

# For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association

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## A New Look at “You Can Fool All of the People”

By David B. Parker \*

In the winter 2003 issue of this newsletter, Thomas F. Schwartz, in one of his “Lincoln Never Said That” columns, wrote on one of the best known of the alleged Lincoln quotations: “You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.”<sup>1</sup>

Schwartz’s article traced the claim that Lincoln made the “fool all the people” statement at a speech on September 2, 1858, in Clinton, Illinois, during the Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Contemporary accounts do not record the words, but nearly a half-century later, several people said that they heard Lincoln make the remark on that occasion. A second claim, from a single source, was that Lincoln made the statement at the 1856 Republican Party Convention in Bloomington, Illinois. Schwartz characterized the claims as “tenuous.”<sup>2</sup>

Those claims aside, the fact is that, until now, we had no documentary evidence linking Lincoln to the quotation until 1901, when it was included in *Abe Lincoln’s Yarns and Stories*, a volume of over five hundred pages compiled by Alexander McClure, that claimed to be “a complete collection of the funny and witty anecdotes that made Lincoln famous.” The only attribution for the quotation was to an unnamed “caller at the White House.”<sup>3</sup> Through the use of several new databases, we can now push the connection of Lincoln and “fool all the people” back almost a decade and a half.

For our purposes the most useful of these databases is a collection from ProQuest Company called “Historic

Newspapers,” which contains the back files of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, and a handful of other newspaper in a digitized, searchable format.



Lincoln said: “You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.” A great many people have been fooled a long time by the foolish claim that the more expensive the charges of the dentist the better he must be.

While “cheap” dentistry is generally the most expensive—in pain and ruin of teeth and re-doing—still first-class Dentistry can be done for practically one-half what is now charged.

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Searching the *New York Times* we find that on August 26, 1887—fourteen years before McClure’s collection—a man named Fred Wheeler, speaking at the Prohibition Party Convention, discussed certain legislation passed by the state assembly: “As I sat in the gallery noting the care and eagerness and anxiety of the leaders to secure its passage I could not help but think of that trite remark of Abraham Lincoln: ‘You can fool all of the people, some of

the time. You can fool some of the people all of the time; but you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.’” The *Times* noted that the remark was met with “Applause.”<sup>4</sup>

Seven months later, the *Times*’s “Hodge-Podge” column (a collection of snippets gathered from other newspapers and periodicals) quoted the *Dry Goods Chronicle*: “Mr. Lincoln said: ‘You can fool some of the people all the time, and you can fool all the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.’ It would be well for our politicians to ponder over this saying, and also merchants who do not advertise their goods. The latter are fooled all the time.”<sup>5</sup>

After these first two mentions in 1887 and 1888, the *Times* quoted Lincoln’s “you can fool all the people” on at least twenty other occasions before it appeared in McClure’s *Lincoln’s Yarns and Stories*.

Other newspapers in the ProQuest collection also give the quotation before 1901, but none as frequently or as early as the *New York Times*. The *Atlanta Constitution*’s first mention of the quotation is of special interest to the present author, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on Charles Henry Smith, a Georgia essayist and humorist who for twenty-five years (1878–1903) contributed a weekly column to the *Constitution* under the pen name of “Bill Arp.” On August 6, 1899, Arp began his column: “Mr. Lincoln said, ‘You may fool some of the people all the time, you may fool all of the people some of the time, but you can’t fool all of the people all the time.’ That’s so, I

*continued on page 2*

## A New Look at “You Can Fool All of the People”

*continued from page 1*

reckon, but I will add that a man can't fool his wife at all. She catches up with him by instinct.”<sup>6</sup>

Another ProQuest collection, “American Periodical Series Online” (APS), offers the contents of well over a thousand magazines and other periodicals published in the United States between 1740 and 1900, again digitized and searchable. A search of APS reveals only scattered references to the alleged Lincoln quotation, none before 1887.

One of the citations in APS is worth mentioning, however. In 1894 a relatively obscure anarchist journal, *Liberty: Not the Daughter but the Mother of Order*, reprinted an article from the *New York Sun* that described the office of congressional candidate Lemuel Quigg: “There are two pictures on the wall in Mr. Quigg's headquarters. One is of Quigg and the other is of Lincoln. Under Mr. Lincoln's picture is the quotation: ‘You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time.’”<sup>7</sup> This suggests that by 1894 the quotation was sufficiently popular and well known to appear on printed portraits of Lincoln.

Making of America, a digital library of nineteenth-century American literature containing approximately eighty-five hundred books and fifty thousand journal articles, digitized and searchable, offers one additional early example of the Lincoln quotation, in a biography of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison published in 1889, a dozen years before McClure's collection.<sup>8</sup>

By 1890 the quotation was well known enough to be used in advertisements. In June of that year an ad for W. W. Kimball Company used the saying to urge customers to be careful when buying a piano or organ.<sup>9</sup> In 1891 a

Chicago dentist quoted Lincoln to warn of “bunko dental colleges” that misrepresented their costs.<sup>10</sup> In fact, prior to 1901 Lincoln had become the unwitting spokesman for some two dozen retailers and products, including Boston's J. B. Barnaby (clothiers) and Paine Furniture Company; Hire's root beer; the Vinolia line of soaps, creams, and powders; Gail Borden Eagle Brand Condensed Milk; Pillsbury's Flour; and my personal favorite, Old Crow Rye.<sup>11</sup>

Thanks to these new online databases—a technology not available to researchers until very recently—we can now search millions of pages of books, newspapers, and periodicals within seconds, turning a task that before would have been a lifetime's work (several lifetimes' work, in fact) into a project that can be completed before a morning coffee break.

And thanks to these databases, we now know that the “you can fool all of the people” quotation was in common circulation and attributed to Lincoln at least fourteen years before McClure's collection.

But these databases can't answer all of our questions, and in fact, they sometimes raise new ones. For example, while the coverage of the databases is just as good before 1887 as after, there are no mentions of the quotation attributed to Lincoln before August 1887. Furthermore, in the millions of pages covered by these databases, the quotation does not appear by itself, unattributed to Lincoln, before that date. Only in 1890 does the quotation start to show up without Lincoln's name, introduced by “Some one has truthfully said” or “There is a saying.”<sup>12</sup>

In other words, before August 1887 the saying never shows up, either alone or attributed to Lincoln; after August 1887 it appears frequently, dozens of times in the next ten years.

The reason for this is unknown, but a good guess would be that the saying,

attributed to Lincoln, first showed up in a book, magazine article, or some other source not covered by these databases in early- to mid-1887.

But I will leave the hunt for that elusive creature to others.

<sup>1</sup>Schwartz, “‘You Can Fool All of the People’: Lincoln Never Said That,” *For the People: A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 5 (Winter 2003): 1ff.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>3</sup>Albert A. Woldman, “Lincoln Never Said That,” *Harper's Magazine* 200 (May 1950): 74.

<sup>4</sup>*New York Times*, Aug. 26, 1887.

<sup>5</sup>*New York Times*, Mar. 12, 1888.

<sup>6</sup>*Atlanta Constitution*, Aug. 6, 1899. The dissertation, which made no mention of the Lincoln quotation, was published as *Alias Bill Arp: Charles Henry Smith and the South's “Goodly Heritage”* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991).

<sup>7</sup>*Liberty: Not the Daughter but the Mother of Order* 10 (Nov. 3, 1894): 13.

<sup>8</sup>*William Lloyd Garrison, 1805–1879: The Story of His Life, Told by His Children* (New York: Century Co., 1889), 4:224. Unlike ProQuest, a series of proprietary databases, Making of America is free and is available at <http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>.

<sup>9</sup>*Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 15, 1890.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, Mar. 15, 1891.

<sup>11</sup>*Boston Daily Globe*, Oct. 25, 1891, Jan. 18, 1897, May 27, 1893; *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* 6 (Dec. 1893): 6; *Arthur's Home Magazine* 64 (Oct. 1894): 10; *Boston Daily Globe*, June 16, 1895; *New York Times*, July 7, 1895.

<sup>12</sup>*New York Times*, Feb. 5, 1890, Dec. 31, 1891.

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## Lincoln Never Said That

By Thomas F. Schwartz

The Internet is a great incubator of spurious Lincoln sayings and no clearer examples can be shown than several that have recently surfaced. A number of Web sites attribute the following quote to Abraham Lincoln: "Congressmen who willfully take actions during wartime that damage morale and undermine the military are saboteurs and should be arrested, exiled or hanged."

But did Lincoln utter these words? An immediate red flag for the authenticity of any Lincoln quote would be information indicating when and where he uttered the words being used. Typically, the absence of a date and/or place is a good indication that something is askew.

The words are not found in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* or *The Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln*. The Web sites using the questioned quote usually are strong supporters of the current military efforts in Iraq. Lincoln's own opposition to President James K. Polk's Mexican War policies makes the statement hypocritical in this context. While Lincoln spoke against people who interfered with the enlistment of soldiers, there is a marked difference between the alleged quote about congressmen and Lincoln's documented sentiments about speech that led to desertion. Most likely, the alleged quote is based upon Lincoln's famous June 12, 1863, letter to Erastus Corning and other Democrats who objected to the banishment of Ohio politician Clement Vallandigham to the Confederacy.

Vallandigham was a bitter opponent of the war, and according to Mark E. Neely, "in a meeting of the Democratic congressional caucus in July [1861], Vallandigham was the only congressman to oppose coercion of the South." His views did not comport with those of the voters, who tossed Vallandigham out in the 1862 elections. Trouble occurred on April 19, 1863, when the commander of the Department of the Ohio, General Ambrose E.

Burnside, ordered any person expressing sympathy for the Confederacy to be arrested as a traitor or banished to the Confederate States of America. Vallandigham tested the limits of the order by speaking out against the war on May 1, 1863. True to his word, Burnside arrested Vallandigham, immediately provoking a series of public protests by Northern Democrats in support of Vallandigham. Lincoln, with the advice of his Cabinet, released Vallandigham from prison but exiled him to the Confederacy. In explaining this tack to Corning and Vallandigham's other Democratic sympathizers, Lincoln stated: "Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wiley agitator who induces him to desert? . . . I think that in such a case, to silence the agitator, and save the boy, is not only constitutional, but, withal, a great mercy." This is a far cry from "hanging" congressmen advocated in the questioned Internet utterance.

With record-low mortgage rates these past many years, homebuilders and real estate Web sites have proudly quoted Lincoln: "The strength of a nation lies in the homes of its people." Once again, there are no dates attached to the saying and the words cannot be found in Lincoln writings or the major recollections. Some Web pages offer, "spoken by Abraham Lincoln more than 140 years ago," which is so nonspecific as to be meaningless. The closest sentiment is something not said by Abraham Lincoln but by another Republican President, Herbert Hoover. In a speech at Palo Alto, California, on August 11, 1928, Hoover said: "To me the foundation of American life rests upon the home and family." A different emphasis is attributed to Andrew Johnson by George L. Tappan, who, in 1872, recalled President Johnson saying: "Without a home there can be no good citizen. With a home there can be no bad one." Perhaps all would be better off by taking the broader view espoused by Dorothy in the *Wizard of Oz*: "There's no place like home."

## Defining the Study of Lincoln The Contributions of the Abraham Lincoln Association

By Thomas F. Schwartz

For nearly a century, the Abraham Lincoln Association has worked to realize, as fully as possible, its charter mission: “To observe each anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve and make more readily accessible the landmarks associated with his life; and to actively encourage, promote and aid the collection and dissemination of authentic information regarding all phases of his life and career.” These are ambitious goals for any group. They are even more challenging for an organization that has been staffed largely by volunteers, that has never exceeded nine hundred members, that has never had financial reserves in excess of \$100,000, and whose base of operations consists of a mailbox located at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. And yet, the Abraham Lincoln Association is considered the leading organization advancing Lincoln studies. What explains this dichotomy?

A terrible irony exists that in the year when the Lincoln Centennial Association met to begin planning the one-hundredth anniversary of the Great Emancipator’s birth, Springfield witnessed a bloody race riot, leaving seven dead. Among the victims was William Donegan, a retired cobbler who made boots for Abraham Lincoln before he was elected president. The men who organized what is now the Abraham Lincoln Association ignored this fact. The founders of the Association reads like a “Who’s Who”: Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Melville W. Fuller, United States Federal Judge J. Otis Humphrey, Speaker of the House Joseph G. Cannon, Illinois Governor Charles S. Deneen, Former Vice-President Adlai E. Stevenson, and Illinois Senator Shelby Cullom. Their task seemed simple and straightforward: to hold

the largest and most memorable birthday celebration to honor the one-hundredth anniversary of Illinois’ favorite son, and Springfield’s most notable citizen, Abraham Lincoln. It was a task they took to heart. The largest hall in Springfield, the Illinois State Armory, was reserved and notably decorated in the appropriate patriotic bunting. Senator Cullom drew upon his position as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee to secure the services of James Bryce, the British Ambassador to the United States, as the keynote speaker with J. J. Jusserand, the French Ambassador to the United States, as an invited guest. Robert Todd Lincoln, the only surviving son of the Sixteenth President was also invited. He agreed to come only if he did not have to speak. And finally, William Jennings Bryan, the former presidential candidate and silver-tongued orator best known for his “Cross of Gold” speech was also among the dignitaries at the head table.

Over twelve hundred persons attended the patriarchic gala. Men wore formal attire and were seated on the main floor of the auditorium. Women were consigned to the balcony. After a sumptuous meal and formal remarks, individuals on the main floor indulged in cigars, cigarettes and brandy. Perhaps the most bizarre event of the evening was Vachel Lindsay’s reading of the performance poem “The Congo.” The audience was held speechless by such lines as: “Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room, Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable, Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, Pounded on the table, Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom, Hard as they were able, Boom, boom, Boom, With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom, Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, Boom.” Clearly, the structure

of the event and the banquets that followed were intended to entertain guests. Speakers were selected with an eye toward publishing their remarks in a keepsake booklet that was a fixture at each banquet place setting. These published remarks were also distributed to various libraries and associations believing that “many of them contain contributions of permanence and value in the way of sound thinking and clear utterance.”

A systemic problem was inherent in the organization of the Lincoln Centennial Association that soon became apparent and threatened the existence of the group. Most of the founders and officers were elderly gentlemen. Without active recruitment and its original goal of celebrating the centennial birth behind it, the Association remained active only as long as the founding fathers lived. President J. Otis Humphrey died in 1918. Vice President John J. Bunn succeeded Humphrey, but Bunn was no young man. Born in 1831, Bunn as a young man had known Lincoln. In fact, Lincoln appointed him as a United States Pension Agent for Illinois. Bunn died in 1920 creating a crisis in leadership for the Association. No banquet was held in 1920 or 1922. Logan Hay, a notable Springfield attorney whose father, Milton Hay, and grandfather, Stephen Trigg Logan, firmly connected him to the Lincoln legacy, became president of the Association following Bunn’s death. As one writer claimed, Hay’s first two years of service “was the empty honor of heading an organization that seemed to want only a quiet burial.”

Hay decided that the Association needed to make a decision on what it wanted: either the board would cease as an organization or recommit themselves to the mission statement from the original charter. In his 1923 banquet

address, Former Governor Frank O. Lowden underscored the need for the Association to gather “authentic” information on Lincoln and preserve the traditions and places in and around Springfield. After several meetings, the Association devised a listing of goals that it hoped to accomplish. As the Association’s main objective, it pledged to make the annual observance of Lincoln’s birth a public meeting “at which the speaker shall be selected with reference to their especial fitness to make distinct contributions to the Lincoln idea, and the publication of the addresses in permanent form.” A series of prizes ranging from the best monograph on Abraham Lincoln to funding scholarships at Illinois colleges and universities to high school essay contests on Lincoln were contemplated. Two similar goals were to assist in the purchase and donation of Lincoln materials for what is now called the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library (formerly the Illinois State Historical Library). The Association also wanted to build a collection of “reminiscences of all individuals who have personally known Mr. Lincoln.” The final four objectives dealt with aspects of promoting visitation and Lincoln programs at Lincoln sites in the Springfield area. They wanted to publish a booklet containing information on Lincoln and associated sites as well as promote a marker program to clearly identify places of significance. The Association would underwrite a pageant at New Salem featuring the descendants of Lincoln’s friends in this frontier community. In a growing era of automobile travel, the Association would work to pave the road between Springfield and New Salem with the roadside shade trees named after “Lincoln, his friends, and contemporaries.”

In 1923 Logan Hay reactivated Association publications with the issuance of an annual *Bulletin*. This was followed in 1924 with the appearance of *The Lincoln Centennial Association Papers*, containing the text of the speaker presentations before the Association in that year. While Hay could oversee the copyediting and production of the

annual *Bulletin* and *Papers*, the new research agenda required the establishment of full-time personnel to oversee research and writing implicit in their research agenda. Income from membership was insufficient for sustaining salaried staff. The solution required the establishment of an endowment fund. In 1925 Hay persuaded a number of civic-minded Springfield families that went back to the Lincoln era—Bunn, Hatch, Pasfield, and Humphrey—to donate the initial funding for the Association endowment. With this financial wherewithal, Hay began interviewing potential executive secretaries. He gave the job to Paul M. Angle, a young man from Mansfield, Ohio, who had a history degree from Miami University. Hiring Angle was based upon his potential rather than a record of accomplishment. Angle later admitted that his only knowledge of Lincoln was obtained by reading Lord Charnwood’s Lincoln biography on the train in route from Chicago to Springfield before his interview.

Angle, however, was a quick study. He began to collect photocopies of original Lincoln documents with an eye toward those that escaped publication by previous Lincoln biographers Nicolay, Hay, and Tarbell. Angle also began to build reference files on every important topic regarding Lincoln, his family, and Lincoln’s Springfield. Between 1925 and 1930 Angle wrote an incredible corpus of reference materials. Among these were two editions of guidebooks to the Lincoln sites in Springfield, seven pamphlets of Lincoln’s day-by-day activities for the years 1854 through 1861, twenty-one regular bulletins, and a monograph, *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln* (1930). Angle also clarified the new direction of the Association by changing the name from the Lincoln Centennial Association, an event that had occurred in 1909 but of little relevance in 1929, to the Abraham Lincoln Association, a timeless moniker.

The Association was the center of national attention in 1929 when Angle exposed as forgeries the *Atlantic Monthly’s* published love letters between Lincoln and Ann Rutledge.

According to Wilma Minor, the owner of the letters and author of the articles in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the materials had been handed down through her family. Initially, the poet Carl Sandburg and the muckraking journalist Ida Tarbell were both attracted to the dramatic power of the romance that was revealed in the correspondence. But Angle knew Lincoln’s handwriting, having just finished transcribing letters for the new edition of Lincoln’s letters. Moreover, Angle also had an ear for Lincoln’s literary voice and knew that the writings were a poor imitation. In the end the letters proved to be the result of spirit writings channeled through the hand of a medium, who happened to be Minor’s mother.

Another little-known project of the Association was research on the proposed Lincoln Memorial Highway. The project sought to find the exact route that Lincoln and his parents traveled from Kentucky to Indiana to Illinois. Confusion abounded with hundreds of notarized affidavits being sent by individuals stating that the Lincolns stopped at their farm, watered their oxen team from their well, and other variations on a theme. Typically, the statements were based upon second or third hand information transmitted by family members or friends. Governor Emmerson referred the matter to a five-member panel—all consisting of Abraham Lincoln Association members—for investigation. Angle sidestepped the issue stating: “At the present time it appears likely that the investigating committee will be unable, by reason of the absence of conclusive evidence, to establish the exact location of the route the Lincolns followed, but in any event a positive gain of some importance in historical knowledge seems assured.”

The “historical knowledge” that Angle sought was of a certain kind. Like his mentor, Logan Hay, Angle probed for written primary source materials in the form of letters, court records, newspapers, pamphlets, the Illinois and Congressional Journal of Debates, tax records, census data, and election returns. Sources avoided or

*continued on page 6*

## Defining the Study of Lincoln The Contributions of the Abraham Lincoln Association

*continued from page 5*

viewed with suspicion were artifacts and material culture, such as Lincoln's personal effects and a careful examination of the surviving structures from the Lincoln era. Archeology conducted by the State of Illinois at New Salem was completely ignored by Benjamin P. Thomas in his study of this frontier community. Recollections, especially those recorded decades after the fact, were given a hoary eye unless they could be independently verified with contemporary written records. This approach to research methodology comported with James Garfield Randall's call for professionalism in Lincoln studies. In his seminal 1936 article, "Has the Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?" Randall noted the professional standards used by the Abraham Lincoln Association in its contributions to Lincoln studies.

Despite Angle's departure in 1932 to head the Illinois State Historical Library, he was replaced by a succession of capable scholars, such as Thomas and Harry E. Pratt, both having PhDs in history. These scholars produced some significant monographic works during the decade from 1930 to 1940 based upon the previous fact collection efforts of the Association. Two particular themes emerged: environmental studies, or the studies of the communities in which Lincoln lived at New Salem and Springfield, and the Lincoln day-by-day studies. Thomas's *Lincoln's New Salem* remains a classic study of the frontier community that was the setting for Lincoln's formative years. In spite of its age, first published in 1934, no author has attempted to eclipse it as the primary study of New Salem. The same can be said for Angle's monograph of Lincoln's Springfield, *"Here I Have Lived": A History of Lincoln's Springfield, 1821-1865*. Whereas Thomas was forced to examine county commissioner records, census data, and probate court records

because extensive correspondence from New Salem did not exist, Angle relied heavily upon newspaper accounts to carry his narrative of Lincoln's Springfield. The four Lincoln day-by-day volumes began with Lincoln's birth in 1809 and took him up to his presidential inauguration on March 4, 1861. This base reference works served as the basic factual building blocks for any Lincoln study. But they also provided a quick short hand to foil forgers, especially the sly Joseph Cosey who was particularly adept at creating legal documents with a passable facsimile of Lincoln's hand. Cosey and other forgers failed to do their homework and typically placed Lincoln in the wrong court at the wrong time of year. A quick check of these day-by-day works made easy work of detecting a questioned document.

With its reputation firmly established and an aggressive research and publications program in place, the Association suffered a blow with the death of Logan Hay in 1940. George W. Bunn, president of the Marine Bank, Lincoln's bank in Springfield, ably succeeded Hay. It was Bunn who inspired and often financed the Association on to greatness. Known to his friends as "Gib," Bunn oversaw the creation of the *Abraham Lincoln Quarterly*, a scholarly publication that would replace the *Bulletin* and annual *Papers*. But the Association's greatest achievement under Bunn would be collecting and transcribing all of Abraham Lincoln's known writings.

*The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* would take twelve years to produce at a cost of over \$100,000 or approximately \$1,000,000 in 2005 dollars. It took meetings with the Library of Congress to convince that institution not to duplicate efforts with a planned Lincoln papers project of their own. Once the Abraham Lincoln Association cleared the way for the project, they hired a new executive secretary who brought to

the project a PhD in English who had already published a volume on Lincoln's writings and speeches. Roy Prentiss Basler was well suited to undertake the work. He had two capable assistants in Marion Bonzi, who would later marry the great Lincoln scholar Harry Pratt, and Lloyd Dunlap. Also on loan to the project was Helen Bullock, a dynamo of a researcher on staff at the Library of Congress. Bullock scoured the manuscript collections in the Library of Congress and National Archives for the Association.

Generally recognized as the greatest scholarly achievement of the Association, the eight-volume *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* literally bankrupted the organization. Originally planned to be five or six volumes and plagued by constant delays, the publication ended up costing the Association much more than anticipated. Rather than publish a volume at a time as finances allowed, the Association made the bold move of liquidating all of their assets to publish all eight volumes at once. The Association maintained its incorporation status and set up an account to receive royalties from Rutgers University Press. The volumes were met with critical acclaim but financial indifference. In part, university presses in general and Rutgers in particular were suffering from financial

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woes. Creative bookkeeping similar to that practiced in Hollywood for residuals on early television shows allowed Rutgers to avoid paying any royalties to the Association.

From 1953 to 1964 the Association was in a state of suspended animation. It took a request by Illinois Governor Otto Kerner to reactivate the Lincoln-hearted men and women of Springfield. The State proposed to restore the Old State Capitol, site of Lincoln's House Divided Speech, to its original luster. Since 1876 Sangamon County had used it as the county court house. The courts, having outgrown the facility, moved to a new facility, allowing the State to turn it back into a Lincoln site. The Association accepted the challenge of raising money for period furnishings to decorate the rooms and resumed the practice of holding annual banquets, hosting as the first speaker Adlai E. Stevenson, then United States Ambassador to the United Nations. A group of less than three hundred members, the Abraham Lincoln Association raised over a quarter of a million dollars for the restoration of the Old State Capitol. The building was ready by December 3, 1968, the 175th anniversary of Illinois statehood.

Reinvigorated, the Association looked to other projects to undertake. For a brief time, they contemplated assisting the State with the renovation of the Lincoln Home neighborhood.

But the transfer of the property to the Federal government in 1971 ended any further discussion. In 1970 publications were resumed, beginning modestly with the annual banquet address and expanding in 1973 to include papers presented at the scholarly symposium.

The bicentennial celebrations of the nation in 1976 prompted the formation of another planning committee to plot out a long-range agenda for the Association. Obvious suggestions, such as an update of the *Collected Works*, *Lincoln Day By Day*, and other significant Association writings, were advanced. Little was accomplished, however, due to lack of funds. The State of Illinois' undertaking of the Lincoln Legal Papers filled a research lacuna identified by the Association fifty years ago. The Association quickly endorsed the project and became one of its main private supporters.

Much of the Association's current influence is reflected in its symposia and publications. New voices in Lincoln studies received their first hearing at the annual Abraham Lincoln Symposium. Scholars such as Allen Guelzo, Daniel Walker Howe, Drew McCoy, Richard Carwardine, William Lee Miller, Stewart Winger, and Silvana Siddali were all introduced to the Lincoln community through their talks at the symposium. Seminal articles such as William Gienapp's "Lincoln and the Border States," James McPherson's

"The Hedgehog and the Foxes," John Y. Simon's "Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge," Daniel Howe's "Why Lincoln was a Whig," and Allen Guelzo's "Lincoln and the Doctrine of Necessity," are frequently cited in the literature.

The Association is no longer the holder of an archive of materials nor does it have a staff to produce original research monographs. It functions more to provide a forum for scholars to present their research findings and new interpretations based upon familiar materials. The Association also provides a vital function in offering financial support to important Lincoln research and projects. The Association's unflinching annual contributions to the Lincoln Legal Papers have paid off with the DVD-ROM edition appearing in 2000. And the Association was the first organization to support the proposed Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library with a check for \$5,000.

The Association made its two most important works, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* and *Lincoln Day By Day*, available on the Internet. All of the back issues of *The Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* are available online through the University of Illinois Press Web site. This provides scholars around the world with access to significant Lincoln scholarship. All totaled, these accomplishments are remarkable for any organization.

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Association in the category indicated:

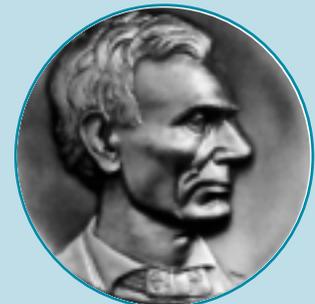
Railsplitter \_\_\_\_\_ \$35  
(\$25 Student)  
Postmaster \_\_\_\_\_ \$75  
Lawyer \_\_\_\_\_ \$200  
Congressman \_\_\_\_\_ \$500  
President \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000

*Members residing outside the U.S. add \$3.00.*

Mail this application (or a photocopy) and a check to:

The Abraham Lincoln Association  
1 Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, Illinois  
62701

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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Web site: [www.alincolnassoc.com](http://www.alincolnassoc.com)

## Who Is the Greatest?

By Thomas F. Schwartz

The Discovery Channel in collaboration with the *Today Show* hosted an ongoing series over the summer, "The Greatest American." Each week, host Matt Lauer would post a diminishing list of "greatest" Americans and ask viewers to vote. Not content with the legal requirement of "one man, one vote," the producers of the show allowed each viewer a potential of nine votes per show: three votes by a 1-800 number, three votes by going to the Web site, and three votes using text messaging. Once the show reached the final five names, small cheering sections were brought in to add energy to an otherwise dull business. In spite of these efforts, the show fell flat. Theoretically, one could see the whole enterprise as nothing more than harmless fun. Others thought it unseemly to pit the achievements of Martin Luther King Jr, George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln against one another. In the end, popularity and perhaps a bit of present mindedness prevailed with the number

one spot going to Ronald Reagan, Lincoln second, King third, Washington fourth, and Benjamin Franklin fifth

The show mirrored similar efforts in 2002 by a British Broadcasting Company (BBC) production, "Greatest Briton." Winston Churchill won that competition but the number two spot went to Isambard Kingdom Brunel, an engineer best known for the Thames Tunnel, the Great Western Railway, and steamships such as the *Bristol*. Not surprisingly, the number three spot went to Princess Diana. In Germany, a 2003 poll listed Chancellor Konrad Adenauer as the "greatest" German, nosing out Martin Luther and Karl Marx for the two and three positions respectively. Frenchmen listed Charles de Gaulle as their favorite historical figure in a similar 2005 contest, with Abbé Pierre, Jacques Cousteau, Marie Curie, Victor Hugo, Molière, Louis Pasteur, and Edith Piaf vying in the top spots.

South Africa attempted a similar series only to pull the plug on the show after pro-apartheid figures received strong showings. Regardless, Nelson

Mandela was in the top spot with professional golfer Gary Player number two and the nonviolence leader Mahatma Gandhi number three.

Traditionally, the polls for greatest president involve academics and other informed public figures. The Internet has democratized the voting process, reaching new audiences. But what is one to glean from the results of these shows? Without knowing who is voting and how often, these polls offer little more than entertainment value and very little insight into what meaning can be teased from the rankings. Perhaps the best example of this is a 2003 BBC show, "What The World Thinks of America." Viewers were asked to nominate their greatest American by sending names to the BBC Web page. The winner was a Springfieldian, Homer Simpson, the cartoon dad, with 47.17 percent. In second place was another famous Springfieldian, Abraham Lincoln (9.97 percent). Martin Luther King Jr. (8.54 percent) and A-Team strongman Mr. T (7.83 percent) trailed the pack.

## For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association  
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