



THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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KEN BURNS TO HELP FORUM LAUNCH LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL AT 13th ANNUAL GETTYSBURG SYMPOSIUM New Books, New Film Will be Previewed

Celebrated documentary filmmaker Ken Burns—whose award-winning 1990 PBS series, *The Civil War*, helped ignite a still-thriving renaissance of public interest in the Lincoln era—will deliver the keynote address at the Lincoln Forum when the group reconvenes in Gettysburg for its 13th annual symposium November 16-18. Burns, who has since produced widely acclaimed films on baseball, jazz, and World War II, among other subjects, has done as much as any historian of the 20th century to re-define and re-enshrine the Civil War in American memory. His multi-part 1990 series, accompanied by a lavish book co-authored with Ric Burns and Geoffrey C. Ward, is widely credited with helping to launch the current golden age of Civil War and Lincoln scholarship.

This year, as the Forum launches its two-year celebration of the Abraham Lincoln bicentennial, the symposium will feature a number of Forum favorites returning by popular demand to give talks on their latest book projects to an expected audience of 250. Attendees will also be given a preview glimpse, from another widely praised filmmaker, Philip Kunhardt, of the latest PBS series on Lincoln—his family’s forthcoming documentary on Lincoln memory featuring Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates.

“As we launch the Lincoln Bicentennial, we are proud to acknowledge—and to proudly feature—the role that both traditional and new media play in the continuing study of Abraham Lincoln,” commented Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams. “More than ever, Lincoln audiences appreciate, in fact require, access to new scholarship on the printed page, the television screen, and the internet alike. Our speakers this year will explore not only their own specialties, and their own newest contributions to the field, but will also help us to consider the ever-evolving nature of Lincoln’s reputation and legend and the old and new technologies that deliver this information. No subject is more important as we consider how Lincoln will be remembered on his 200th birthday and beyond. With a stellar roster of historians on hand, and the usual high interest in the event, this symposium promises to be one of the Forum’s best, and most significant, yet.”

Speakers at the 13th Lincoln Forum symposium will include Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer, who serves also as co-chairman of the U. S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, on his new *Abraham Lincoln: President-Elect*; Allen C. Guelzo of Gettysburg College on his widely praised new study of the Lincoln-Douglas debates; William Lee Miller on his new ethical biography, *President Lincoln: The Duty of a Statesman*; and Craig L. Symonds, emeritus professor at the U. S. Naval Academy, on his own widely anticipated new book, *Lincoln and His Admirals*.

In addition, the nation’s pre-eminent Ulysses S. Grant scholar, John Y. Simon, returns to engage the nation’s pre-eminent William T. Sherman authority, John F. Marszalek, on the intriguing subject: “Who Won Lincoln’s War: Grant or Sherman?” And Jean H. Baker, whose biography of Mary Todd Lincoln remains the standard reference after a generation, makes her latest appearance to re-appraise the Lincoln marriage with a lecture entitled, “Abraham and Mary: A 166th Anniversary Assessment.”



Ken Burns

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How the Pueblos of New Mexico will celebrate the bicentennial.



MESSAGE from the CHAIRMAN

In May, Virginia and I traveled to New Mexico where I was to speak at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. We were anxious to visit some of the Pueblo nations who lived under a system of self-government that was over 300 years old. Our primary reason was to look at one of the nineteen “governance canes” presented to the Pueblos in 1864 by President Abraham Lincoln as a symbol of Pueblo sovereignty – a nation within a nation. The Spanish Crown and Mexican government had also recognized the tribes’ sovereignty with symbolic canes since the 1620s. These canes are still revered – especially those presented by Lincoln through his Superintendent of Indian Affairs. The canes are rarely seen except when passed to each successive Governor (as the Chiefs are called) each year. In the interim, they are kept in the Governor’s house. Each cane was silver-crowned and bore an inscription, long since worn off, with the name of the Pueblo tribe, the year 1863, and the name of “A. Lincoln, Pres. U.S.A.” Virginia and I visited the Isleta Pueblo reservation to meet with Governor J. Robert Benavides and his First Lieutenant Governor, Max Zuni. As with all Pueblos, their economy has been much improved with casino gambling. We met the governor and lieutenant governor in a modern tribal administration building. Mr. Benavides, a former tribal policeman who saw active duty at the modern day Wounded Knee, could not have been more gracious, interrupting his day and asking the Lieutenant Governor to go by his home to fetch the canes. We held the Lincoln governance cane that is so treasured (Photo: Governor J. Robert Benavides, below, holding the canes of governance including the ebony cane presented by President Lincoln). When I asked Governor Benavides what his Pueblo nation will do for the bicentennial, he indicated, “hold a sacred ceremony in President Lincoln’s honor with the governance cane on February 12, 2009.”

University of New Mexico President David J. Schmidly, trained as a scientist, will also sponsor a joint bicentennial conference on Abraham Lincoln and one of his favorite historical figures, Charles Darwin, who was born, like Lincoln, on February 12, 1809.

As these stories demonstrate, Abraham Lincoln remains in the consciousness of all Americans – including native peoples.

Yet, despite the approach of Abraham Lincoln’s 200th, all is not well. In March, The Lincoln Financial Foundation announced it would, after 80 years, close its treasure, The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, on June 30, 2008. The Foundation is currently seeking a new home for its magnificent collection. The announcement, in the middle of the bicentennial year, could not have been more ill-timed. What will become of the 230,000 items, valued at \$20 million dollars, remains to be seen.

But our Lincoln Forum continues the celebration in earnest with a robust Forum XIII. 📖

Mark Williams

Chairman’s Note: for more information about the Abraham Lincoln governance canes, see “The Lincoln Canes of the Pueblo Governors by Robert S. Barton in the Winter 1953” *Lincoln Herald* (Vol. 55, No. 4).

Governor Benavides (on the right with the ebony cane from President Lincoln) and First Lieutenant Governor Zuni with governance canes.



Photo by Virginia Williams

LINCOLN PORTRAIT COMES HOME: THOMAS JOHNSTON'S "LOST" PAINTING BACK IN U.S.

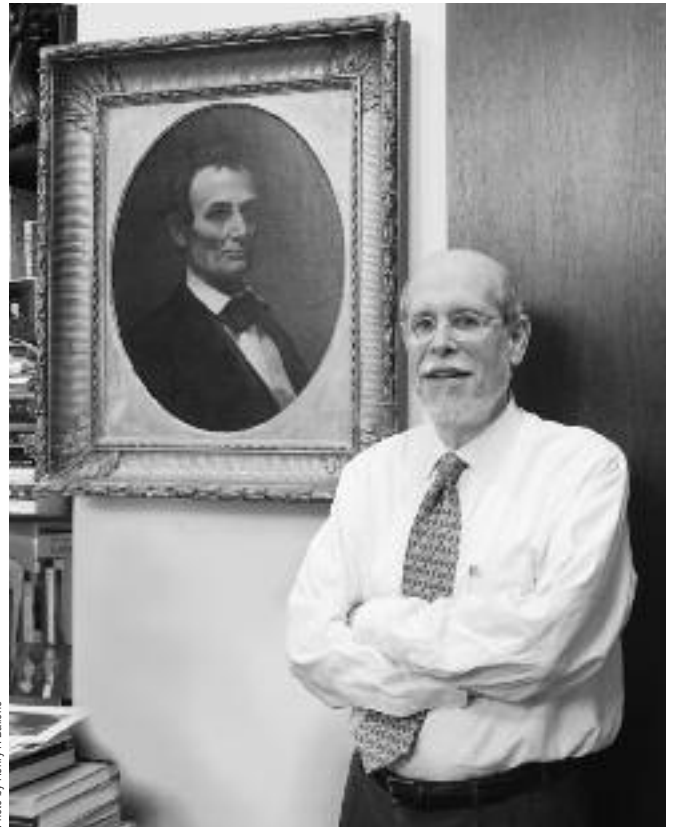
In the summer of 1860, Boston print publisher C. H. Brainard sent the young artist Thomas M. Johnston west to Springfield, Illinois, to make a portrait of the new Republican candidate for President, Abraham Lincoln. Brainard intended to enter the robust competition for Lincoln images with a distinctive lithograph based on life sittings.

When Johnston arrived in Lincoln's hometown, however, he was surprised to find he would not be the only artist undertaking such a project. Thomas Hicks of New York had preceded him, Boston's own Charles Alfred Barry had just completed a Lincoln portrait of his own, and several others were either working on life sketches or in the process of applying for sittings. Johnston had no choice but to dive into the competition and produce something unique.

In fact, he did, producing a rosebud-lipped crayon sketch that he toted back to Boston and submitted to lithographer Francis D'Avignon for adaptation. Later that summer, Brainard published the result—but apparently without much enthusiasm. In fact, only one copy of the result is known to exist, and the original crayon on which it was based long ago vanished. It is likely the result was judged a failure. Publisher Brainard spent so much money on the enterprise, and got so little financial reward in return, that he had to surrender a huge batch of prints of Lincoln's rival—Stephen A. Douglas—merely to keep his business afloat.

But only weeks later, Brainard issued a new Lincoln print portrait, based on an altogether different likeness by the same Thomas M. Johnston, to whom he apparently gave a second chance. This time, the image bore an unmistakable resemblance to an 1858 photograph of Lincoln long in circulation. However derivative this second effort, the impression was far more handsome than the first, and based on the fact that many copies have survived to the 21st century, apparently won a significant audience that campaign season. Johnston was apparently proud enough of the result to add a bold "TMJ" to the image to claim authorship.

But like the first sketch from life, Johnston's original subsequently vanished. For years, lacking knowledge of the similarly lost sketch, scholars like Stefan Lorant mistook it for the original made in Springfield. But just a few years ago, the painting made a surprise re-appearance—surfacing in a magazine illustration, where it could be seen peeking out from the wall of a U. S. ambassador's residence in Europe, where it had been sent as part of an ongoing art-loan program to our foreign embassies.



**Thomas M. Johnston's Lincoln—
and its temporary custodian—
at The Metropolitan Museum of Art.**

Now, at last, the painting has returned home. Its owner, Elaine Hirsch Ellis, recently brought it to Harold Holzer's office, where it now hangs while museum officials and historians consider its next destination. For the time being, Thomas M. Johnston's 1860 painting of Lincoln—perhaps not authentically from life, but certainly based in part on the artist's precious life experiences with the subject in Springfield—reposes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, back home from its long exile abroad, and hopefully soon to find a permanent home in the country where it was produced. The mystery of the "lost" Johnston has been solved. ■



In Memory of Chuck Platt, a memorial fund has been established to promote the study of Abraham Lincoln.

If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation send to:

The Lincoln Forum Educational Fund, c/o Russell Weidman, Treasurer, The Lincoln Forum,
6009 Queenston St., Springfield, VA, 22152.

The Forum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization; donations to the fund are tax deductible.

FORUM HISTORY: LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD, AT AGE 13

Introduction

For more than a decade, the Lincoln Forum has provided to its hundreds of members, in the form of symposia and publications alike, both the educational benefits of historical research at the highest levels of accomplishment, and the fraternal benefits of annual events offering the collegial exchange of ideas and enthusiasm. As it approaches the midpoint of its second decade, the organization pauses to account for the past and look to the future.

The Forum began—and has sustained—a commitment to providing scholarly and organizational excellence at the lowest possible cost to its membership, making the experience of learning within the Lincoln community affordable, enlightening, and enjoyable.

Originally founded to provide an East Coast-based association that would feature historians and collectors at modest annual meetings, the Lincoln Forum began its organizational life as a loosely structured group associated with the Civil War Education Association, a Virginia-based tour group, with local assistance from the Civil War Institute of Gettysburg College. The Forum then worked briefly with the Association of Civil War Round Tables, receiving organizational help from the late Jerry Russell, founder and leader of that group. By its third year, with the support and expertise of its own part-time administrator, the Forum developed the in-house ability to sustain and build its membership association, promote itself, and organize and stage its annual symposia.

Ever since, the Forum has crafted, promoted, and organized annual meetings of up to 300 participants in Gettysburg, growing into one of the largest Lincoln organizations in the country, with an enthusiastic repeat membership.

Annual Symposia

The Lincoln Forum's annual symposium occurs in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania each year between November 16 and November 18, allowing attendees to enjoy the ambience of one of the most historic villages in America and then, on November 19, to participate in yearly, on-site public observances of the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and the nearby annual meetings of the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania.

During its first decade, symposium themes have included "Lincoln at Gettysburg: Man, Myth, and Monument" (1998), "Abraham Lincoln: Commander-in-Chief" (1999), "Lincoln 2000: New Insights for the New Century" (2000), "Lincoln and the Legacy of Freedom" (2001), "Abraham Lincoln's Image in History and Popular Culture" (2003), "Electing and Re-electing Lincoln: Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of the Campaign of 1864" (2004), and "The 140th Anniversary of the Lincoln Assassination" (2005). This year—in 2008—the Forum launches a two-year observance of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial.

The Forum's annual symposia have featured presentations by most of the greatest historians of Lincoln and the Civil War era, including Pulitzer Prize, Bancroft Prize, and Lincoln Prize winners, delivering their original lectures as part of an intensive two-and-a-half day program of seminars, lunches, and dinners.

Among the scholars who have participated memorably are Richard Nelson Current, David Herbert Donald, Mark E. Neely Jr., James M. McPherson, Gary Gallagher, Jean H. Baker, Garry Wills, John Hope Franklin, Allen C. Guelzo, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Craig L. Symonds, John F. Marszalek, Barry Schwartz, William Lee Miller, Lucas Morel, David E. Long, Daniel Mark Epstein, Gerald

Prokopowicz, Frank J. Williams, Harold Holzer and countless others. Popular historians, including Michael Beschloss, John C. Waugh, and Jay Winik, have also been featured, as have collectors like Louise Taper, and specialists in such fields as military history, political history, iconography, and other important areas of study. Performances, including concerts by Civil War musical groups, a gala reading by actor Sam Waterston, and the annual recitation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as well as his other words by leading Lincoln re-enactor James Getty, have also become regular Forum activities, as have opportunities to hear filmmakers like David Grubin, artists like Wendy Allen and Richard Wengenroth, and novelists like Jeff Shaara.

The Forum encourages association with Lincoln sites around the country by showcasing, as session moderators, representatives of such attractions as the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne and the Lincoln Home National Site in Springfield.

Each session of the Lincoln Forum symposium concludes with an ample question-and-answer session that encourages audience participation, and welcomes dialogue. At least one session of each Forum is devoted to a wide-ranging panel discussion, featuring a free flow of ideas and especially ample opportunities for questions from attendees.

Symposium attendees have also been offered annual Gettysburg (and once, Antietam) battlefield tours with professional guides, and in the symposium's ten-year history have explored every day and every nuance of what is arguably the most significant battle in Civil War history. In 2007, the Forum was given an exclusive pre-opening tour of a site whose rehabilitation it began championing in the 1990s: the Lincoln summer cottage at the Soldiers' Home in Washington.

Award of Achievement

Since 1993, the Forum has conferred an annual award of achievement as a means of recognizing contributions to the study of Abraham Lincoln by historians and public figures alike, while generating additional public interest in the Forum and its mission.

To date, the Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement has been presented to: historian Gabor Boritt (1996), C-SPAN founder and CEO Brian Lamb (1997), historian John Hope Franklin (1998), the late U. S. Senator Paul Simon (1999), historian David Herbert Donald (2000), author Garry Wills (2001), historian James M. McPherson (2002), actor Sam Waterston (2003), historian John Y. Simon (2004), and sculptor John McClarey (2005), Doris Kearns Goodwin (2006), and Jeff Shaara (2007). In addition, special awards of recognition have been presented to Richard Nelson Current (2000), for whom the award was named, and the Forum's Founding Chairman, Frank J. Williams (2005).

The awards, in the form of a sculpted McClarey maquette, *Freedom River*, have become recognized in the historical community as an important acknowledgment of exceptional contributions to the public appreciation for Lincoln and American history, and their presentation has been widely covered by the media, including broadcast on C-SPAN.

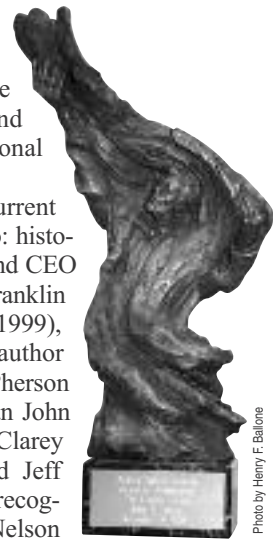


Photo by Henry F. Ballone

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Publications

The Forum has developed and maintained a publishing program that recognizes its commitment to keep its members informed of the group's activities, as well as wider developments in the field, and concurrently to provide scholarly contributions that will take a permanent place on the historical bookshelf for readers throughout the country.

The group publishes a twice-annual *Bulletin* that offers news about future symposia, new books, and advance discussions of future Forums. In recent years, this once-simple publication has been greatly enhanced, re-designed, and converted into a much-appreciated membership feature as well as a widely anticipated journal of Lincoln activities and trends.

Additionally, the Forum has sought to collect its strongest lectures and publish them in book form.

The first such volume, *The Lincoln Forum: Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg, and the Civil War*, co-edited by John Y. Simon, Harold Holzer, and William D. Pederson, was issued by Savas Publishing in 1999, and featured essays by William C. Davis, Sandra Day O'Connor, Richard N. Current, Harold Holzer, Edna Greene Medford, John Y. Simon, and Frank J. Williams.

The second in the series, *The Lincoln Forum: Rediscovering Abraham Lincoln*, edited by John Y. Simon and Harold Holzer, was published by Fordham University Press in 2002, and contains chapters by James M. McPherson, John Y. Simon, Gary Gallagher, Craig L. Symonds, John F. Marszalek, Gerald J. Prokopowicz, J. Tracy Power, Frank J. Williams, Jean H. Baker, Iver Bernstein, Barry Schwartz, Hans L. Trefousse, and Harold Holzer. The much-honored Civil War historian James I. Robertson, Jr., called the collection "a tasty hors d'oeuvre for scholars and students alike."

A third collection of Lincoln Forum lectures, *Lincoln Revisited: New Insights from the Lincoln Forum*, was published by Fordham University Press in 2007, featuring essays by: Joseph R. Fornieri, Lucas E. Morel, John Y. Simon, Harold Holzer, Matthew Pinsker, Frank J. Williams, Jean Baker, Daniel Mark Epstein, John F. Marszalek, William Lee Miller, Jean Edward Smith, Geoffrey Perret, Craig L. Symonds, Michael Vorenberg, Ronald C. White Jr., William C. Harris, Garry Wills, and Edward Steers Jr.

A fourth volume on the Lincoln assassination is currently being prepared for Fordham University Press for publication in the spring of 2010 for the 145th anniversary of the sixteenth president's murder.

Scholarships

The Forum has consistently encouraged students to participate in Forum activities, offering a wide range of opportunities to attend symposia, deliver student papers, and compete for scholarship awards in an annual essay contest.

Under a program to encourage diversity and love of history, the Forum provides scholarships to the annual symposium, at no cost, to students from Howard University, under the supervision of Howard Professor Edna Greene Medford, a member of the Forum Board of Advisors.

Over the years, the Forum has also invited student speakers to lecture to the symposium on occasion, creating a synergistic partnership with Gettysburg College to attract these young scholars.

The Forum's Platt Family Essay Contest, funded by the Forum's founding Treasurer, the late Charles D. Platt, and administered and judged by a jury of Forum Advisors, has attracted hundreds of entries over the past few years, offering prizes of \$1,000 and \$500 to well-reasoned, well-crafted compositions on Lincoln and his meaning for today. These essays are routinely published as supplements to the biannual Lincoln Forum *Bulletin*.

The Forum's most recent initiative in the scholarship field was the launch, in 2004, of an annual scholarship for a teacher. In exchange for assistance in organizing and staffing the symposium, the Forum offers free tuition and meals.

Sponsorships

The Lincoln Forum supports and co-sponsored Lincoln activities throughout the country in order to encourage the year-round study of Civil War-era history, and to provide its members with year-round activities between annual November symposia.

For example, the Forum serves as official co-sponsor, providing financial support as well, for presidential symposia created every three years by The International Lincoln Center, Louisiana State University at Shreveport.

The Forum has also served as co-sponsor of the annual Symposium and family weekends at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia, marking the anniversary of the Battle of Hampton Roads and the launching of high-tech naval warfare developed in the Lincoln administration.

The Forum also entertains contributions to Lincoln activities and projects around the country, including support for the ongoing rehabilitation of the railroad station at which Abraham Lincoln arrived in Gettysburg the evening before delivering his Gettysburg Address.

Outreach

The Lincoln Forum has utilized many forms of outreach to maintain and expand communication with its membership—and with potential members and Lincoln enthusiasts as well.

In addition to its biannual *Bulletin*, the Forum has maintained a national mailing list of members who are apprised regularly of the group's activities and given early opportunities to register for meetings.

The Forum has developed publicity campaigns, in both print and broadcast, to promote Forum symposia and honor its award winners, and has advertised widely in Civil War publications to attract new members. On four occasions, C-SPAN has aired many Lincoln Forum symposium highlights to its national audience of history enthusiasts.

The Forum's web site, recently re-designed, offers up-to-date information on the organization, its symposium, and its leading members' Lincoln-related activities. The Forum has developed an email list that enables the organization to send instant messages on upcoming broadcast, symposium, and other news to its growing and geographically diverse membership.

Nearing its 15th anniversary, the Lincoln Forum, its executive leadership and Board of Advisors, continues to extend the hand of fraternity and the opportunity to learn and explore the American past to a growing roster of enthusiasts, scholars, and students. ■

LINCOLN FORUM MEMORIES: AN AL



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Everett & Antigoni Ladd receive the People's Choice Award for Their Unsung Service to the Lincoln Forum from Linda Wheeler & Budge Weidman



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Tina Grim, Welcome to Gettysburg



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Betty Anselmo & Val Hallenbeck



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

George Buss, Eileen Mackevich & Brooks Davis



Photo by Dave Walker

Dale Jirik, Fred Priebe, Dave Walker, Jim Getty & James Hayney, Mr. Lincoln Goes to School



Photo by Joe Card

Henry F. Ballone & Frank Williams



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Virginia Williams & Marylou Symonds



Photo by Tim Branscum

James Getty, Mr. Lincoln speaks



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Tim Branscum, Malcom Garber & Jerry Desko



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Part of the Lincoln Ladies Sewing Circle



Photo by Tim Branscum

Don McCue, Announces the Winner of the 2007 Platt Family Essay Contest



Photo by Tim Branscum

Daniel W. Stowell, Burruss Carnahan, Mark E. Steiner, James F. Simon, Panel: Lincoln and the Law

BUM OF THE 12TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM



Rodney Davis,
Reconsidering Herndon



Photo by Tim Branscum

Attendees enjoy lecture following dinner



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Doug Wilson,
Reconsidering Herndon



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Frank Williams & Harold Holzer present to Jeff Shaara, The Richard N. Current Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Budge & Russ Weidman



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Joe Card & Dave Walker



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Bob Zeller & Harold Holzer



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Tom Wheeler, "Mr. Lincoln's T-Mails"



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

John C. Waugh, Bob Zeller & Dan Boritt



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

William C. Harris, Lincoln's Role in the Presidential Campaign of 1860



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Craig Symonds at Fort Stevens



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Edith Holzer at the Visitor Center



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Jean Edward Smith, Presidential Leadership in Wartime: Lincoln and Roosevelt



Photo by Henry F. Ballone

Stan Domosh, Gabor & Liz Boritt



Photo by Tim Branscum

President Lincoln's Cottage

Lincoln and The American Dream

By Norton Garfinkle

The Lincoln bicentennial in 2009 offers the opportunity to review the crucial role Abraham Lincoln played in building our modern American democracy. There was no other time in our history when political leadership was more important than the three years that led to the Civil War. The Civil War was the great crisis of American history. What better time than now to review Lincoln's leadership in the onset of this crisis.

We so fully understand Abraham Lincoln's contribution to our nation's moral beliefs, that we have neglected his role in shaping our uniquely American middle-class economic vision. Because the moral issues surrounding the slavery question are so clear to us today, there is a tendency to understand the origins of the American Civil War solely in this familiar moral context. In actuality, the Civil War was fought not just about slavery, but about what kind of economy the nation would have. It was a moral clash, and it was also a clash between two economic and social systems.

Abraham Lincoln was not only a moral leader; he was also a political philosopher and an economic realist. Lincoln's genius lay in his ability to see the relationship between the workaday, economic realities of American life and the nation's highest moral and political principles. In Lincoln's mind, the opportunity "to improve one's condition" was an essential feature of the Declaration of Independence's claim that human beings have unalienable rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness". To Lincoln, the economic, moral, and political elements were inextricably intertwined. Together, they represented what is distinctively American about our economy and democracy. "I have never had a feeling politically," Lincoln said, "that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence." The reason that "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" was worth preserving, and even worth fighting a war to preserve, was precisely that it offered the opportunity to each American "to improve one's condition."

More than any other President, Lincoln is the father of the American Dream that all Americans should have the opportunity through hard work to build a comfortable, middle-class life. For Lincoln, liberty meant above all the right of individuals to the fruits of their own labor, seen as a path to prosperity. "To [secure] to each labourer the whole product of his labour, or as nearly as possible," he wrote, "is a most worthy object of any good government." The real evil of the Southern slave system was the denial of this economic right. Indeed, Lincoln insisted that African-Americans were entitled to the same economic rights as all other Americans, even putting these ahead of such political rights as full citizenship or voting rights.

The purpose of the United States was to "clear the path" for the individual to labor and get ahead. Lincoln understood that this purpose was challenged by the slave based, aristocratic, economic and social system of the Southern states. It was this challenge that created a house divided: virtually two separate nations based on very different economic structures. He saw "saving the Union" not simply as a political effort but as a moral imperative to secure for the America of the future the middle class society of the Northern states.

For Lincoln, American liberty was intimately connected with economic opportunity. It was economic opportunity that gave liberty meaning. The universal promise of opportunity was for Lincoln the "philosophical" core of America; it was the essence of the American system. "Without the Constitution and the Union," he wrote, "we could not have attained . . . our great prosperity." But the Constitution and the Union were not the "primary cause" of America. "There is something back of these, entwining itself more closely about the human heart. That something, is the principle of 'Liberty to all'—the

principle that clears the path for all—gives hope to all—and, by consequence, enterprize, and industry to all." "The prudent, penniless beginner in the world," Lincoln wrote, "labors for wages awhile, saves a surplus with which to buy tools or land for himself, then labors on his own account another while, and at length hires another new beginner to help him. This is the just and generous and prosperous system which opens the way to all, gives hope to all, and consequent energy and progress and improvement of condition to all." This was, for Lincoln, the American Dream, the *raison d'être* of America, and the unique contribution of America to world history.

President Abraham Lincoln was the first American leader to fully grasp that this economic opportunity to rise to the middle class was, in truth, the defining feature of America, its very essence and its justification for existing. He was the first to fully grasp the meaning of what was later called the American Dream.



Lincoln in 1861

The freedom guaranteed by the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution was of value, in Lincoln's view, precisely because it enabled humble individuals to attain an independent, middle-class standard of living by the work of their own hands. America was the first nation on earth to offer this opportunity of economic advancement to all, even to the humblest beginner, and this was what made the nation unique and worth preserving. Ultimately, it was the largest reason for Lincoln's willingness to fight the Civil War.

As he noted in a message to Congress in March 1861, at the outset of the Civil War: "On the side of the Union it is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men—to lift artificial weights from all shoulders—to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all—to afford all an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life." Or as he said while campaigning for president in 1860: "I want every man to have the chance—and I believe a black man is entitled to it—in which he can better his condition—when he may look forward and hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him! That is the true system."

Perhaps the most fundamental question of all was the meaning of the Union itself. Only with great difficulty had the Framers of the Constitution yoked the thirteen separate former colonies into a "United States." Today, time and long usage have led us to think of our fifty "states" as something akin to provinces, administrative and geographic units of a larger, unified nation. Only perhaps at our quadrennial political conventions, when the "great state of Maryland" or the "great state of Illinois" casts its votes for presidential nominees, are we reminded of the once independent character of these entities. When Americans before Lincoln's era heard the word "state," they heard a strong echo of the word as it is used today in the field of international relations—the way in which we say that France, Germany, or the United Kingdom are "states."

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Lincoln and the American Dream • continued from page 8

“United States” was not yet a singular, but a plural noun. Politicians routinely spoke of “these United States,” meaning independent, sovereign states unified under an agreed-on federal government. But whether this federal government was a strong federation or a loose confederacy remained in dispute. Many important politicians found themselves on different sides of that question, depending on the issue at stake. Even figures such as the Kentuckian Henry Clay, perhaps the nation’s leading proponent of a stronger and more active federal government during Lincoln’s first decades in politics, still had a strong sense of “states’ rights.”

In one sense the political issues that dominated Lincoln’s age were quite different from those of our era. In another sense, they were somewhat the same. Many of the debates of the 1830s and 1840s were debates about whether there should be “more” or “less” government—meaning the federal government. Lincoln—despite or rather because of his ardent belief in individual economic opportunity—was firmly on the side of those who favored “more.”

Lincoln’s vision came from his personal experiences. His perspective was that of a man starting humbly who had worked his way up the social and economic ladder by sheer discipline, persistence, and force of will; it was a perspective he never lost. It shaped his core values. “I hold the value of life is to improve one’s condition,” he told an audience in Cincinnati in 1861. “Whatever is calculated to advance the condition of the honest, struggling laboring man, I am for that thing.” Or as he sympathetically told a delegation of striking workers who visited the White House in 1863: “I know the trials and woes of workmen. I have always felt for them.”

When Lincoln presented this economic vision, he did so not out of a sense of nationalism but because in very practical terms, he thought specific programs would aid ordinary working people, people like himself, those striving to become, and remain, middle-class. As an inhabitant of a still undeveloped frontier state, an Illinois bereft of decent roads and dependably navigable rivers—to say nothing of canals and railroads—he saw a need for government to act, to provide the infrastructure that would allow the expansion of internal commerce, to guarantee a sound currency to enable economic transactions, and to protect home-grown manufacturing from the threat of (mostly British) manufactured goods from abroad. The government’s job was to “clear the path” for its citizens to get ahead. The whole nation had witnessed the vast benefits that accrued to the citizens of New York from the construction of the Erie Canal. Lincoln wanted something of the same for his own citizens of Illinois.

At bottom, there was a philosophical logic to Lincoln’s economic vision. The founding principle of the nation was liberty. The purpose of liberty was to enable individuals to improve their condition. The role of government therefore was to serve that central purpose by, as Lincoln liked to put it, “clearing the path” for men to achieve economic success. “Clearing the path” for Lincoln did not mean government “getting out of the way.” Clearing the path was a frontier metaphor, suggestive of the hard work of clearing forest for a farm or a road, pulling stumps out of the ground with teams of oxen. “The legitimate object of government,” he wrote in a note around 1854, “is to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they can not, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves.” Like political philosophers from the time of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, Lincoln saw the first purpose of government as providing for physical security and the common defense. But he also believed that government should take positive action to promote the common good, “There are many such things—some of them exist independently of the injustice of the world. Making and maintaining roads, bridges, and the like; providing for the helpless young and afflicted; common schools; and disposing of deceased men’s property are instances.” He saw “charities, pauperism, orphanage” as government responsibilities. Not that Lincoln believed government’s role should be intrusive; he thought it

should be limited. But by the standards of his time, when the federal government was minimal, and even state governments often had few resources at their disposal, he was in favor of activist government—on the grounds that the whole purpose of the United States was to serve the individual’s economic opportunity and that government should play its proper role in assisting this effort. His major undertaking when he entered the Illinois state assembly was to push through an ambitious package of “internal improvements,” partially state-financed roads, bridges, canals, and railroads.

It was this active role of government that Lincoln alluded to in the most famous phrase from his Gettysburg Address. The essence of the United States was not merely government “of the people” and “by the people,” but also government “for the people,” government in an active role clearing the path for its citizens to advance economically.

As president, Lincoln presided over measures decisively strengthening the role of the government in American economic life. In the process he created what Leonard P. Curry has called “a blueprint for modern America.”

Lincoln signed into law, the National Banking Act, which not only revived the national bank, but gave the country its first unified currency and created a national system of chartered national banks, replacing a system in which states and state banks created their own money. The Homestead Act provided land inexpensively to settlers willing to migrate west. Lincoln raised tariffs to encourage the development of domestic manufacturing. He chartered the first transcontinental railroad, which would link the country from East to West Coasts, the greatest “internal improvement” up to that time. He signed the Morrill Act, which provided states with grants of land to establish colleges, designed to provide useful education to help “clear the path” for ordinary people to achieve the American economic dream. These colleges became the basis of the nation’s state university system. All were embodiments of what Lincoln believed to be government’s legitimate and vital role.

The challenges facing Lincoln are in some respects very different from the issues that perplex us today. But Lincoln, as our most clear-eyed president, was the first to fully understand what America is all about and to tell us so in unflinching clear terms. He lived in a “house divided” between two ways of life. On the one side, was a middle-class society, honoring labor and offering multiple opportunities for economic advancement by ordinary people, where government was assuming an increasingly constructive role in “clearing the path” for economic success. On the other side, was a society rigidly divided between rich and poor, ensuring through law and oppression that labor remained devalued and cheap, dedicated to an unfettered market, neglectful of the public sector and offering few opportunities for ordinary people, and none at all for a whole race of human beings. For Lincoln, the choice was never a hard one. He consecrated his life to ensuring that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the face of the earth.” And he was willing to fight a civil war to sustain this goal.

Lincoln was unwavering in his commitment to preserving the American Dream for future generations. Revisiting “Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War” shows how important it is for Americans to select wise leaders and support wise decisions. In this bicentennial celebration of Lincoln’s life and work, modern Americans can be grateful for the guidance Lincoln provided to the ongoing future of American democracy.

Norton Garfinkle is the Chairman of The Future of American Democracy Foundation. He is the author of *The American Dream vs. The Gospel of Wealth: The Fight for a Productive Middle-Class Economy* (Yale University Press, 2006), editor with Daniel Yankelovich of *Uniting America: Restoring the Vital Center to American Democracy* (Yale University Press, 2006) and editor of *Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War* (D.C. Heath & Co., 1958). ■



Photo by Henry F. Balone

JASON EMERSON WINS ACCOLADES AS TOP FORUM LECTURER OF 2007

Jason Emerson—who lectured on his first book at his very first Lincoln Forum lecture in November 2007—has won the highest rating of all the speakers who appeared at Lincoln Forum XII.

Based on the 100 evaluation sheets submitted by Forum attendees, Emerson achieved a rating of 9.65 out of a possible 10. National Archives leader Tom Wheeler, another first-time lecturer, followed closely with a 9.53, novelist Jeff Shaara, who delivered the keynote as he earned the 2007 Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement, achieved a rating of 9.50, Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams scored a 9.32, and photography specialist Bob Zeller a 9.18. It marked the first time that five speakers had been rated above 9. Historians William C. Harris, Douglas L. Wilson, Rodney Davis, and Jean Edward Smith were all ranked above 8.

Overall, the 2007 attendees ranked the 12th annual meeting at a high 9.3, although for the first time, hotel accommodations and meal service fell to a ranking below 8. The panel on Lincoln and the law scored a 9.6, and the 2007 tour to Fort Stevens and the Soldiers' Home a 9.3. Tour guides Frank Williams, Harold Holzer, Craig Symonds, and Matthew Pinsker were all lauded by the participants. The 2007 enrollees traveled an average of 588 miles to attend Lincoln Forum XII—from as far away as 3,000 miles and from as close as one mile, literally around the corner.

"I have enjoyed this symposium more than any other which we have attended," commented one attendee. "Everyone welcomed me even though I was a first-time delegate," echoed another. A regular agreed: "I thought this was one of the best Forums because of the closeness of the people who were involved in the set-up of the Forum. The speakers were very easy to approach and talk to about their topics...and we have Abraham Lincoln to thank."

Wrote an educator attending his initial symposium: "As a first-time attendee I have been very impressed with the overall program." And one of the teachers who participated this year added: "I work primarily with K-12 teachers and attend conferences and professional development for educators. This was very different, and I enjoyed the format and presentations. My mind was spinning as I was not only trying to take in as much as possible but also trying to think about how to share this information with both teachers and students. Although I am a newbie and far (far, far) from a Lincoln scholar, I feel welcome and engaged."

"I'm hooked," cheered yet another first-timer. "I'll definitely be back and already look forward to next year."

So does the Lincoln Forum. **1**

Lincoln at Gettysburg

Lincoln Forum attendees view recently discovered stereo view purporting to show Lincoln arriving at Gettysburg's soldiers' cemetery on November 19, 1863. The long-ignored photo was unveiled at the Forum—and earned national headlines.



Photo by Henry F. Balone



Above is the enlarged view of the full frame shown below.



IN MEMORIAM

The Lincoln Forum joins their family and friends in mourning the passing of its treasured Advisors and members:

**Robert Bruce
George Craig
Merrill Hoefler
Albert Jerman
John K. Lattimer, M. D.
David Schleidt
Clariss Stiller
Fred Willmer**

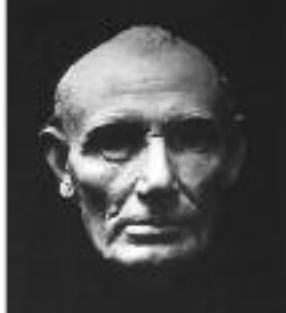
The Abraham Lincoln Plaster Life mask of 1860

By Dr. Mark D. Zimmerman

“This is Lincoln, look at those brows, they shadowed the dark eyes. Themselves touched by a wand of more than might, that saw through the dull mist of years. Before whose gaze a war-like pageant passed too terrible for the gentle hearts of men to bear, made still more terrible by millions of pleading hands in chains. Great lips made immortal. No less weighty than Isaiah told. No less deep in faith than those brought forth by the measuring of Job and no less sad with press of human sorrow than the foreboding wails of Jeremiah.” So impressed was he after seeing the Abraham Lincoln plaster life mask of 1860, that the sculptor, writer, and M.I.T. teacher, Truman Howe Bartlett, wrote those words in the 1870’s.



Abraham Lincoln in 1860



Lincoln plaster life mask
cast in April 1860

In 1858, Leonard Wells Volk first asked Abraham Lincoln, during the Lincoln-Douglas debates, to visit him at his Chicago studio. Volk intended to create a bust of Lincoln as he had for Stephen A. Douglas. The Illinois politician did not manage to see Volk for a week of morning visits until April of 1860. A plaster mold would be required in order to produce the subsequent mask necessary to study Lincoln’s unusual features. The mold was created by applying warm and wet plaster to Lincoln’s face. A less than agreeable process, Lincoln’s hair was uncomfortably pulled while removing the solid plaster mold one hour later. Into this mold, Volk poured plaster, producing the positive image mask. Little did Volk realize that he would create a mask that would become an American treasure.

After 1870, the mask would make its way from Rome to New York and back to Paris. Many of the greatest French sculptors such as Rodin, Fremiet and Aube would find amazement in the masks unusual structure. Most of them, who were graced by it’s rough elegance, would not know that it was of an American, much less the 16th president of the United States.


John Hay, Lincoln’s assistant and private secretary, once stated: “Lincoln’s face was difficult to describe from any angle.” Childhood trauma, in the form of a horse kick to the face, insured the irregularities of the adult Lincoln face. The plaster mask incorporates all of this.

Copies of the mask were made by a master plaster craftsman in New York in 1887-1888 under the guidance of sculptor Augustus Saint Gaudens. These copies were to be sold to a select group of New York notables and philanthropists for \$50 per copy with the total number sold limited to only 33. The original mask was then purchased from Volk for his asking price of \$1,500. Truman Howe Bartlett was incensed at the closed nature of the offering and called it: “a barbaric and unjust ridiculous condition.” He felt that Volk purposely kept the knowledge of the Lincoln face

away from the public, and, as proof of his inability to even understand its value sold it for the meager sum of \$1,500. The original mask was placed in the Smithsonian Institution in 1888. Of the thirty three original copies, only slightly more than half exist today in private collections and museums.

Almost all of the great Lincoln sculptors have depended on Volk’s mask to assist them. As sculptor Avard Tennyson Fairbanks (1897-1987) put it: “Volk left a priceless legacy for future sculptors. Virtually every sculptor and artist uses the Volk mask of Lincoln.....it is the most reliable document of the Lincoln face, and far more valuable than photographs, for it is the actual form.” According to Gutzon Borglum, who used the mask extensively in the production of Mount Rushmore and other Lincoln sculpture, “I have never found a better head than his, and I have never seen a face so mature, so developed in its use of his expression. You will find written in his face literally all of the complexity of his great nature.”

To some, the face preserved by the mask represents a man at the epicenter of the defining moment for a nation. A face, that became the emblem of its success. There is an incomparable feeling gazing into Lincoln’s face, as it speaks to us, allowing his presence to become vibrantly alive. We may not be left to imagine who he was and what it meant to live in those uncertain times because he is telling us.

As Truman Howe Bartlett put it: “This mask is the face of Abraham Lincoln. Look at it. Listen to the words that have passed through those lips out into the swift and universal winged air to be carried to the uttermost parts of the earth into minds of kings to make them tremble. And filling the hearts of the down trodden with such comfort and support as they have never had since near nineteen hundred years.” 

ZIMMERMAN LIFE MASK

TO BECOME NEW FORUM PRESENTATION PIECE

Applications for 2009 Begin Now

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Mark Zimmerman of Vero Beach, Florida, the Lincoln Forum will honor, yearly, an academic institution that has shown excellence in advancing Lincoln history and preserving his memory. The designated group will receive a handsome bronze replica on a marble base—made under Zimmerman’s supervision—representing an actual cast of Leonard Wells Volk’s 1860 life mask.

Applications will be accepted for 2009. Submit to Frank J. Williams and Harold Holzer, c/o The Lincoln Forum. Only one guarantee is required: that the mask remain on display at the designated institution in a prominent and conspicuous location for all to see.

A new Lincoln Forum tradition is born—thanks to our friend Mark Zimmerman

The noted filmmaker Philip B. Kunhardt III will offer a preview glimpse of the upcoming Lincoln Bicentennial documentary directed by his brother Peter W. Kunhardt, scheduled to air on PBS in February 2009. The Kunhardts, whose great-grandfather Frederick Hill Meserve pioneered the preservation and study of Lincoln photographs, have spent a lifetime adapting and analyzing the family collection for unforgettable books and film productions.

This year's multi-historian panel discussion will explore the subject, "Lincoln in Myth and Memory," and offer a fresh and updated look at reputation and legend through the eyes of three scholars who have generated much excitement with new books on the subject: Gerald Prokopowicz, author of *Did Lincoln Own Slaves? And Other Frequently Asked Questions About Abraham Lincoln*; Edward Steers Jr., author of *Lincoln Legends: Myths, Hoaxes, and Confabulations Associated with Our Greatest President*, and James A. Percoco, author of *Summers with Lincoln: Looking for the Man in the Monuments*. The panel, which will also consider and appraise the multiplicity of web-data on Lincoln, will be chaired by Frank J. Williams and will include Harold Holzer, co-author of the classic 1984 work, *The Lincoln Image*.

The Forum's 2008 field trip will offer a special, guided tour through the new Gettysburg Battlefield visitor center, opened just this year, and featuring the mammoth, newly restored 1884 cyclorama by Paul Philippoteaux, which a critic of the day called a "colossal marvel of artistic learning and sentiment."

Once again, the Forum will feature book and art displays, lunches at the headquarters hotel, the Holiday Inn Gettysburg Battlefield, group dinners, a lunch at the historic 18th-century Dobbin House, and the delivery of a classic Lincoln oration by premier Lincoln presenter James Getty. And for the 13th time, the Forum will bestow the coveted Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement.

For registration information, visit www.thelincolnforum.org 



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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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FORUM CO-SPONSORS HILDENE SYMPOSIUM ON CRUCIAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The Lincoln Forum and Robert Todd Lincoln's Hildene co-sponsored a spring symposium on "The Nine Most Important Elections in U. S. History" May 28-30 at the historic Equinox Hotel in Manchester, Vermont—the resort where Mary and Tad Lincoln stayed in 1863 and 1864.

Among the decisive elections offered to the more than 100 attendees—including local high-school students—were the Lincoln victories of 1860 and 1864, presented by Harold Holzer and Frank Williams, respectively.

In addition, James Roger Sharp of Syracuse University spoke on the Adams-Jefferson contest of 1800; Daniel Feller of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville on the Adams-Jackson-Clay-Crawford election of 1824; Michael Holt of the University of Virginia on the Hayes-Tilden race of 1876; Kathleen Dalton of Boston University and Philips Andover Academy on the Taft-Wilson-Theodore Roosevelt face-off in 1912; and Mark Stoler of the University of Vermont on the Roosevelt-Hoover contest of 1932.

Hildene's executive director, Seth Bongartz, hosted a concluding panel on all the federal, state, and local elections under discussion. The institution's programming director, Carrie Howe, introduced the speakers. Participants enjoyed tours of the magnificently restored Hildene estate, where Lincoln's son Robert died, followed by a dinner on the terrace overlooking the mountains that the President's descendants loved.

At the dinner, Hildene officials announced that the property has acquired, is restoring, and will soon display an authentic Pullman sleeping car, certain to be a major attraction for railroad aficionados. Robert T. Lincoln was president of the Pullman Company. 

To receive e-mail updates about The Lincoln Forum and other Lincoln news, enter your email address to our automated Email Marketing system on our home page at:

www.thelincolnforum.org