By Jonathan W. White

Americans have been dreaming about Abraham Lincoln since at least 1861. In May of that year, a woman from Rochester, New York, sent a letter to Mary Todd Lincoln describing a dream that she’d had of the president towering over Washington, D.C., amid a tremendous thunderstorm. As the lightning flashed and the thunder boomed, the sun cast “a soft mellow light around about him.” Beneath Lincoln’s feet “rolled dark & heavy clouds which the sun light was fast dispelling.” Lincoln held a book in one hand, walked toward the southern part of the horizon, “crowned with honors & covered with Laurels, and looked very smiling.” This was a premonition, the woman thought, that Lincoln would restore the Union and free the slaves. In “these perilous times” she hoped that her dream would be “a comfort” to the first lady.

During the war, at least two soldiers dreamed that their commander-in-chief granted them promotions, while a Union POW at Macon Prison, in Georgia, dreamed that he had a conversation with Lincoln about prisoner exchanges. In like manner, a correspondent for Harper’s Weekly “dreamed that Old ‘Abe’ was sitting in our room talking with my mother.” She asked the president “how soon he thought the war would be over.” Lincoln answered, “not before I’m out.”

Even after Lincoln’s death, he continued to visit his former friends and associates in their dreams. In 1872, Salmon Chase had a “singular dream” in which Lincoln and Jefferson Davis had a “last battle.” Davis was beaten and taken prisoner, but then Lincoln resigned his seat and Davis became president. The Union and Confederate Congresses then met and amended the Constitution to abolish slavery and grant suffrage to blacks, at which point Davis resigned and Lincoln was reelected. Lincoln then granted “Universal Amnesty” to the South and all southern congressmen were seated, leading to “general harmony & reconciliation.” Peace at last.

More than thirty years later, John Hay dreamed that he went to the White House and found Lincoln there. “He was very kind and considerate, and sympathetic about my illness,” Hay wrote in his diary just a few weeks before his own death in 1905. “He said there was little work of importance on hand. He gave me two unimportant letters to answer. I was pleased that this slight order was within my power to obey.”

But if a few Americans saw Lincoln in their dreams, many more have been fascinated by Lincoln’s own dreams. Lincoln revealed his most famous dream at a cabinet meeting on April 14, 1865, and he (continued on page 2)

Lincoln-Era McLean County Court House Uncovered

By Floyd Mansberger and Christopher Stratton
Fever River Research, Springfield, Illinois

Proposed improvements for the new south entrance to the McLean County Museum of History in Bloomington, Illinois, are located on the site of the second McLean County Court House. In service from 1836 through 1868, it was in this building where Abraham Lincoln practiced law while travelling Illinois’s Eighth Judicial Circuit, and Bloomington resident Judge David Davis presided between 1848 and 1862. It was one of three coffee mill courthouses designed and built by Edgar Munsell of Edgar County. Both this Court House and the 1848 jail show up well in the 1867 bird’s eye view of Bloomington. The building was torn down in 1868 to make way for a much larger Court House.

The archeological excavation of the site was performed in the summer of 2014, and pictures of the results are shown here.
believed that it portended some “great news very soon.” He was on “some singular, indescribable vessel” that was “moving with great rapidity towards an indefinite shore.” Lincoln told the Cabinet that he’d had this dream before the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, as well as preceding the battles of Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Stones River, Wilmington, and the surrender of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863. Lincoln believed that the dream portended some “great results”—hopefully involving Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman’s army.

Sitting at the Cabinet meeting, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles did not think much of the dream. But two or three days later he remembered it and recorded it in his diary. “Great events did, indeed, follow,” he wrote mournfully, “for within a few hours the good and gentle, as well as truly great, man who narrated his dream closed forever his earthly career.”

The provenance for this dream is quite good. At least four eyewitnesses recorded or retold the dream—Welles, Attorney General James Speed, Assistant Secretary of State Frederick Seward, and a correspondent for the New York Herald. Lincoln’s words differ slightly from version to version. In Welles’s, Speed’s and Seward’s versions, each respective man placed himself at the center of the conversation with Lincoln. In the New York Herald’s report on April 18, however, Lincoln volunteered the nature of the dream without being asked. Still, the dream undoubtedly occurred.

By May the Herald’s story had been picked up by newspapers as far away as San Francisco, and it continues to retain a prominent place in the American imagination 150 years later. Steven Spielberg depicted this dream in one of the opening scenes of Lincoln. Spielberg’s rendition is generally true to the historical record, with the sophisticated touch of having Lincoln standing atop what appears to be a Monitor-styled vessel. (Ever an enthusiast for technology, Lincoln is alleged to have said when he saw the design for the Monitor, “All I can say is what the girl said when she put her foot into the stocking. It strikes me there’s something in it.”)

Although not a dream of death (Lincoln thought positive news was coming), Lincoln’s ship dream is often portrayed as a portent of his impending assassination. But in April 1865, Lincoln is alleged to have had another, much darker, more explicit dream of death. This story comes down to us through Ward Hill Lamon’s Recollections of Abraham Lincoln (1895).

According to Lamon, Lincoln revealed a “horrid” dream to Mary, Lamon, and a few others at the White House sometime in early April. Lincoln “was in a melancholy, meditative mood, and had been silent for some time,” wrote Lamon. Finally, Mary coaxed her husband into speaking what was on his mind. Lincoln remarked that it seemed “strange how much there is in the Bible about dreams. . . . If we believe the Bible, we must accept the fact that in the old days God and His angels came to men in their sleep and made themselves known in dreams.”

Mary was struck by Lincoln’s solemnity and asked him, “Do you believe in dreams?” “I can’t say that I do,” Lincoln replied, “but I had one the other night which has haunted me ever since.” After having the dream, Lincoln said that he thumbed through his Bible and that wherever he turned he “seemed to encounter a dream or a vision.”

Lincoln “now looked so serious and disturbed” that Mary exclaimed, “You frighten me! What is the matter?” She coaxed him into describing his dream, which he did with “his brow overcast with a shade of melancholy.”

In the dream, Lincoln heard sobbing and wailing in the White House. He walked from room to room, looking for the mourners, but “no living person was in sight.” Finally he made his way to the East Room. “There I met with a sickening surprise. Before me was a catafalque, on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, some gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully.” Lincoln went up to one of the guards and inquired, “Who is dead in the White House?” “The President,” came the reply. “Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd, which awoke me from my dream. I slept no more that night; and although it was only a dream, I have been strangely annoyed by it ever since.”

In his Recollections, Lamon wrote, “there was something about it so amazingly real, so true to the actual tragedy which occurred soon after, that more than mortal strength and wisdom would have been required to let it pass without a shudder or a pang.” It is little wonder, then, that popular writers spanning the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as Carl Sandburg, Stephen B. Oates, Jean H. Baker, Jay Winik, Doris Kearns Goodwin, James L. Swanson, Bill O’Reilly, and others, have all repeated it in their books. Andrew Burstein even recently appropriated Lamon’s story for the title of his new book, Lincoln Dreamt He Died, and the dream appears in the National Geographic Channel’s movie Killing Lincoln.

But is it true? Any reader should naturally be hesitant to accept such an incredible story. The story’s provenance should cause even greater concern. Lamon’s Recollections of Abraham Lincoln is notoriously unreliable. In fact, Lamon did not actually write Recollections. His daughter, Dorothy Lamon Teillard, compiled writings by her father regarding Lincoln’s life and added her own supplemental prose to turn the disparate pieces into a naturally flowing book. Not all of the words in Recollections, therefore, are Lamon’s.

Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher cast significant doubt upon the veracity of the dream, pointing out that Lincoln was at the front from March 24 to April 9, 1865, not at the White House, as Lamon claimed. The Fehrenbachers’ analysis should have been enough to discredit Lamon’s story. But there is more evidence that suggests that it is a fiction.

(continued on page 5)
The Abraham Lincoln Association was one of the first contributors to the fund to re-create the historic Third Street original entrance to Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois, where Lincoln is buried. The project got underway this summer and the re-created gate will be completed in October. A dedication of the gate project is planned for later in the fall of 2014.

The original gate was the passageway into the Cemetery for Lincoln’s remains on May 4, 1865. For more information about the events planned to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Lincoln Funeral, see page 6.

The design for the gate was determined from photographs taken at the time of Lincoln’s Funeral. This is one of those photographs, taken by Frederick W. Ingmire of Springfield, Illinois.
PRESIDENT ROBERT A. STUART’S GREETING

Dear ALA Members,

October marks the beginning of our membership drive. I want to thank each member for your continuing loyal support of the Association. The goals of this Association are ambitious: “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.”

How has a small group with no real office grown into the oldest and most respected group for the advancement of Lincoln studies? Through the assistance of the many members of the Association whose financial support, time, and talent have enabled such projects as The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, The Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, and making everything Lincoln easily available to all through the Association’s website.

The Association continues its work to engender a love of Lincoln study in the next generation and engage with Lincoln students of all ages. Please join us in this effort by introducing our website and publications to your friends and please recruit new members. Your suggestions are always welcome, and we value your support and input. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Robert A. Stuart, President

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome our 26 new members from 10 states.

Robert W. Bornemann
Lake Forest, California
Dr. Tofig Arjmand
Springfield, Illinois
Cliff Berg
Sacramento, California
John Coady
Taylorville, Illinois
Chris DeRose
Phoenix, Arizona
Robert Govier
Mission Viejo, California
Trey Holland
Indianapolis, Indiana
Sarah Jennings
Springfield, Illinois
Bill and Julie Kellner
Springfield, Illinois
William King
Bellevue, Ohio
Walter Kubon
Wheaton, Illinois
Brent McGucken
Charleston, West Virginia
John Waddell
Byfield, Massachusetts

Michael McCuskey
Champaign, Illinois
Philip R. Smith
Mequon, Wisconsin
Mike Newmeister
Springfield, Illinois
David Pruitt
Haverhill, New Hampshire
Daniel Reigle
West Chester, Ohio
Julian Rogus
Glen Ellyn, Illinois
Francie Staggs
Springfield, Illinois
Traci Stahl
San Jose, California
Dr. Michael Alan Stutz
River Forest, Illinois
Ryan Lincoln Stutz
River Forest, Illinois

RENEW NOW! JOIN NOW!

Your membership is essential to the ALA’s success. It allows the ALA to provide you with the For The People newsletter and the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association and to sponsor many worthwhile programs related to the life of Abraham Lincoln. Please join.

William G. Shepherd, Membership Chairman

Mail this application (or a copy) and a check to:
The Abraham Lincoln Association
1 Old State Capitol Plaza
Springfield, Illinois 62701

Name: _______________________
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Student..................$25
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An abbreviated version of the White House funeral dream first appeared in a small-town Pennsylvania newspaper as early as Lincoln’s birthday in 1874. A much longer, more detailed version (most similar to Lamon’s) first appeared in an unsigned article entitled “President Lincoln’s Dream” in Gleason’s Monthly Companion in March 1880 (fifteen years before Lamon’s Recollections appeared in print). The details in the 1880 version differ in several significant ways from Lamon’s account in Recollections. First, the 1880 version contains no chronological clues as to when Lincoln was supposed to have had the dream (compared to Lamon’s version, which places it in April 1865). Second, Lincoln was in conversation with “Mrs. Lincoln and the children” in the 1880 version, not as Lamon described it, with “only two or three persons present,” including himself. Third, in Lamon’s account, Lincoln seemed unconcerned with assassinations, while Lamon portrayed himself as deeply concerned for the president’s life. In the 1880 version, however, Lincoln “had an ever-present dread of the assassin’s hand.” Finally and most importantly, Lamon is nowhere to be seen in the 1880 version of the story.

Some may conclude that the story of the White House funeral dream is more credible now that Lamon is not its source; however, several facts in the story do not align with what we know about the Lincoln assassination. According to the 1880 version, Mary Lincoln’s “first exclamation” after John Wilkes Booth shot her husband at Ford’s Theatre was, “His dream was prophetic” (Lamon quoted this line as well but did not connect it to any particular dream). “This remark was not then understood,” noted the anonymous author in Gleason’s Monthly Companion. However, no contemporary record cites Mary as saying those words. In fact, Mary told William H. Herndon in 1866 that her husband “didn’t in late years dream of death.”

The 1880 piece concludes, “Subsequently, the circumstances of Mr. Lincoln’s dream was told to many in Washington, and formed one of the most impressive incidents connected with the tragedy which gave the nation its immortal martyr.” If it was all the talk around Washington, as the 1880 article intimates that it was, surely it would have found its way into the papers shortly after Lincoln’s death. A search of several digitized newspaper databases reveals that the ship dream had gained widespread attention within a month of Lincoln’s death, but no such mention of the far more provocative White House funeral dream appeared. In fact, the White House funeral dream did not circulate widely in newspapers and periodicals until the 1880s, after the story appeared in Gleason’s Monthly Companion.

In short, this was a fictional piece written for a newspaper; it was later embellished by a literary magazine; it circulated through other newspapers in the 1880s; finally, Ward Hill Lamon’s daughter appropriated and further exaggerated it in the 1890s when she edited and published her father’s ill-titled Recollections. The dream is an utter fabrication, but it continues to hold an important place in the American imagination because it seems to confirm the almost supernatural character of our nation’s greatest martyr.

Jonathan W. White is assistant professor of American Studies at Christopher Newport University and the author of Abraham Lincoln and Treason in the Civil War: The Trials of John Merryman (2011), Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln (2014), and Lincoln’s Advice to Lawyers (2015). His current project, “Midnight in America,” is a history of sleep and dreams during the Civil War. For more information about his research, please visit www.jonathanwhite.org.

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Book the Iles House

Nancy Chapin, ALA Board Member, has organized a day of books at the Iles House at 638 S. 7th Street, Springfield, Illinois. Please plan to attend.

October 4, 2014

10:00 a.m. to Noon

Books For Children

Katie Johnson - Goodnight Springfield
Allison Gnuse - My African Home
David Reid and Danielle Fore - The Honorable Fido, Judge On the Common Law

12:00 p.m. – Lunch and readings

Gary Vitale - Untold Rainbows

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Kevin Corley - Sixteen Tons
Ed Cunningham - The Perfect Patsy
Dick Hart - Jameson Jenkins & James Blanks, African Americans; Preston Butler, Photographer
2015 Lincoln Funeral Re-enactment

Abraham Lincoln died on April 15, 1865, and in the following 20 days, the citizens of Springfield, Illinois, prepared for his final funeral and burial. “The entire Springfield community pulled together to honor the man who was not only their president, but also their neighbor and friend,” said Katie Spindell, chair of the 2015 Lincoln Funeral Coalition, a not-for-profit corporation planning the re-enactment of Lincoln’s Springfield funeral and burial on May 1-3, 2015.

The 2015 Coalition (which receives no public funds) began planning in 2010, and scores of companies, school districts, private citizens, public officials, churches, and community organizations have endorsed the project.

“This was Abraham Lincoln’s final return to the city he called home,” Spindell explained. “We have three weeks of events to commemorate his life, death, and legacy, and everyone is invited to participate.”

COMMENORATION EVENTS

The planned commemoration events are listed below. Many of the final details will be announced at the website of the Coalition:
www.lincolnfuneralcoalition.org

**Tuesday April 14, 2015**
**Our American Cousin**
Hoogland Center for the Arts
Performance of Our American Cousin, the play Abraham and Mary Lincoln were watching when the President was shot by John Wilkes Booth.

**Wednesday April 15 through Sunday May 3, 2015**
**Lincoln Symposia**
The names of speakers and the schedule will be announced in the future.

**Wednesday April 29, 2015**
**Lincoln and the Music He Loved**
Washington Park, Springfield, noon and 7:00 p.m.
Robin Austin, Springfield Park District Carillonneur, performs a free concert on the Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon. Bring a lawn chair or a blanket and enjoy this musical tribute to Lincoln.

**Thursday April 30 - Sunday May 3, 2015**
**Civil War Military Encampments**
Civil War military and civilian re-enactors plan to set up encampments in a number of Springfield locations.

**Friday May 1, 2015**
**Lincoln through the Arts**
Hoogland Center for the Arts
Performances of poetry, music, and visual arts celebrating the life of Abraham Lincoln.

**Saturday May 2, 2015**
**Funeral Train Arrival and Funeral Procession**
Amtrak Station, Springfield 11:00 a.m.
Plans for Lincoln Funeral Train replica arrival at the Amtrak Station in downtown Springfield carrying a replica of President Lincoln’s coffin. The coffin will be placed in a replica of the Lincoln Funeral Hearse and proceed to the corner of Washington and Sixth Streets followed by a procession of dignitaries, Color Guard, Civil War re-enactors, and direct descendants of original Honorary Pallbearers all dressed in 1860s-period attire.

**Commemoration and Candlelight Vigil**
Sixth and Washington Streets
At Sixth and Washington Streets, there will be a service of commemoration followed in the evening by a candlelight vigil throughout the night and ending at mid-morning on Sunday May 3.

**Sunday May 3, 2015**
**Commemorative Church Services**
Local churches draped in period mourning will conduct commemorative services.

**Lincoln Funeral Procession**
Washington & 6th Street to Oak Ridge Cemetery Noon
A replica of the Lincoln Funeral Hearse will transport Lincoln’s replica coffin to Oak Ridge Cemetery. On all streets possible, the Lincoln Funeral Procession will follow the historic route from downtown to Oak Ridge Cemetery. Procession participants must be in 1860s-period attire. The procession will enter the Cemetery at the re-created Third Street entrance. See a map of the Funeral Route at www.lincolnfuneralcoalition.org

**Lincoln Funeral Commemorative Service**
Receiving Vault Oak Ridge Cemetery
Clergy and Civil War re-enactors conduct eulogies, speeches, and salutes at the original public Receiving Vault. Musicians and choirs will perform original scores heard during the 1865 Funeral ceremony.

To volunteer or learn more, visit www.lincolnfuneralcoalition.org

Follow the Coalition on Facebook: www.facebook.com/lincolnfuneral2015

This drawing was published in Harper’s Weekly, May 27, 1865, and was titled “President Lincoln’s funeral — burial service at Oak Ridge, Springfield, Illinois. — [Sketched by W. Waud.]”
UIS Lincoln Legacy Lectures to Preview Lincoln Funeral Commemoration

By Barbara Ferrara

The 12th Annual Lincoln Legacy Lectures will be held at the University of Illinois Springfield on October 16, 2014, with the theme “Lincoln’s Funeral.” The lectures will provide background before the 150th anniversary commemoration of Abraham Lincoln’s funeral in Springfield in 2015.

James L. Swanson, senior legal scholar at The Heritage Foundation, will present a lecture titled “I give you my sprig of lilac: The Death and Funeral of Abraham Lincoln.”

Dr. Richard Wightman Fox, professor of history at the University of Southern California, will present a lecture titled “What We’ve Forgotten about Lincoln’s Funeral, and What We’ve Never Known.”

Dr. Michael Burlingame, who holds the Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies at UIS, will offer opening remarks, titled “Why Lincoln was Murdered,” and will serve as moderator.


Burlingame is the author of the two-volume biography Abraham Lincoln: A Life (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008). The authors’ books will be available for purchase and signing at the reception following the lectures.

The event will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. in Brookens Auditorium at UIS. It is free and open to the public; no reservations are required. Those who arrive early will have an opportunity for seating in the auditorium; overflow seating will be in Public Affairs Center room C/D. A live webcast can be viewed at: www.uis.edu/technology/uislive.html

The event is sponsored by the UIS Center for State Policy and Leadership, in cooperation with the Lynn Chair in Lincoln Studies. The lectures are cosponsored by The Abraham Lincoln Association, Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund, Engaged Citizenship (ECCE) Speaker Series, Illinois Issues, Illinois State Historical Society, Illinois State Library, Staab Funeral Home, University of Illinois Alumni Association, UIS College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, UIS College of Public Affairs and Administration, and WUIS Public Radio. For more information, call Barbara Ferrara at UIS, (217) 206-7094.
What is Pennyroyal?  
Comments and Responses

From what I know about the Lincolns’ marriage, this is a decision the husband would have left to his wife.

What was Mrs. Lincoln’s state of mind at the time? From April 8 until the end of 1852 Mr. Lincoln was gone 150 nights out of 267, on the Circuit Court. But from June 10 until September 15 he was home and it appears, from all we know, to have been a happy summer for the couple. Robert was nine years old, Willie was a year and a half, and Mary had recovered from her “baby-sickness” of the year before. Mr. Lincoln was making an extra effort to please his wife, who had sorely missed him: he bought her a bolt of fine muslin, and a very expensive new carriage. She had servants. The Lincolns entertained their old friends Orville and Eliza Browning in their home, for dinner, on July 22.

Mrs. Lincoln’s mood swings were becoming more pronounced when she was in her mid-thirties. She had been depressed in April, but definitely recovered her spirits in June. She had breast-fed Willie until he was eighteen months old, to delay ovulation; she then weaned him in late spring of 1852, before her husband returned.

It seems to me that she wanted to be pregnant that summer, but she might have had cause later, in September and October, to change her mind. Mr. Lincoln would be gone almost the entire autumn. Perhaps she tried to abort the pregnancy when she realized she would be left alone again. We will never know, but it is an arresting possibility. It is easy to imagine a sad woman, foreseeing another entire autumn in Springfield, with two children, without her husband, wanting to end her pregnancy.

It is difficult for this biographer to imagine her taking the pennyroyal in mid-August. It is easier to imagine her doing it in September. This is not history, it is conjecture.

Who bought the pennyroyal, and why? Mary had female servants. Maybe one of those women wanted it. More likely Mary wanted it, just in case she should decide to take it.

Copyright by Daniel Mark Epstein.

A Teachable Moment: Speculation, Pennyroyal, and Mrs. Lincoln

By Jean Baker

Erika Holst’s piece “A Puzzling Lincoln Purchase at Corneau & Diller’s Drug Store: What is Pennyroyal?” provides us with an opportunity to consider the process of historical verification, the use of evidence, and the distinction between gossip and history. As Holst writes in her carefully parsed piece, in August 1852 someone in the Lincoln household purchased pennyroyal from Corneau & Diller, the local Springfield pharmacy. A 19th century herb of the mint botanical family, the magical pennyroyal has multiple uses ranging from driving away fleas and killing snakes to treatment for upset stomachs and headaches, relieving flatulence, and serving as an abortifacient. It is this last application that Holst focuses on.

In August 1852 Mary Lincoln was pregnant; her fourth son Thomas “Tad” was born in April 1853, eight months later. The purchase and the birth of Tad are the only facts that lead the author to weave a series of speculations that someone in the household bought the pennyroyal. Mary took it to abort her fourth child, but was unsuccessful. Obviously the pennyroyal did not work and Tad Lincoln was born in April of the following year. (One wonders why the Lincolns did not return to the pharmacy the next month for more pennyroyal if their intention was abortion!) Doubling down on her speculation, Holst suggests that the pennyroyal Mary Lincoln ingested did not abort the fetus, only harmed it; hence Tad Lincoln’s cleft palate (itself not entirely documented) was the result of Mary Lincoln’s use of pennyroyal.

There are several ways to address the assumptions in this piece that move it into the realm of gossip. The Illinois census of 1855 reveals a female between the ages of ten and twenty, most likely Catherine Gordon, living in the Lincoln household. It is just as plausible to suggest that a woman Mary Lincoln described as one of those “wild Irish” may have used the pennyroyal. Among the many uses of pennyroyal was its effectiveness as an insecticide. It was August during the buggy

(continued on page 9)
Holst speculates that Mary Lincoln was six weeks pregnant, using the traditional nine months as her target dates with Tad born on April 4th, 1853 and the purchase made on August 14th. But the wide variation in the duration of pregnancies is well established. Mary Lincoln may have had an eight-month pregnancy that began in August. Thus Mary Lincoln may not have been pregnant at all or more likely, less (or more) than six weeks pregnant. If less than six weeks, it is doubtful that she knew she was pregnant. Moreover one missed period would not have been sufficient time to take such a bold step that contradicts all other evidence indicating the attachment of the Lincolns to their children and to parenthood.

A notably long nurser of her babies, Mary Lincoln had just stopped nursing Willie in the summer of 1852. Establishing regularity in any menstrual cycle is always difficult after a period of nursing, again suggesting that Mary Lincoln may not have known she was pregnant in August 1852 when the pennyroyal was purchased. Or alternatively she may have been trying to regulate her menstrual cycles after their long cessation while she was nursing. In any case to reach the conclusion that the pennyroyal was used by Mary Lincoln for an abortion requires the rejection of many equally likely alternatives.

It also requires proceeding by asking questions that are not answered definitively. Thus Holst’s piece is peppered with interrogatories that frame her hypothesis without requiring a factual statement: “Could Mary Lincoln etc.? “Why might the Lincolns have terminated a pregnancy?” “Might Mary Lincoln’s ingestion (of pennyroyal) have harmed but not killed the fetus?”

Documentary evidence — as opposed to inference — has the Lincolns telling neighbors and friends that Willie needed a playmate, hence the pregnancy. Certainly one reason to have a fourth child was their mutual hope for a daughter. And as for the evidence-by-exception that Mary Lincoln did not have as many children as her sisters, she had a prolapsed uterus and was physiologically unable to conceive after Tad’s birth. Using a larger profile, not just the family one that Holst espouses, couples in Springfield bore an average of four children and according to Kenneth Winkle “middle class Springfielders practiced the most rigorous regimen of family limitation,” most using coitus interruptus. There is substantial evidence that the Lincolns understood contraception, given the nearly five-year gap between Eddie and Willie’s births. The evidence reveals that Mary Lincoln got pregnant when the couple wanted another child as indicated in her response to Eddie’s death.

Given its lack of explicit concrete evidence “A Puzzling Purchase” introduces us to questions of the limits of inference, with the title itself somewhat misleading. The subject here is not a puzzling purchase or even pennyroyal: it is the suggestion that Mary Lincoln used it for an abortion. Yet there is neither empirical nor contextual nor documentary evidence that Mary Lincoln did so. There is no corroborate, no smoking gun in a letter or even gossip around town that might have been harvested by William Herndon’s later interviews. There are no documents to suggest this conclusion. And these are devastating charges, despite their prudent presentation by Holst who nonetheless encourages us on the basis of her inferential case “to reexamine what we know about the Lincolns and their desire for children.”

Using David Hackett Fischer’s list of historical fallacies in his engaging Historians’ Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought as a measure, Holst is guilty of many violations. First the fallacy of possible proof for which there is no real evidence but rather a web of possibilities that might have occurred, one building onto the other into the final hypothetical house of cards. Next the prodigious fallacy that mistakes sensation for significance and describes events that are fantastic and extraordinary. Who would have cared if the pennyroyal was purchased as a solution for Fido’s fleas? Rather it is the suggestion of abortion and the possibility of causing Tad’s cleft palate that titillates. As Fischer writes, suggestions “like sinners gain something from an unsavory reputation” and surely the proposition of a possible abortion is unsavory. Certainly Holst exaggerates the neutrality on abortion of this generation. Twenty years later the Comstock Act passed Congress making the advertisement or practice of abortion a federal crime.

One can almost see the headline in the National Inquirer of the day — New York’s Police Gazette: First Lady’s Abortion Cause of Son’s Cleft Palate! Finally there is the fallacy of false extrapolation that takes us, as on a magic carpet, from the pharmacy to Tad’s cleft palate.

Perhaps this article will encourage students of history to think about our responsibility to the past, especially to a woman whose life has long been besmirched by gossip. Is it fair to present such salacious speculations, knowing how long it takes evidence to catch up to inference? While Holst is careful to suggest and speculate and conjecture, staying far away from any moral judgments and offering disclaimers along the way, the mere presentation of the suspicion is harmful to Mary Lincoln’s reputation. Rebuttals never entirely catch up to assertions. There are still folks who believe the canard promoted by Herndon that Abraham Lincoln had syphilis which he gave to Mary, hence her insanity! Finally we might recall the advice of those common sense logicians Tweedledum and Tweedledee: “I know what you are thinking about,” said Tweedledee, “but it ain’t so.” To which Tweedledee replied, “Contrariwise if it was so it might be and if it were so it would be, but as it isn’t, it ain’t. That’s logic.”

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season in Springfield. On other occasions Mr. Lincoln’s home had a broken blind and window, suggesting free entry for mosquitoes and biting flies. There was as well a dog — Fido — in the house at Eighth and Jackson. Pennyroyal was also used for tuberculosis, an especially feared disease in the Lincoln household after four-year-old Eddie Lincoln’s death from tuberculosis in the winter of 1850. One can easily imagine Mary Lincoln rubbing the leaves onto Willie’s chest. Besides its multiple health applications, pennyroyal was used in folklore to ward off the evil eye, and the ever superstitious Mary Lincoln might have used it to scent a sachet as the women of her birth town of Lexington sometimes did. Surely the multiple possibilities suggested in the above paragraph suggest the impossibility of verifying the critical proposition in Holst’s article.

Mentha pulegium, commonly (European) pennyroyal
The Global Lincoln

International Noises from 1864

By James M. Cornelius
Lincoln Curator
Abraham Lincoln
Presidential Library and Museum

International tensions were one result of the nationalism that arose everywhere after 1815. Using a historic word with broad resonance in 1862, Secretary of State Seward quoted Lincoln in a letter to Paris: “In the president’s opinion, the emancipation of this continent from European control has been the principal feature of its history during the last century.”

In 1863 Sen. James Doolittle (R-Wisc.) intoned to England and France: “We have just begun to fight ... we will never surrender.” Hearkening back to John Paul Jones (1779); foreshadowing Winston Churchill (1940); pointing to global struggle that grows out of civil war -- Doolittle was prophetic.

Foreign trade that once favored the secessionist cause was mostly gone; cotton was no longer king. The south in 1860 produced 90% of world supply, but by 1864 its production and export had been decimated. Other fibers had greatly replaced it: wool, flax (for linen), hemp, jute, etc. Other cotton producers, especially India and Egypt, all ramped up. New Englander Stephen Allen published *Fibrilula: A Practical and Economical Substitute for Cotton* ... (260 pp., $1.00) and when war broke out it appeared in Paris, too. Kentucky grew 30% of our flax in 1860, another reason Lincoln needed them in the Union. Wool also replaced cotton, a boon to states from Ohio to Minnesota, and to European Shepherds.

To the north, Canada had sharp elbows. Navy Sec. Gideon Welles’s diary: “August 12, 1864: Have news this evening that a new pirate craft, [CSS] Tallahassee, has appeared off New York, burning vessels. Steamers ordered off in pursuit. Aug. 18: Mr. Seward brought me this A.M. a dispatch from Consul Jackson at Halifax [Nova Scotia], saying the pirate Rebbl Tallahassee had arrived at that port,” for supplies.

CSS Alabama, built in Liverpool, sank more Union ships than any other vessel, but was sunk herself near France in June 1864. CSS Florida took 37 fishing and shipping vessels before its capture in a Brazilian port in Octo-

ber. To stop the Tallahassee, Welles sent specific orders to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but feet dragged. “Not one of them [in Brooklyn] is a Farragut, or Foote, or Porter, I fear.” On 25 August Union vessels sent after the Tallahassee in Canada returned, failures all.

In July, Horace Greeley at the *N.Y. Tribune* forced Lincoln to heed rumors of CSA ‘peace agents’ at Niagara, Ontario, who proved to be unauthorized to act. Greeley wrote it up to make Lincoln look like he preferred war to negotiation. Gov. Yates of Illinois was apoplectic about Canadian-based raiders storming Chicago to liberate Camp Douglas POW’s, though no raid materialized. One did reach St. Albans, Vermont, on 19 October, when 25 Confederate agents crossed from Quebec, robbed 3 banks, killed 2 Americans, and fled back north.

Spain, as the Fort Sumter crisis loomed in 1861, took the opportunity to re-annex the Dominican Republic, against strong but bellet-free protests from Washington, and held her till May 1865. More needling was Mexico, soft underbelly of the American continent. After Sumter, more than 8,000 Spanish, French, and British sailors lit out to claim unpaid debts, though by summer 1862 the Spanish and British withdrew. Lincoln could not spare men for republican president Benito Juarez against the Franco-Catholic-royalist forces. So Seward tried to face down the French with punch-less diplomacy. *Harper’s Weekly* in April 1863 responded with a cartoon, “Mr. Seward and the Frenchman”; Seward gently drops a boxing glove, while Mercier, with big moustache, politely whispers that he will fight the Mexicans instead. Lincoln told General Banks in New Orleans to keep an eye on Euro-monarchist moves toward Texas, while generals Grant and Sherman also pondered turning west rather than east after Vicksburg.

In 1864 Napoleon III poured it on, choosing for his new crypto-French monarchy in Mexico his political underling Archduke Maximilian of Austria, brother of emperor Franz-Josef. He and Empress Carlota landed at Tampico in June, to the cheers of Jefferson Davis, who desperately needed their muscle; which never was lent. In fall 1864 the *Atlantic Monthly* feared a foreshadowing at home: “What has happened to Mexico would assuredly happen here, if we should allow the country to Mexicanize itself at the bidding of [N.Y. Democrat August] Belmont & Co.”

International debate over the nature of our war boiled. Is the money-minded Union conquering the agrarian Confederacy? The embarrassing parallel of Poland arose. In 1863 its nationalist uprising was crushed by Russian troops. Then Russian naval vessels showed up unannounced in New York harbor as a ‘gesture of friendship’ for the Union. Lincoln was obliged to send Mary to thank them, though Russian maneuvers merely announced that Britannia did not rule all waves.

Would the overbearing Union crush its poorer provinces? The issue was bruited enough that James Russell Lowell in the *North American Review* in 1864 had to defend Lincoln’s course: “As for subjugation, when people are beaten they are beaten, and every nation has had its turn.... To talk of the South as our future Poland is to talk without book.”

John Stuart Mill, thinker on ‘democracy,’ never chose a side in our war. As late as July 1864 the shipbuilding interest in Parliament (heavily Liberal) moved for recognition of the Confederacy. Thomas Baring, M. P. and banker, warmly supported the North -
Today, only a few unrestored Lincoln-era structures remain in Springfield, Illinois. One is the historic Judge John Wycliff Taylor House at 902 South 12th Street, on Springfield’s near east side. The House was built by 59-year-old Taylor in 1856. Judge Taylor knew Lincoln and later the House was witness to significant events in Springfield’s African-American history. Just a short time ago, the House was saved from demolition at the last minute by preservationists, historians, and neighborhood residents. This photograph taken in August 2014 shows a contractor removing shingles and revealing clapboard painted a Quaker brown color similar to the Lincoln Home. If you know anything about the House, please share your information with the editor at rhart1213@aol.com.
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