press). Guelzo, Holzer and these two others were chosen by a jury of historians who examined 91 entries. This year's jury consisted of Melinda Lawson of Union College; Brian Holden Reid of King's College of London; and Peter Kolchin of the University of Delaware. The prize's Board of Trustees made the final selections. The Lincoln Prize was established in 1990 by Gilder, Lehrman and Gettysburg College Fluhrer Professor of Civil war Studies Gabor Boritt.

Lincoln Award winners Harold Holzer and Allen C. Guelzo —Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Register Now for LINCOLN FORUM X

November 16-18, 2005 — Theme:
The 140th Anniversary of Lincoln's Assassination

Contact: anetwest@earthlink.net
For Further information

A letter from President George W. Bush celebrating the Forum's ninth meeting is presented by Harold Holzer to Frank Williams. The letter is reproduced on page two.

Continued from page 1

The *Today* show, a reliable barometer of popular culture and rarely a venue for historical discussion, devoted several minutes of precious airtime to *The Intimate World.* News outlets like CNN, Fox, and NPR followed suit. The airwaves fairly crackled with excitement: was the Great Emancipator a lover of men? Other questions remained unasked: what can Lincoln's leadership teach us about the war on international terrorism? How can we reconcile security and civil liberties in wartime? Instead, we were forced to ponder the sleeping arrangements of young men in Springfield, Illinois. Michael Burlingame and Michael Chesson faced off, in *Crossfire* fashion, while CNN's Wolf Blitzer, maintaining a straight face, barked interrogatories about Lincoln's supposed nocturnal escapades.

One might be hard pressed to name a major newspaper or magazine that did not review this controversial book. The *New York Times, Time, Salon, Slate*, and *The New Republic* (twice!) commented on Tripp's work, and the present author reviewed it in the *Washington Post.*

Given the sensitivity of the issues involved, and the ideological polarization of our public debates, it was somewhat surprising to see the nearly unanimous criticism of *The Intimate World.* With very few exceptions, liberal and conservative publications alike condemned the book, but most reviewers remained cautiously noncommittal about the central question.

The first major review was written by a conservative writer in a liberal newspaper, Richard Brookhiser in the *New York Times.* "On the evidence before us, Lincoln loved men, at least some of whom loved him back," concludes Brookhiser, but he ridicules Tripp's fevered speculations about Lincoln's supposedly hypersexualized adolescence. He criticizes the author's writing as "jumpy and lifeless, like a body receiving electric shocks," and finds that Tripp "alternates shrewd guesses and modest judgments with bluster and fantasy." Brookhiser harbors a strong suspicion that Tripp might be on to something, but he finds the book deeply flawed and dismisses speculation about Lincoln's sexual life as merely "biography." To Brookhiser, "the Lincoln that matters" is "the man who saw liberty and equality as facets of the same thing, and who maintained his…vision in the face of Northern confusion and Southern fury."

In *Salon*, the reliably liberal online magazine, Andrew O'Hehir offered the most devastating review of all, wondering "why a book quite as bad as *The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln* had to be published." O'Hehir finds that Tripp "assassinates his own case almost as thoroughly as John Wilkes Booth killed Lincoln," with "a mishmash of supposition, rumor, half-cooked research and specious reasoning." In another liberal online publication, *Slate*, David Greenberg is similarly critical, concluding that Tripp "doesn't even begin to make a persuasive case in this tendentious, sloppy, and wholly unpersuasive farrago." Both these reviewers are open to Tripp's central argument, but neither of them can abide his methods.

According to historian Christine Stansell, in *The New Republic*, "the virtue of this little book is to get you wondering," and yet she accuses him of "wrenching the evidence in line to make the case." Some of the historical testimony leaves her wondering, but she finds Tripp occasionally "ungenerous (and) small-minded. The compulsive quest for the 'truth' of Lincoln's homosexuality blinds him to the great expanses of life that lie outside his exceedingly straitened notion of sex."

The Intimate World of Abraham Lincoln has its defenders, two of whom in particular are worth mentioning. Though separated by a wide gulf ideologically, Andrew Sullivan and Gore Vidal are both outspokenly gay and eager to believe in the "lavender Lincoln."

In *The New Republic*, Sullivan asks "how gay was Abraham Lincoln?" Scorning what he considers the "historically futile, binary question of 'gay' versus 'straight,'" Sullivan attempts to locate Lincoln somewhat on the pinker end of the sexual continuum. A talented writer, he makes as good a case for Tripp's thesis as possible.

Gore Vidal, on the other hand, endorses the book in the online version of *Vanity Fair* with his accustomed pomposity. Vidal's exquisite self-regard threatens to overshadow his praise of Tripp; the reader must wade through quite a few references to Vidal's own accomplishments, and his endless battle with the *New York Times.* Though once skeptical that Lincoln's sexuality had any impact on his public life, Vidal now believes otherwise. Our greatest president "avoided the hang-ups of those indoctrinated in their teens with the folklore of the time which condemned masturbation and same-sexuality as evils, while Lincoln knew firsthand that they were not. From that single insight it was no great step to recognize that the enslavement of one race by another was, despite St. Paul's complaisance, a true evil." Here the fantasy of Lincoln's concealed homosexuality reaches its apotheosis: Lincoln was not only gay, but would never have achieved greatness otherwise.

The reaction of many to this controversy has been understandable, and even admirable: who cares? Is our appreciation for Lincoln's remarkable accomplishments affected by his alleged homosexual tendencies? And yet, such a reaction is perhaps naïve. People have studied the life of our sixteenth president with remarkable zeal, and no detail is considered irrelevant. As James McPherson has noted, more books have been written about Lincoln than about any other figure save Christ and Shakespeare. Many of these dwell on Lincoln's personal habits and behavior in exquisite detail. Given that sexuality is a vitally important component of human nature, perhaps it cannot be ignored in an exploration of the inner life of a historical figure.

When it comes to Lincoln, however, the path to understanding does not pass through the bedroom. With the reader's indulgence, I will end this essay by quoting the conclusion of my own review of this provocative, exasperating book:

> "Those who seek to understand Lincoln through an exploration of his physical life are doomed to disappointment. More than most major historical figures, Lincoln lived a life of the mind. He was no Jefferson, forever building pillared mansions, collecting fine wines and savoring French delicacies. Not for him flirtations with Parisian ladies or dalliances with slaves. Lincoln was neither an aesthete nor a gourmand; uninterested in art, he ate sparingly and barely tasted his food. The squalor of his early beginnings left him indifferent to his surroundings. His ascetic nature is part of his enduring mystery, and no resolution of that mystery will be found within this book's pages. Dwelling on matters of the flesh will bring us no closer to Lincoln's soul."

Forum Advisor Michael F. Bishop is Executive Director of the U.S. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commision.

2005 MARINERS' MUSEUM SYMPOSIUM ATTRACTS RECORD ATTENDANCE, MARKS MAJOR PROGRESS ON USS MONITOR CENTER

The third annual Mariners' Museum "Battle of Hampton Roads Weekend and Symposium" — co-sponsored by the Lincoln Forum — attracted record numbers of local and national visitors to the Newport News, Virginia site March 3-6, including many Forum registrants. The subject of the 2005 conference was "The 1862 Peninsula Campaign," George B. McClellan's ill-fated attempt to capture Richmond from the southeast.

The annual event is scheduled around the anniversary of the duel between the ironclads *Monitor* and *Virginia* off nearby Hampton Roads. The museum is the official home of the salvaged relics of the Union ironclad *USS Monitor.*

Among the lecturers this year were William C. "Jack" Davis ("The First Evacuation of Richmond"); Craig L. Symonds ("Joseph E. Johnston and the Peninsula Campaign"); Harold Holzer ("The Image of McClellan and Lee"); and local scholars John Quarstein, Joe Gutierrez, Jeff Johnston, and Anna Holloway, curator of the new USS Monitor Center at the Mariners' Museum.

Museum President John Hightower opened the conference by declaring that after three years, the event was officially a museum "tradition," and would remain an important part of the institution's annual schedule. Attendees not only enjoyed the opportunity to see original relics of the *Monitor* in their outdoor preservation tanks—including its original Dahlgren guns—but were invited to attend the keel-laying of the full-scale *Monitor* replica to be constructed outside the new *USS Monitor Center* now under construction adjacent to the Museum's main building. More than 800 people attended that event in chill sunshine, a major improvement over the snow and sleet of the day before.

At the symposium, Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams chaired a well-received panel discussion on joint army-navy operations during the Peninsula Campaign—featuring Symonds, Quarstein, Gutierrez, and in a rare appearance, historian Stephen Sears, author of definitive works on General George B. McClellan and several Civil War Battles (Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg). Williams also filled in for an ailing James I. "Bud" Robertson with an illustrated lecture on "Abraham Lincoln and the Evolving Role of Commander-in-Chief."

This year's event was highlighted by a number of unusual, well-attended, physically exhausting, but widely acclaimed tours: a boat tour of the Hampton Roads harbor that Lincoln viewed after the ironclad duel of March 9, 1862; an all-day bus tour "To the Gates of Richmond," featuring stops at major Peninsula Campaign battlefield sites as well as Richmond's Tredegar Iron Works; and a frigid but unforgettable evening boat tour of Fortress Monroe, where Abraham Lincoln considered matters of war and peace, and where Jefferson Davis was imprisoned at war's end.

As a special bonus, Lincoln Forum stalwart George Buss brought a new program—and a new acting partner—to Newport News with a dialogue, in full costume, between "Abraham Lincoln" and "George B. McClellan" James E. Finch. George, who dedicated his performance to the late Rich Sokup, a longtime Forum favorite, performed twice at the Museum theater.

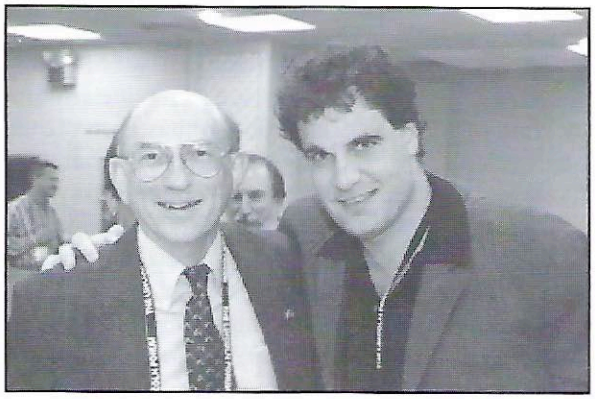
Next year's symposium will focus on the Naval Civil War—On River and Sea—and will feature Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James McPherson.

Forum Advisory Board member George Buss (left), and James E. Finch (portraying General George B. McClellan) re-create Alexander Gardner's iconic 1862 photograph of Abraham Lincoln and McClellan in conference near the Antietam battlefield. Buss and Finch performed a Lincoln-McClellan program at the Mariners' Museum Symposium. —Photo by Henry F. Ballone

LINCOLN FORUM IX MEMORIES:

The 2004 symposium once again provided fascinating history, fun and topical diversity from town and battlefield tours to exhibits to some subjects noted here and a panel on the latest in Lincoln books.The illustrations here are by some of our remarkably dedicated and generous photographer-attendees. Be sure to join our special Forum X on November 16-18, 2005, to discuss the 140th anniversary of the Lincoln assassination.

Chairman Frank Williams opens the Forum —
Photo by Henry F. Ballone



John Marzalek and Joseph Fornieri
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone

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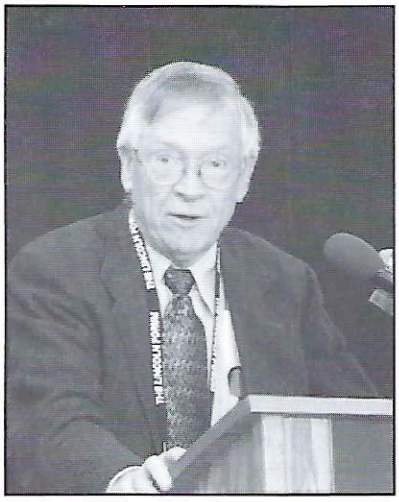
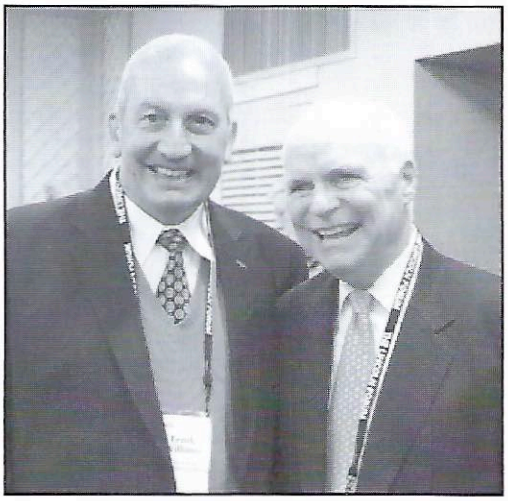
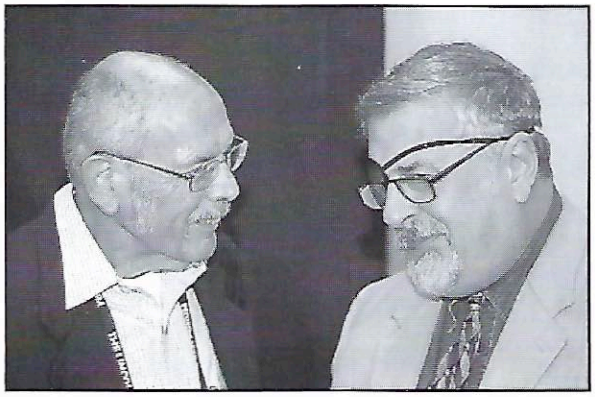
Budge Weidman presents "The People's Award" to
Forum Treasurer Chuck Platt and Linda Platt



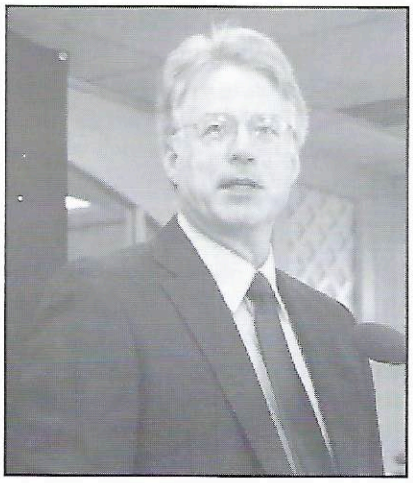
William C. Harris notes foreign complications after Lincoln's Re-election
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone



Frank Williams and C-Span President and CEO Brian Lamb
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone

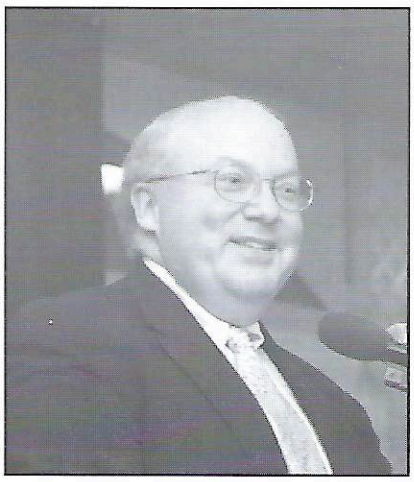


Moderator John C. Waugh and Speaker
David Long on the 1860 Election



Daniel Mark Epstein speaks on Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone

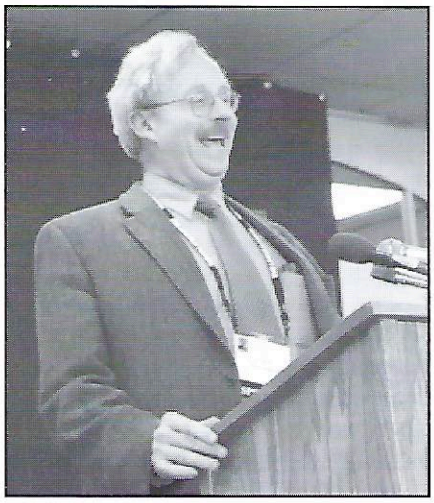
Leeding the applause for John Y. Simon, center, winner of the Richard N.Current Achievement Award, are Frank Williams and Harold Holzer.



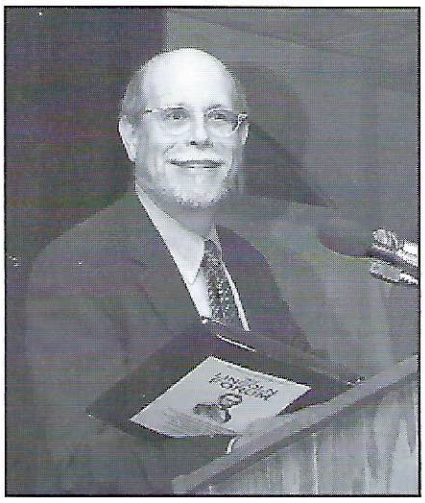
Richard Norton Smith, Director, Abraham Lincoln Library, Illinois

Forum Symposium
enry F. Ballone

Henry Ballone, David Walker and Joe Card
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone



Joseph T. Glatthaar proves speakers can have fun discussing the 1864 election
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone



Award winning author Harold Holzer looks inspired
—Photo by Joe Card

Forum Adminstrator Annette Westerby, nephew Trevor Platt and father Chuck Platt and the "Chief's Coin"
—Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Were cues a cure for Lincoln's fatigued mind?

By Don Pieper

Prof. Harold Hill, an eminent cultural commentator and band uniform salesman, famously observed in a lyrical exhortation to the citizens of River City:

"I consider the hours I spend with a cue in my hand are golden. Help you cultivate horse sense and a cool head and a keen eye."

The professor, whose River City adventures were chronicled by Meredith Wilson in *The Music Man*, declared that it takes "judgment, brains and maturity" to pull off a three-rail billiard shot.

Prof. Hill was endorsing the billiards form of cue sports. He argued that pool ("I say that any boob kin take and shove a ball in a pocket") would provoke trouble, right there in River City. His analysis of qualities engendered at the billiard table — the cool head and the keen eye and all —are exactly those required of a Civil War president and precisely those manifested by Abraham Lincoln. So, understandably perhaps, an advertising agency wishing to generate respect for the products of Brunswick Corporation alleged in television commercials that Mr. Lincoln was "a proud owner" of a Brunswick table.

Moreover, the company's Web page — in a section titled, "Famous Owners of Brunswick Tables" — asserts:

"The first real American celebrity who owned a Brunswick table was an immensely important person in American history — Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was a self-confessed 'billiards addict.' He described the game as a 'health inspiring, scientific game, lending recreation to the otherwise fatigued mind.' "

Well, maybe.

Alas, there is no citation of when Mr. Lincoln commented about the virtues of billiards in reinvigorating a fatigued mind or proof that he owned a table.

The obvious thing to do was to call Brunswick and ask where the quotes came from and how the company could confirm that Lincoln, proudly or otherwise, owned a Brunswick table.

The call reached Mark McCleary, vice president, marketing, at Brunswick Billiards. Mark said he had no idea about proof for the table claim or the source of the quotes. The quotes and claim were provided, he said, by an advertising agency that Brunswick had engaged. The agency, unfortunately, has disbanded and the staffers who worked on the Lincoln material have scattered he knew not where.

But, Mark said, there was a Plan B: a fellow named Joe Newell, who relishes pool table history, especially Brunswick pool table history, with the same fervor that Forum members reserve for Lincoln history. Newell has a shop in Clay Center, Kansas where he restores old tables. He also has a vast collection of artifacts and documents dealing with all aspects of cue sports.

Call Joe, Mark advised. If anyone knows about Lincoln and pool, Joe knows.

Oh, yes, Joe said, he knew about the advertising agency's quest for information. Representatives had visited to see if Joe's records revealed any famous Brunswick owners. Sure enough, there was proof of ownership by Teddy Roosevelt, Buffalo Bill Cody, Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Mark Twain, Frank Sinatra and other notables. But none, to the chagrin of the agency reps, for Abraham Lincoln.

So Joe, who is a history consultant for Brunswick and not an employee, says he has no idea if they ever found proof that Lincoln's fatigued mind was eased by knocking balls around his own table, but they didn't find it in his papers.

"I guess they figured they could stretch it until they got called on the carpet," Joe said of the ad people. (Joe said he also couldn't prove that Babe Ruth ever owned a Brunswick, but the Bambino is included in the list along with confirmed owners George Armstrong Custer, William Vanderbilt, Henry Ford and William Randolph Hearst.)

It is not in dispute that Abraham Lincoln shot pool. Both Joe Newell and Joan Flinspach, president and CEO of the Lincoln Museum at Fort Wayne, Indiana, say there are newspaper clippings and photographs to support that, but those who say he actually owned a table may be behind an eight-ball.

Joe says it has been customary to have pool tables in the family area of the White House, but those tables were the property of the government, not the presidents. The same is true of the tables (there are four) at Camp David.

Presumably, if Lincoln chalked a cue at the White House or Anderson Cottage, he did it to play at a government-issue table and not one he owned himself.

Joe said he has no proof that Lincoln ever had his own table back home in Springfield, Illinois. However, Springfield — courting trouble, according to Prof. Hill — did, Joe's records indicate, have at least one pool hall during the time of the Lincoln residency.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES RANK LINCOLN FORUM IX AMONG BEST EVER

Holzer and Williams Declare Simon Most Popular Lecturer

Lincoln Forum IX has ranked among the most acclaimed and applauded symposia in the organization's history, according to evaluations submitted by a record number of survey participants in 2004—nearly half of all registrants.

The Forum itself was ranked at 9.17 out of a possible 10 for excellence, the survey showed, with continued high marks for the forum's headquarters hotel, the Holiday Inn Gettysburg Battlefield, and scores of 9.4 and 9.5, respectively, from those who attended the "first-time" battlefield and Gettysburg town tours, and a score of 9.1 for the "What's New in Books" panel.

Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer was the highest-rated speaker at the 2004 Forum. Holzer's *Lincoln at Cooper Union* talk earned a 9.88 ranking. He was followed by: Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams at 9.29; John Y. Simon at 9.05; David Long at 8.96; Richard Norton Smith at 8.67; Gabor S. Boritt at 8.65; Joseph T. Glatthaar at 8.13; Daniel Mark Epstein at 8.02; and William C. Harris at 7.52.

In a joint statement, Holzer and Williams said: "As officers of the Forum whose lengthy podium time no doubt influenced the vote in our favor, and perhaps even inspired attendees to give us high marks simply to get us off stage, we hereby remove ourselves from the balloting this year and with great joy declare our friend John Y. Simon the most popular speaker at Lincoln Forum IX. Besides, if our wives had not given us '10s,' John Y. might have won without our assistance." Simon was the 2004 winner of the Richard N. Current Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement.

The average attendee traveled 548.4 miles to visit this year's event—some coming from as far as the West Coast and Canada, and others from as near as a mile from the Holiday Inn, and expressed high satisfaction with the *Lincoln Forum Bulletin*.

Once again, enrollee comments expressed praise for the speakers, topics, and camaraderie at the Forum. A sampling follows:

"Everyone was very nice and made my wife and me feel like peers."

"I find the Lincoln Forum educational, exciting, and a wellspring of places to refresh and grow in my knowledge of Lincoln."

"We thoroughly enjoy each year's Forum—the speakers are great, the people are very friendly and dedicated. Keep up the good work."

"I always enjoy coming to these events. I learn a lot and get a chance to visit with old friends."

"Most enjoyable. The length of the meeting afford time to talk with fellow students more and the quality of the talks is much appreciated."

"As always, the scholarship was first-rate. What makes the Forum unique is the friendly atmosphere that provokes the information....the inclusive environment."

"Many thanks for the great work you do in bringing together the Lincoln Forum. They get better and better each year."

"Another year of extraordinary scholarship, well-presented to an involved group. Always informative, always fun."

"The atmosphere, acceptance of non-historians, ands friendliness, is very appealing. Keep the same format as long as we can attract top speakers."

"We look forward to, and enjoy, each Lincoln Forum. They are excellent and professional. Keep up the good work and see you next year."

"This has been an exceptional symposium. Thank you."

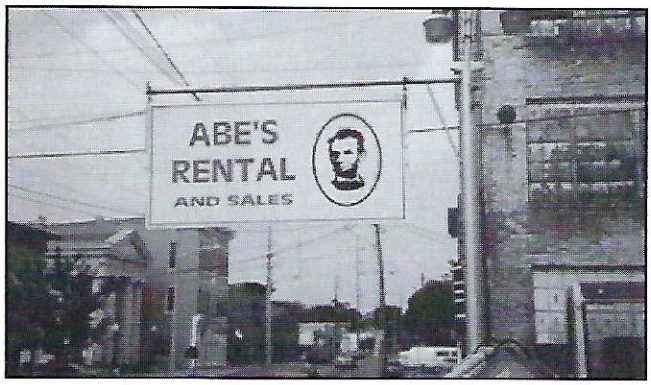
"Brilliant conference...consistently excellent...a very educational experience...sets high standards in the Lincoln community ...great mix of academic and popular authors...I do not think this organization has peaked yet!"

At the same time, the Forum received—and, as always—will take seriously, attendee suggestions for future forums.

Evaluators asked for more panel discussions—and fewer speeches within the annual panels (more time for audience questions). Others asked for more breaks to spend time with friends, better temperature control in the meeting/dining room, more speakers in the morning and fewer in the afternoon, improvements in the food, more events focusing on women and the war (this year's *Ladies' Fashions of the Civil War* program was well received), more music, and creation of a Lincoln Forum lapel pin.

One comment the Forum leadership took particularly to heart was the plea: "Please stop making it sound like all people who write on the assassination are nuts. There have been several scholarly books on the subject in the past few years, but it sounded like the book panelists were lumping everyone pretty much together."

While the 2004 panelists might beg to differ, it should be noted that Lincoln Forum X will be devoted entirely—and very seriously —to the subject of the Lincoln assassination.



Mr. Lincoln as Mr. Potato Head

Man: We were at dinner the other night ...
Woman: At McDonald's.
Man: ... and I almost ate Abraham Lincoln's head.
Woman: In french fry form.

McDonald's Super Bowl commercial this year told the tale of a couple who discovered a french fried potato with an irregular edge that seemed to resemble the Lincoln profile.

The couple become local sensations. Everyone pesters them to see the Lincoln likeness. Finally, they put the fry up for auction on the Internet — and a bidding war breaks out between a collector known as Gettysburg7 and a Lincoln enthusiast in Japan who admits to wearing a fake beard.

Visit http://lincolnfry.yahoo.com to see the commercial along with the T-shirts and other merchandise McDonald's is peddling.

The fried Lincoln is only the latest example in a stream of advertisements over a century and a half that have featured the Lincoln visage and sought to lever off his reputation.

A future Lincoln Forum Bulletin article will explore his exploitation as a commercial spokesman. Members who wish to contribute information on the subject should send e-mails to depea@charter.net.

Lincoln's Hope for Victory: Henry W. Halleck

By John F. Marszalek

The two men actually had some things in common. President Abraham Lincoln and General Henry W. Halleck were both successful attorneys, Lincoln in Illinois and Halleck in California. They both had an abiding interest in politics and had experienced losses in elections for the United States Senate in the 1850s. They each had a disheveled look about them, their clothes never quite appearing to fit. Their marriages are mysteries to later historians, although it seemed, at the time, that they each had married above themselves, Lincoln to the daughter of an influential politician/businessman, Halleck to a granddaughter of founding father, Alexander Hamilton. Both entered the Civil War as successes, Lincoln the president of the United States and Halleck a household word among military men because of his famous book on military theory.

When Abraham Lincoln called Henry W. Halleck to Washington in July 1862 to become the commander of all his armies, the two men had heard a great deal about each other, but they had never met. Unfortunately, no record has survived to tell us how the president and the general sized each other up that first time they shook hands. We do know, however, that Lincoln looked to Halleck to provide the military leadership that George B. McClellan had not been able to deliver. Halleck was Lincoln's hope for victory. Conversely, the general had a much simpler desire for the president. He wanted him to stay out of the way, so military men, not politicians, could make unimpeded decisions.

Early after Halleck's arrival in Washington, Lincoln told "Old Brains" that he had a problem that he wanted solved. George McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, was mired on the Virginia Peninsula, his great flanking movement against the Confederate army in a stall. Lincoln told Halleck to visit McClellan and then decide whether Little Mac should stay where he was or should back out and begin a new offensive in conjunction with John Pope's Army of Virginia.

It did not take Halleck long to decide. In his famous 1846 book which reflected the ideas of Antoine Henri Jomini, the great European military mind, Halleck had insisted that armies should always mass. Seeing McClellan's army on the peninsula miles away from John Pope's near Washington, Halleck instinctively knew he had to tell McClellan to leave the Peninsula and merge his army with Pope's. For his part, Lincoln was pleased that Halleck was taking charge.

It did not prove all that simple, however. Like so many other individuals in his earlier life whom Halleck came to see as a substitute for the birth father he had run away from as a teenager, McClellan overawed Halleck. Consequently, Old Brains could not bring himself to order Little Mac to move his army. He suggested; he pleaded; he cajoled; but he did not order definitively. The result was that McClellan did not move with the alacrity required to merge with Pope before Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson inflicted a severe defeat on Pope at Second Bull Run (Manassas) in August 1862.

This defeat was disastrous for Union arms, and it proved damaging to Halleck's psyche. He suffered a physical and emotional crisis. All the insecurities he had been masking all his life came to the surface. The man of enormous accomplishment in the pre-war and early war years became the hesitent general who refused to give orders, who insisted that his job as commanding general was only to advise field generals, not to order them.

Henry W. Halleck
Photo: Library of Congress

Lincoln watched this altogether unexpected disintegration with stunned disbelief. The successful man he had ordered East to bring decisive success to the Union military effort was demonstrating disastrous indecisiveness. Halleck, who had gained the nickname "Old Brains" because of his merging of knowledge and action in capturing strategic Corinth, Mississippi in May 1862, was now balking rather than leading. When Ambrose Burnside failed miserably at Fredericksburg in December, 1862 and wanted to try again in January 1863, Lincoln asked Halleck for his evaluation of the plan. Halleck refused. It was up to Burnside in the field to decide what to do, he said. Even when Burnside himself begged for help, Halleck again said no.

The president and the general, who at first saw greatness in each other, had now changed their minds. Lincoln came to call Halleck "a mere clerk," and Halleck saw Lincoln as a bungling politician. Had Halleck not opposed the anti-war platform on which George McClellan ran against Lincoln in the 1864 election, he would certainly have supported Little Mac. He did not think that Lincoln was up to the job of the presidency, so he supported him only by default.

Yet, the two men worked together for nearly two years. Lincoln could have fired Halleck at any time, but he kept him on. When once asked why he retained Halleck, Lincoln facetiously commented that he had to remain Halleck's friend, because no one else was. In truth, the two men never developed any kind of camaraderie, so friendship was certainly not an issue.

Lincoln retained Halleck as his commanding general because he continued to respect his military knowledge. He believed correctly that Halleck was a bright man with good ideas about fighting the war. The general had entered the Civil War as the epitome of the traditional strategist, but as the conflict wore on, Halleck expanded his thinking to see that change had to come. So, although Lincoln saw Halleck as a failure in the East, he recognized the successes that Grant and Sherman were making in the West, along the Mississippi River, using new ideas of war that Halleck had come to embrace and encourage.

As commanding general, Halleck dealt with Grant and Sherman as he did with the eastern generals. He gave them advice and then left it up to them to decide what to do. They thrived under this freedom and brought Lincoln the kind of victories in the West that he was looking for in the East. Still, the battles in Virginia, Maryland, and even Pennsylvania were geographically closer to Washington than those in Tennessee and Mississippi, and thus they were more menacing. A loss in the western theater might ultimately prove catastrophic, but it did not immediately endanger the nation's capital like the eastern battles did. Lincoln looked at what was happening in the war, and though his heart might be on the Mississippi River, his mind told him that he needed success in the East too. He experienced more criticism from newspapers and politicians about battles in Virginia than he ever did about engagements in the western theater.

As defeats mounted in the eastern theater, there was enormous pressure on Lincoln to do something. Some earlier historians have argued that Lincoln kept Halleck in his post as commanding general for so long because the president was able to use the general to deflect criticism. Surely, however, Lincoln wanted to win more than he desired a scapegoat around to take the blame for losing. Lincoln was always willing to give his generals a chance, and he had no compunction about firing them or keeping them on according to his needs. He fired the charismatic McClellan, whom the Army of the Potomac adored, fired a reluctant Burnside, and an arrogant Hooker. When Meade disappointed him by not catching and destroying Lee's army after Gettysburg, Lincoln vented his displeasure but kept him on anyway.

The reason why Lincoln retained Halleck as commander of all his armies, therefore, was because he genuinely respected the man's knowledge and kept hoping that he would bring victory to Union arms, as he had before. He also hesitated because he found himself in the perplexing situation of not knowing who could replace Halleck. U.S. Grant was prepared in March 1864 to become commanding general because of his previous experiences in the war. He did not have the requisite knowledge until then. Additionally, William T. Sherman would have been an ineffective commanding general. His dislike of and his inability to deal with political leaders indicated his lack of talent for overall command. Sherman would also have refused to come East and thus placed Lincoln in a terrible dilemma.

Who else was a possibility? There was always McClellan, but how could Lincoln have gone to him again? George G. Meade's deliberate style, his abrasive personality, and his arguments with newsmen would have made his appointment controversial and his tenure difficult. So too would the naming of Thomas have been problematic, his Virginia birth and his defensive military style major detriments. Sheridan was too young and too volatile for the job. Burnside certainly would not have worked, nor would have Hooker, Buell, or Rosecrans. Then there were Butler, Banks, Fremont, and so on down the list.

There was no one available in 1862 and 1863 other than Henry W. Halleck, and Lincoln knew it better than anyone else. As unfortunate a commander as Halleck proved to be, he knew what he was doing, and his hands off command style actually proved beneficial. It allowed Grant and Sherman to develop into the military leaders they became. They listened to Halleck's advice, and then they acted as they saw fit. They became the generals that Halleck said all his field commanders should be. Ironically, too, they became the kind of generals Lincoln had thought Halleck would be when he called him to Washington.

Even when Grant became commanding general, Lincoln did not unceremoniously dump Halleck despite his frustration with him. He created a new position, chief of staff, and Halleck shined in that post. Now he could give advice and implement someone else's orders. He could not have been happier. Lincoln had found the ideal spot for him.

In summary, Abraham Lincoln and Henry W. Halleck never became friends, they never forged a close cooperation, and they did not particularly respect each other. But they did work together longer than any similar pair in the Civil War. When all was said and done, Lincoln had nowhere else to turn until 1864. Halleck was indeed Lincoln's hope for victory.

Yet, when the president met with his military leaders at City Point near the end of the war to plan the conflict's last days, Halleck was not present and his absence created no stir. Lincoln met with Grant, Sherman, and Admiral David D. Porter, the leaders in the soon-to-be realized Union victory. For his part, Halleck was in Washington, deep in paperwork, feeling little stress, happily and importantly exercising his genuine and essential talents for administration.

John F. Marszalek is Giles Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Mississippi State University and a member of the Board of Advisors of the Lincoln Forum. His recently published biography is *Commander of All Lincoln's Armies, A Life of Civil War General Henry W. Halleck.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004.

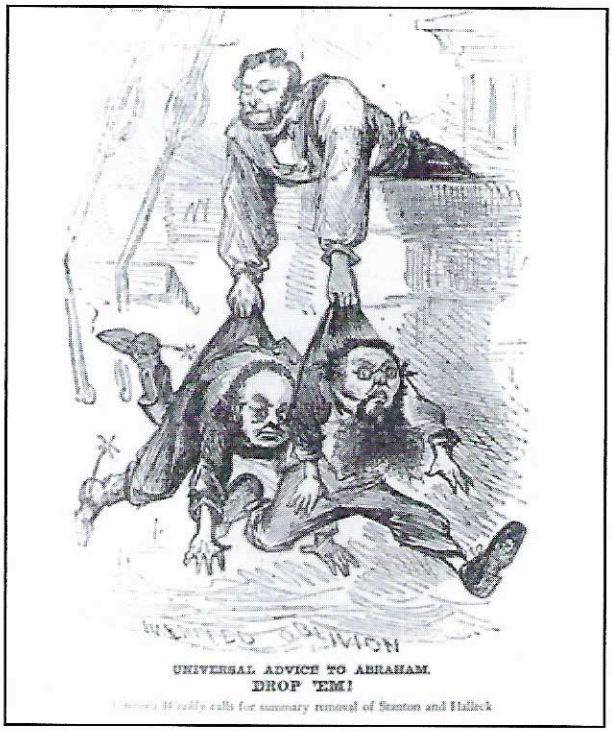


Photo: Harpers Weekly 10 January 1863

Forum Chairman Delivers "Gettysburg Address"

To commemorate the 141st anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's delivery of the Gettysburg Address last November 19, Lincoln Forum Chairman, Frank J. Williams, addressed an enthusiastic and respectful audience of students, scholars, Forum members, honored guests and townsmen on "Justice In War - Learning from Lincoln." The full text of his speech was sent to all Forum members earlier. Sponsored by the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania, the Civil War Institute and the National Park Service - Gettysburg National Military Park, Williams spoke on the battlefield only yards away from the actual site where Lincoln delivered his immortal speech. Speaking as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island, Williams brought home not only Lincoln's legacy but he tied it to current events while drawing lessons for today's world leaders.

Williams saw some ties to modern times when he remarked how Lincoln "inherited a nation divided," and then highlighted "four tenets of leadership" which "enabled a military neophyte to wage war to ensure peace." These tenets included that the nation "could not endure half slave and half free," and how Lincoln "committed all resources - political, economic and human - to the complete eradication of inequity." The second leadership rule he said found Lincoln holding true to his principles, even in the face of criticism. Third was when Lincoln saw that his philosophy of leadership mandated that he "valued nobility, honor and character in himself and in others." The fourth and final tenet of Lincoln's is one Williams has often referred to, the "focused pursuit of justice." The difference between law and justice, he said, is that law is an assemblage of rules developed from court opinions or legislative acts, while justice is "the integral relationship between the people and these rules."

Not hesitating to get into today's constitutional debate where the people are "walking a tense line between American security and personal liberty," of civil liberties and the balancing of the rights of enemy combatants with public safety, Williams recalled that this issue has often cropped up in the American saga - and most assuredly in the Civil War. "Lincoln may have been the first to realize that the laws of war are different" from what civilians are accustomed to, and he had to act in that spirit. He was "in many ways the father of the modern law of armed conflict."

The Chief Justice is perhaps uniquely qualified to discuss this because Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld appointed him to be one of five military appeals court judges to preside over the terrorist detainees question now being adjudicated and fast tracked in the courts as to its constitutionality. If the issue is declared constitutional, the judges will be able to start fulfilling their duties.

The two Lincoln's on the Battlefield: James Getty as Lincoln and Frank J. Williams, who prepares to deliver his Gettysburg Address —Photo by Joe Card

In his own "Gettysburg Address" last November, Williams referenced Lincoln and the modern law of armed conflict that the 16th President commissioned a Columbia University professor to codify. The Chief Justice said, "These laws of war that permit detention of enemy combatants and the temporary suspension of our normal judicial practices - such as speedy trials and other due process - remain difficult for Americans to conceptualize. But a new kind of war breeds a new reality - a time when security and national preservation may temporarily trump our accepted ideas of civil liberties. Lincoln knew how true this is."

Williams commented that Lincoln's "temporary suspension of 'some' liberties secured 'all' liberties for all time to come," and that whatever a few historians may say, "the world will always see [slavery as] the one overriding issue...."

Concluding his address, Williams said, "The issues of civil liberty and equal justice are more heated today than even in Lincoln's time because of the ever shrinking, ever more connected global village in which we all live....

"Lincoln emerges from the perennial controversy over civil liberties with a reputation for statesmanship. That may be the most powerful argument for his judicious application of executive authority during a national emergency. Whether our nation's leaders will continue to emerge similarly vindicated by history is yet to be determined. Lincoln's actions during the Civil War may offer no neat legal precedents for today's leaders but their political lesson is clear: our long-term goal is not simply to crush terror just as Lincoln suppressed a revolution based on slavery, but to save the nation, and our great democracy, as 'the last best hope of earth.'

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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:

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