



# FOR THE PEOPLE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

[www.abrahamlincolnnassociation.org](http://www.abrahamlincolnnassociation.org)

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FALL-WINTER, 2018  
DOUBLE EDITION

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

## Dan Abrams 2019 Birthday Banquet Speaker

Dan Abrams—attorney, journalist, ABC News chief legal affairs anchor, the host of the A&E Network show *Live P.D.*, and recent Lincoln author — will be the principal speaker at the Association's 2019 Lincoln Birthday Banquet on Tuesday, February 12 in Springfield. Abrams will discuss his *New York Times* best-selling book *Lincoln's Last Trial: The Murder Case That Propelled Him to the Presidency*. The book, written with David Fisher, examines the 1859 trial of Peachy Quinn Harrison, the son of a close Lincoln friend and political supporter, who was accused of murdering Greek Crafton, whom Lincoln had mentored and trained for a law career in his Springfield office. Lincoln had recently risen to national prominence a year earlier during his U.S. Senate campaign debates with Stephen A. Douglas and because of that the eyes of the nation were focused on this Springfield murder trial. Lincoln won an acquittal for Harrison, and one year later would be elected President of the United States.



Dan Abrams

ALA Director Chris DeRose, himself a lawyer and Lincoln author, says of the book, "In this rich and previously unexplored corner of history, the authors take you inside the courtroom to watch Abraham Lincoln — at the height of his powers as a lawyer and on the edge of eternal fame — as he tries a thrilling murder trial to a jury."

Dan's father, Floyd Abrams, will be the recipient of the ALA's Lincoln the Lawyer Award, which recognizes individuals who reflect the character and ideals of Abraham Lincoln in their legal careers. Floyd Abrams is among the nation's foremost advocates on behalf of the First Amendment. He has argued numerous cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, primarily on freedom of expression issues. In 2011 Yale Law School founded the Floyd Abrams Institute for Freedom of Expression in his honor to promote free speech, scholarship, and law reform on traditional and new media freedoms.

In *Lincoln's Last Trial*, Dan Abrams writes, "I dedicate this book to my mentor and father Floyd Abrams whose genuine love for, and mastery of, history and the law established a lifelong example that I continue to emulate but will never quite live up to."

### MAKE RESERVATIONS TODAY

Reservation forms are available at the ALA website  
<http://bit.ly/alareg2019> or Email: [jessicamcpeek.ala@gmail.com](mailto:jessicamcpeek.ala@gmail.com)  
Phone: 217-LINCOLN (546-2656)

## Benjamin P. Thomas Honored at Illinois College

In May 2019, Illinois College in Jacksonville, Illinois held a ceremony marking the rededication of the Benjamin P. Thomas Civil War Library Collection. The event celebrated the donation of the Thomas Civil War Library Collection at Illinois College, originally given to the College in June 1958 in memory of Benjamin Thomas. An historian and one-time Executive Secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association, Thomas was well-known for his popular 1934 book, *Lincoln's New Salem*, as well as a 1952 biography of Abraham Lincoln, a book which gained success both in historic and scholarly circles, as well as with the public. Thomas was awarded an honorary degree from Illinois College in 1947 and later served as a trustee of the College. Both the Thomas family and the Springfield-based group, Springfield Civil War Round Table, partnered with the College to make the event a success.

Relatives of Thomas who participated in the rededication included four of his grandchildren along with his daughter Sarah Thomas, who read from her father's speech to her high school graduating class. Additional speakers during the special event included William Furry, executive director of the Illinois State Historical Society; Guy Fraker, Lincoln author and retired attorney; and James Cornelius, former Lincoln curator at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Abridgements of their remarks appear on pages 2 and 4.



Benjamin P. Thomas

## *Benjamin P. Thomas Civil War Memorial Library*

### *Illinois College - Rededication*

*The following are abridged from remarks made at the rededication of the Benjamin P. Thomas Civil War Memorial Library at Illinois College's Schewe Library on Saturday, May 19, 2018.*

***Sarah Thomas read remarks her father, Ben, delivered at her 1953 high school graduation:***

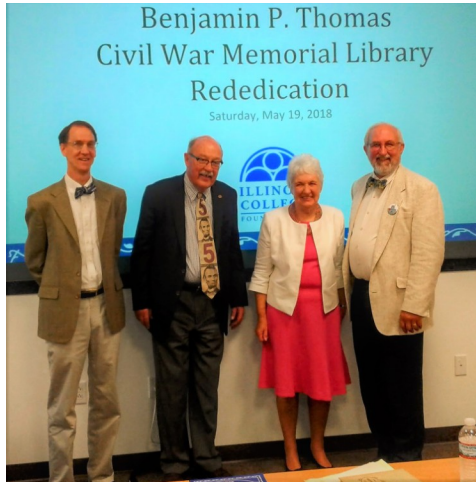
We may as well face up to the fact that you live in a troubled world. Some young people are daunted by that thought; and some whom I have talked to are inclined to feel sorry for themselves. Some young men whose lives are interrupted, or will be, by military service, think these are especially cruel times; and young ladies with boy friends are likely to share that opinion.

But yours is by no means the first generation to face a troubled world; we might almost say that the normal condition of the world is turbulent. It has known religious revolutions, political revolutions, wars foreign and domestic, plague, famine, economic collapse, and persecutions from the beginning of time.

Even the ages of advancement have brought catastrophe to some. The discovery of America, with the resulting change in trade routes, made England a great power; but it meant economic stagnation to certain Mediterranean cities. The industrial revolution, which is now bringing American working men the most elevated standard of living the working man has ever known, meant poverty and misery for working men at first.

Some day we may have a completely peaceful world, but it will never be contented. God never meant mankind to be contented. We hear a lot about contented cows. But who wants to be a cow? A cow is contented because she has no mind. It is the struggle for human betterment that develops our minds and our spirits, and brings out the best that is in us. I believe God meant our world to be that way.

The Founders of our nation, setting forth in the Declaration of Independence the ideals that they hoped would guide us, asserted that all men are created equal, and that they are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When I was a boy, this word "Commencement" used to puzzle me. But of course the word 'commencement' is correct ... accomplishment and fulfillment mean the



**James Cornelius, Guy Fraker, Sarah Thomas and William Furry at Illinois College**

commencement of something bigger.

Specialization has gone farther in science than in any other field, and I have talked to scientists who fear what they are accomplishing; because our knowledge of natural forces, and what can be done with them, has outstripped our knowledge of proper human relationships, of how we live together. You are going to live, I trust, under a democratic form of government – under the sort of government whose leaders seek not to impose their will on you, but try, rather, to help you to choose wisely for yourselves. But to choose wisely demands broad understanding. Take just one example – our relations with Russia. If we judged Russians solely by the acts of their political leaders in recent times, we might conclude that it is hopeless to try to get along with them. But we know also that Russia has produced great music, great works of literature, great art. And knowledge of these aspects of Russia's cultural background gives us some reason to hope that some day, some how, the better nature of the Russians may gain the upper hand.

Broad knowledge of the sort I have in mind will make it evident to you that your own well-being is inseparable from the general welfare of mankind, and that we as people, and we as a nation, can advance and prosper permanently only as the lot of others improves along with ours. Our great corporations, for example, know that the assurance of their prosperity lies in the prosperity of their own and other workers, who buy their products. Nations learn that if they turn their backs upon

the world, the world aligns itself against them. Man serves himself best in the long run by showing sympathy and helpfulness toward others.

This enlightened self-interest, which recognized the interdependence of our own welfare with the welfare of those around us, is the essence of democracy. It differentiates democracy from communism. It gives fair competition a valid place in our democratic way of life.

Every one of us knows men and women who would be sincerely shocked to be accused of being enemies of our democracy, yet who, by their tolerant thinking and their intolerant actions, put democracy in greater peril than all the secret agents the Russians could ever send against us. Because unwittingly, but no less effectively, by denying some classes of our people the chance of self-advancement which democracy promises them, they are preparing a fertile seed-bed for communist propaganda. Our democratic way of life will never be overthrown from abroad unless it is first weakened from within. And it can only be weakened from within by our own failure to live up to its ideals.

With Asia in ferment, with Africa threatening to become another world trouble spot, with race relations in our own country better, but still unsolved, and with communism eager, whenever an opportunity presents itself, to discredit democracy as a mere deceit and sham, you, more than any other generation, will be called upon again and again to ask yourselves the simple, but all important question, "Do I believe in democracy or don't I?" And if you answer "Yes," as I sincerely hope you will, then you must help to made the ideals of democracy something more than mere platitudes to be mouthed on suitable occasions.

Your school has performed its duty well, if it has taught you how to study and made you want to learn. The mark of an educated person is a certain humility born of the realization of how little he possesses of the sum total of human knowledge. There is nothing quite so tragic or so dangerous as the ignorant complacency of the man who knows it all. If you have something of a feeling of inadequacy today, you are beginning to be educated.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## The Abraham Lincoln Association

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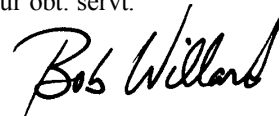
## President's Message

The Abraham Lincoln Association started with a simple premise: celebrate the 100th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. In fact, the original name of the organization was the Lincoln Centennial Association. There was a great celebration in 1909 and the group decided to have similar events every year. But after a couple of decades the leadership decided to expand the purpose of the association to include preserving and promoting Lincoln landmarks and advancing Lincoln scholarship. At the same time the association changed its name to the one we know today.

I've been intrigued to look at the original corporate filing that our association submitted to the Illinois Secretary of State in 1908. It contains an amazing collection of founders—the Chief Justice of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, a former U.S. Vice President, past and present governors of Illinois, congressman and senators, justices, judges, and journalists, and even some personal friends of Mr. Lincoln. These were important and busy government and private executives, but they took the time to support and organize our association. They knew that there was something special about Abraham Lincoln, something that needed to be shared with the world.

I am grateful to the members of today's Abraham Lincoln Association who carry with them the same realization about Lincoln's importance as our founders did. I hope that we, as we mark ALA's 111th anniversary this year, will extend our reach throughout the entire nation for whom he preserved the Union.

Your obt. servt.




ALA President Bob Willard with President Lincoln, as portrayed by George Buss in the Lincoln Room of the U.S. Capitol December 2015.

## Four New Directors Welcomed

At the ALA October meeting, the Board of Directors elected four new Directors:

- **Susan J. Koch** is Chancellor of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. She is actively leading the UIS initiative to establish a Center for Lincoln Studies. Koch earned a bachelor's degree with honors from Dakota State University in South Dakota and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Northern Iowa.
- **Anne E. Moseley** is the Director and Curator at the Lincoln Heritage Museum on the campus of Lincoln College in Lincoln, Illinois. A graduate of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and the University of Illinois at Springfield, Moseley is known for her interpretive portrayals of Lincoln-era figures, including Mary Lincoln.
- **Roger D. Rudich** is an attorney in Chicago and a former president of the Civil War Round

Table of Chicago. He has a bachelor of science degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a law degree from DePaul University School of Law.

- **Brian Steenbergen** is a financial manager with Meier, Inc. in Grand Rapids and a long time collector of Lincolniana. He received his bachelor's degree in finance, investment and securities from Grand Valley State University.

The ALA Board of Directors consists of 48 members. It has two formal meetings a year in Springfield plus an optional summer meeting that is usually held at a site associated with Lincoln not in the Illinois capital. At its most recent meeting the Board affirmed that its meetings (except executive sessions) are open to all ALA members. Any member interested in attending should contact ALA Executive Manager Jessica McPeck via email: [jessicamcpeek.ala@gmail.com](mailto:jessicamcpeek.ala@gmail.com)



(Continued from page 2)

### **Bill Furry, Executive Director, Illinois State Historical Society**

On my refrigerator at home is a quotation attributed to English writer, poet, and philosopher G. K. Chesterton that goes something like this: "Without education we are in horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously."

While it has a sort of smug charm, this one by Benjamin Platt Thomas speaks more directly and honestly to the subject of what a real education means. "The mark of an educated person is a certain humility born of the realization of how little he or she possesses of the sum total of human knowledge. There is nothing quite so tragic or so dangerous as the ignorant complacency of the person who knows it all."

We are gathered today to remember the gift of a man who knew a very great deal, who valued education, who valued democracy, and who valued the lessons of history.

There is so much to admire about the brief, productive life of Benjamin Thomas. His life and impact on Lincoln studies were significant, but I want to say something about his life as a writer, begun after his careers as teacher; as secretary of The Abraham Lincoln Association; as an insurance and cattle man; and as director of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce. In the late 1940s he began work on a biography of abolitionist Theodore Dwight Weld, one of the pillars of the anti-slavery movement in the east, whose passionate leadership rivaled that of William Lloyd Garrison. Weld is now all but forgotten except in the footnotes of new works about the abolitionist movement, the American Anti-Slavery Society, and the Underground Railroad.

Although Thomas's biography, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom*, was respected and appreciated, it didn't sell well; to be honest, it died a thousand deaths. Thomas reportedly was ready to forsake his call to write history. But for his next book he turned to a familiar topic: the life of Abraham Lincoln. Because of that book, and not the perceived failures of his earlier efforts, we are here today, a grand lesson for scholars and researchers never to give up.

I met Sarah Thomas many years ago when she was a librarian at the Lincoln Public Library on the north side of Springfield. When I discovered who she is, it was akin to meeting royalty. I met her son, Fred Slocombe, when he became an intern for the ISHS a decade ago. His original design for the logo of the ISHS still graces the covers of our academic *Journal* and *Illinois Heritage* magazine.

It is an honor and a privilege to pay tribute to Benjamin Thomas, who, I suspect, is with us here today, inviting us to be engaged with the history happening all around us, and to make a personal difference for the future.

### **Guy Fraker, author of *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency***

The works of Benjamin Thomas had a substantial impact on my pre-college years, an influence that remains to this day. I grew up in suburban New York, with roots in Illinois. In 1948, while visiting relatives in central Illinois, I was taken by my Great Aunt Lola to New Salem, a visit to the village from which I have never fully recovered. The following Christmas I received a five-dollar bill, which I spent on Paul Angle's wonderful biography *The Lincoln Reader*, an anthology which I devoured. The book includes 32 pages of text by Benjamin Thomas, 13 on New Salem. Thomas and Angle were close friends.

In 1951 our family returned to Illinois and I revisited New Salem. While there I purchased Thomas's classic *Lincoln and New Salem*, which I read and reread. Its warmth and personal tone gave me a sense of knowing the people of New Salem, and living through the efforts to save the village. I could picture myself walking through the village as I read the book.

A year later, I learned about the highly touted Lincoln book that was soon to be published – the first single volume biography in many years. At age 14 I was thrilled that this author was the author of my beloved New Salem book. The arrival of *Abraham Lincoln: a Biography* was a major publishing event nationally. The book soared to the top of the *New York Times* best seller list, and was a Book of the Month Club selection. It was written for and read by a full range of readers, not just the "Lincoln crowd." I felt a personal triumph that this guy whose New Salem book I had so enjoyed had just hit a home run in Lincoln literature. The scholarly biography had a readability and warmth that made it more than an intelligent and creative Lincoln book; it was a classic.

While a freshman at the University of Illinois several years later, I learned of Thomas's death. I was strangely saddened by the untimely death of someone I had known only through these three books. History has vindicated my youthful enchantment with the Lincoln books of Benjamin Thomas. *Abraham Lincoln: a Biography* preempted the field. In 1977 a new biography was dismissed as being lifted in no small part from Thomas. In 1995, David Donald's highly publicized biography *Lincoln* was published. In his Foreword, Donald acknowledged his debt to Thomas. Two of the

blurbs compared the work to Thomas's book. In 2008, Ronald C. White authored a fine updated biography, *A. Lincoln, a Biography*. Its bibliography includes Thomas's two books. Both of these books have a place on my shelf; however, neither will replace Thomas's biography.

### **James Cornelius, Secretary, The Abraham Lincoln Association**

The founders of the Springfield Civil War Round Table declared that they, and thus we, gather for "congenial association." Ben Thomas was the embodiment of that spirit, by agreeing in 1955 to serve as the first president, compounding his renown as researcher and writer.

The CWRT launched this book collection in Ben's honor in 1958 in part because Illinois College is a center of humanistic learning. May this room be the seedbed of a rebirth of Lincoln and Civil War studies.

Does saying that mean these books are a past culture? George Cashman of the CWRT wrote in 1956 that "The usual reaction [to hearing about such books and groups] is one of disbelief that any adult could be interested in what happened more than a century ago." Moreover, why study an old war, which only "opens old wounds"? He wrote when Hungary was being crushed by a Russian-communist invasion; President Eisenhower was secretly having heart surgery; the British were being chased from the Suez Canal, which then briefly closed. You think we have problems? They had problems in 1956.

One response is to devote a collection to a single person, and of these, Lincoln is the leader. Are these now fading? The one at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, closed a decade ago, merged into a public library; Illinois Benedictine College deaccessioned its Lincoln collection 20 years ago. The Randall Chair at the U. of I. has been empty for 2 years. In Springfield, you can never be sure what will happen, as that Lincoln collection has had 4 homes in less than a century. But keep looking: Mississippi State University accepted a very large Lincoln collection from Judge Frank Williams. Yale purchased a major photographic and documentary collection about Lincoln and the Civil War era. On that same plane of high repute is Illinois College, with the difference that thanks to the SCWRT and the Thomas family this assemblage has been available and cared for during a tumultuous half-century, and has a permanent home. Michael Burlingame compiled many of Ben's much-admired after-dinner talks in *Lincoln's Humor* (2002). Might the archives of, say, Illinois College hold unpublished essays by Ben?

## Lincoln and Douglas -- in London

By James M. Cornelius

More than three dozen editions of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates have been published since Lincoln himself saw them into print in book form in 1860. A schoolbook version appeared in 1896 from Macmillan. Edwin Erle Sparks, compiler of the next one in 1908 for the Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, remarked upon the “crude though virile setting ... of two men so evenly matched in polemical power, yet so unlike in temperament and physical appearance.” In 1993, Harold Holzer’s “unexpurgated” edition of the debates cited the 21 Sept. 1858 *New York Evening Post* comment that “The prairies are on fire,” a headline that Sparks also found. In 2009 for the David Leroy / Daniel Weinberg book on the 42 copies of the 1860 volume Lincoln signed and gave to friends, Judge Frank J. Williams noted that “Lincoln had judged from the newspaper transcripts that the debates with Douglas offered a favorable impression of himself.”

The fascination continues, yet to this author’s knowledge, none of the editions has mentioned what the British press said at the time. Nothing? Lord Charnwood, who might have had readiest access to the 1858 *Times* of London, did not cite it in his 1916 biography of Lincoln; nor Richard Carwardine in his of 2006. Contemporaneous reports of the words of the Republican challenger to the Democratic

incumbent for a U.S. Senate seat from Illinois were printed far and wide in the U.S., and it has long been known that New Yorkers, Virginians, Louisianans, et al., took as much interest in the arguments and policy

development. We can only judge of the future from the past, and, comparing the vote of the several organizations last year with the prospects in the present contest, we see no reason to anticipate any material change from the proportions in the popular vote which each party then held. The campaign is a short one, and will doubtless be conducted in a spirited and energetic manner. The degree of success which awaits the several tickets in different localities may be influenced in a considerable degree by the local nominations, and the feeling engendered in the contest for local officers. In Illinois the canvass between Mr. Douglass and Mr. Lincoln goes on without much apparent change in the prospects. The defeat of Mr. Douglass will be a great gain for the Republicans in 1860. The importance of the issue is felt by them, and they are sparing no pains to insure success. On the other hand, the friends of the Administration throughout the north are beginning to feel the great importance of preventing a Republican triumph in the leading State of the north-west. The sympathy for Mr. Douglass in the democratic ranks is open, notwithstanding the hostility at Washington. The complications of American politics were never more varied than at present. Out of the confusion, however, there can only come in 1860 two great parties, as in 1855—the Republican and the Democratic. All the politicians must fall into one or the other of these ranks. The comments of *The Times* upon the cable celebrations of New York have called out responses from most of the New York press. *The Herald* says,—“The cool assurance with which the English journals claim that everything is done by ‘English science, English art, and English men,’ is extremely refreshing. We have not space to descend to the minor points in the field of telegraphic discovery and development, and therefore confine our remarks to the main ones.”

Clip from *London Times*

ideas of the two orators as did Illinoisans. After all, if a ‘nobody from nowhere’ could knock off the leader of the Congressional Democrats, what might it portend for the 1860 presidential election?

A correspondent for the *London Times* was aware enough, too. In the issue of 4 October

1858, on page 9, column 2, appeared the snippet pictured here. It begins, “In Illinois the canvass between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglass goes on without much apparent change in the prospects,” according to their U.S. correspondent. “The defeat of Mr. Douglass will be a great gain for the Republicans in 1860.” The scribe ought to have put that second sentence into the conditional: the defeat *would* be a great Republican gain. As we now know, the Democrats’ victory in Illinois — called the “the leading State of the north-west” — aligned the factors for Lincoln’s and the Republicans’ victory in 1860.

Most of the paragraph described the Democratic rift between Douglas and Buchanan factions. The writer became more prescient in one respect, ending the section by averring that “All the politicians must fall into one or the other of these ranks [Democrat or Republican].” There would be no firm 3- or 4-party array in the U.S. as occurred in the U.K. during the 1850s.

Assuredly the correspondent had read of the debates at Ottawa (21 August) and Freeport (27 August). But a 4 October publication date in London, after a typical ship’s passage of 2 or 3 weeks bearing his letter, might also have taken heed of those at Jonesboro (15 Sept.) and Charleston (18 Sept.). Do we now have cause to re-read the Jonesboro and/or Charleston debates to determine if either contributed to one foreigner’s sense that Lincoln was going to win the Senate contest?

## 10th Anniversary of President Obama’s Banquet Speech

It has been ten years since newly inaugurated President Obama returned to Springfield to participate in the nationwide celebration of Abraham Lincoln’s 200th birthday. Just about every President since Lincoln’s time has made a pilgrimage to Mr. Lincoln’s hometown of Springfield, but only two spoke at the ALA Birthday Banquet. President William Howard Taft in 1911 was the first.

The 2009 Bicentennial Banquet was held in the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. ALA President Richard E. Hart (at left) was the master of ceremonies. Governor Pat Quinn and former Governors Jim Thompson and Jim Edgar attended the event.



## *ALA Events*

### *Celebrating Abraham Lincoln's 210th Birthday*

**1**

Free and  
Open to Public

#### **Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium**

##### **Opening Address**

**Monday, February 11, 2019**

**6:00 p.m. House of Representatives, Old State Capitol**

**Sarah Thomas** will speak on *About a Book*

**Brian Dirck** will present *Last Full Measure: Lincoln and the Battlefield Dead*

**2**

Free and  
Open to Public

#### **Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

**11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. House of Representatives, Old State Capitol**

**Ron Keller** will discuss his forthcoming book, *Lincoln in the Illinois Legislature* in a talk entitled *Lincoln in the Legislature: Worthy of Esteem?*

**Matthew Pinsker** will discuss his next book in a talk entitled

*Boss Lincoln: New Insights on a Party Leader.*

**3**

Reservations  
Required -

#### **Dr. Thomas F. Schwartz Luncheon and Lecture**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

**1:00-2:00 p.m. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Atrium**

**Nicholas J. C. Pistor** will discuss his book, *Shooting Lincoln: Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and the Race to Photograph the Story of the Century.*

**4**

Free and  
Open to Public

#### **Round Table Discussion with All Speakers**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

**2:30-4:00 p.m. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, 2nd Floor**

Book signing to follow

**5**

Reservations  
Required -

#### **Lincoln Birthday Banquet**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

**President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, 7th and Adams**

**Dan Abrams**

*Lincoln's Last Trial:*

*The Murder Case That Propelled Him to the Presidency.*

**Banquet Reception: 6:00 p.m. Presidential Ballroom Lobby**

**Banquet: 7:00 p.m. Presidential Ballroom**

All events are free and open to the public with the exception of the Luncheon (\$30 per person) and the Birthday Banquet (\$55 per person). Advance registration is required for these two events and can be obtained at the "Upcoming Events" page on the ALA website.

[www.abrahamlincolnnassociation.org/upcomingevents.aspx](http://www.abrahamlincolnnassociation.org/upcomingevents.aspx)

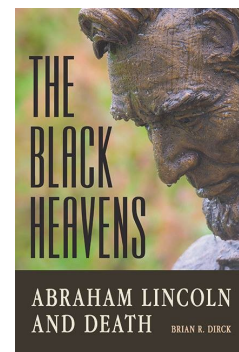


## Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium Speakers



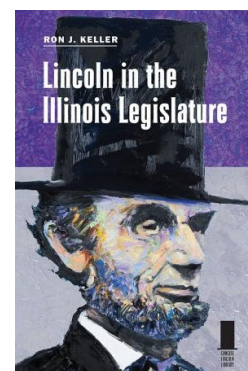
### Brian Dirck

Brian Dirck is a professor of history at Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana. He received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Kansas. His first book, *Lincoln and Davis: Imagining America, 1809-1865*, was based on his dissertation, offering a comparative analysis of the two Civil War presidents' lives and careers. He has since focused most of his attention on Abraham Lincoln. He edited and contributed to a collection of essays entitled *Lincoln Emancipated: The President and the Politics of Race*. In 2007 he published *Lincoln the Lawyer*. In 2012 he published *Lincoln and the Constitution*, as part of the Concise Lincoln Library Series, and *Lincoln and White America*, an analysis of Lincoln's views concerning white supremacy and racism.



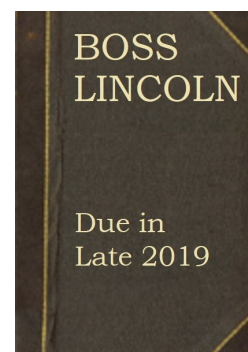
### Ron J. Keller

Ron J. Keller is an associate professor of history and political science and the current managing director of the Abraham Lincoln Center for Character Development at Lincoln College. He is a coauthor of *Abraham Lincoln in Logan County, Illinois, 1834-1860* and *A Respect for the Office: Letters from the Presidents*. A past director of the Lincoln Heritage Museum, he serves on the board of The Abraham Lincoln Association and is an adviser to the Lincoln Forum. In February 2017, Ron was elected a City Council Alderman in his hometown of Lincoln, Illinois.



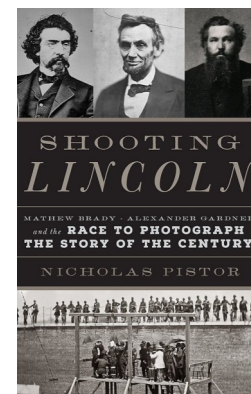
### Matthew Pinsker

Matthew Pinsker holds the Brian Pohanka Chair of Civil War History at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and serves as Director of the House Divided Project (<http://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites>), an innovative effort to build digital resources on the Civil War era. Matt is also a fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington DC. He has previously held visiting fellowships at Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College and the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. Matt graduated from Harvard College and received a D.Phil. degree in Modern History from the University of Oxford. He is the author of *Lincoln's Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers' Home* and *Abraham Lincoln*, a volume in the American Presidents Reference Series by CQ Press.



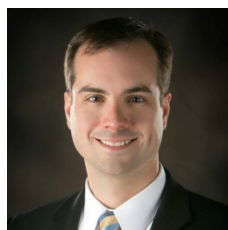
### Nicholas J. C. Pistor

Nicholas J. C. Pistor is a former reporter at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* who has broken stories on some of the biggest stories in the Midwest and was a consultant for CBS's "48 Hours" true-crime series. Nick began as a stringer for the *Post-Dispatch* in 2003, after he graduated from Saint Louis University, eventually working through various roles before becoming a reporter. In his 2017 book, *Shooting Lincoln*, Nick argues that Civil War photographers Mathew Brady and Alexander Gardner were media pioneers who had a lasting impact on the industry that can be traced to TMZ, paparazzi, and film.



## Abe Lincoln: An Acceptable Nickname?

By Joshua A. Claybourn



Abraham Lincoln despised the nickname *Abe*. Or so we learn reading certain Abraham Lincoln scholars. Indeed, Lincoln biographer Stephen B. Oates wrote in his 1979 book *Our Fiery Trial* (without citing any primary source), “He commanded the respect of his colleagues, all of whom called him ‘Mr. Lincoln’ or just ‘Lincoln.’ Nobody called him Abe—at least not to his face—because he loathed the nickname. It did not befit a respected professional who’d struggled hard to overcome the limitations of his frontier background.”

Russell Freedman, winner of the 1988 Newbery Medal for his work *Lincoln: A Photobiography*, may have relied on Oates when he wrote, “As for the nickname Abe, he hated it. No one who knew him well ever called him Abe to his face. They addressed him as Lincoln or Mr. Lincoln.”

In his 1995 book *Lincoln*, the eminent historian David H. Donald reported that Abraham’s cousin Dennis and other boyhood associates called him Abe but asserted that Lincoln “always disliked the nickname.” Donald apparently based his case on Lincoln always addressing his law partner William Herndon, nine years his junior, as “Billy” while Herndon called him “Mr. Lincoln.” But with Lincoln as the older law partner and mentor to Herndon, the relationship naturally lent itself to differences in title and deference.

Even the National Constitution Center, an institution established by Congress, noted in a list of “Top 10 Abraham Lincoln Facts” that Lincoln “hated being called Abe. Apparently, he preferred being called by his last name.”

This contention among scholars seeped into the popular press as well. For instance, *Parade* cited one of ten “facts” about Lincoln as, “He hated the nickname ‘Abe.’” Reporters for the *Chicago Tribune* offered “10 things you might not know about Abraham Lincoln”

with number one an assertion that “Lincoln detested the nickname Abe, and his friends and family avoided using it in his presence.”

But do these assertions hold up under scrutiny? A review of available source material provides no direct evidence that Abraham Lincoln hated or even disliked the nickname *Abe*. In fact, the available record indicates close family members and associates used that name often without any suggestion that Lincoln disfavored it. From his childhood those around Lincoln referred to him as *Abe* and those who knew him well continued calling him *Abe* throughout his life.

Following Lincoln’s assassination, his former law partner, William Herndon, began collecting stories of Lincoln’s life from those who knew him, eventually resulting in a Lincoln biography and a trove of primary material about Lincoln. Herndon’s notes from his interview with Lincoln’s stepmother, Sarah Bush Lincoln, consistently use the name *Abe*—28 times, in fact. Either Herndon or Sarah Lincoln, or both, used the nickname in conversation or shorthand to refer to Abraham Lincoln.

Other close family and friends repeatedly used this same nickname when speaking about Lincoln to Herndon, including Dennis Hanks, Lincoln’s cousin and boyhood companion; Nathaniel Grigsby, Lincoln’s brother-in-law; Matilda Johnston Moore, Lincoln’s stepsister; and John Romine, a man who hired Lincoln to work on his farm. When Dennis Hanks wrote to Lincoln on 5 April 1864, he addressed the letter, “Dere [*sic*] Abe”.

After winning the Presidency, Lincoln told a visitor: “All through the campaign my friends have been calling me ‘Honest Old Abe,’ and I have been elected mainly on that cry.” Although Lincoln expressed concern about living up to his honest reputation if his appointees turned out to be corrupt, nothing suggests Lincoln disliked the name *Abe* itself.

A journalist who reported Lincoln’s activities almost daily from the time he was elected until he left Springfield for Washington, Henry Villard consistently used the nickname *Abe*. For example, Villard reported on receptions for Lincoln in Springfield in November 1860: “No restrictions, whatever, being exercised as to visitors, the crowd, that

daily waits on the President, is always of a motley description. Everybody who lives in this vicinity or passes through this place, goes to take a look at ‘Old Abe.’ Muddy boots and hickory shirts are just as frequent as broadcloth, fine linen, etc. . . . Today’s work was the hardest ‘Old Abe’ did since his election. He had hardly appeared at the State House when he was beset by an eager crowd that had been on the lookout for him ever since daylight.”

Viewing the available record as a whole, we find no evidence that Lincoln “hated” the nickname Abe. Although some mid-20th century historians latched on to this view, perhaps as a result of Oates’s initial assertions, several notable modern historians now question Oates’s, Donald’s, and Freedman’s conclusions about *Abe*. Lincoln historian Michael Burlingame notes, “I have not come across anything indicating that Lincoln hated the nickname Abe. I do recall seeing something to the effect that he was teased for having the name Abraham and that is why he regularly referred to himself as A. Lincoln, but that’s not the same as saying he hated the nickname Abe.”

Douglas L. Wilson, co-director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College, likewise could not identify any source indicating Lincoln hated being called *Abe* and noted the nickname was “certainly what he was called by his friends as a young man.”

Abraham Lincoln rooted much of his persona in the image of a common, self-made man. Rather than a nickname that Lincoln despised, *Abe* may well have been a nickname Lincoln embraced in his political career to underscore his authentic, humble character. Either way, we know that when Lincoln’s associates frequently used *Abe*, he expressed no concern about the practice. Surely Lincoln scholars and historians can freely deploy *Abe* as an appropriate moniker for Mr. Lincoln.

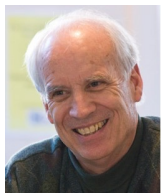
Footnotes available on request.

Joshua A. Claybourn of Newburgh, Indiana is an attorney and co-editor with William Bartelt of *Abe’s Youth: Collected Works from the Indiana Lincoln Inquiry* (Indiana University Press, expected 2019), an annotated edition of Lincoln Inquiry papers. Find him online at [JoshuaClaybourn.com](http://JoshuaClaybourn.com).



## *Two John Hay Letters to Members of the George Huntington Family*

*By Richard E. Hart*



Michael Burlingame



Richard Hart

*Transcriptions by Michael Burlingame*

John Milton Hay (October 8, 1838 - July 1, 1905) was a curious companion for John Nicolay and Abraham Lincoln. He grew up in the Illinois River town of Warsaw. Thanks to the benevolence of his Uncle Milton Hay, he was sent off to Brown University after prepping at Illinois State University in Springfield. At Brown, he shone, and became the Class poet in 1858. Photographs of him as a young man portray him as a Beau Brummel and dandy.

After finishing his studies at Brown, he came back home to Illinois where in the spring of 1859, Uncle Milton took him in as a clerk in his Springfield law office. The office was next door to Abraham Lincoln's in a building still standing at the corner of Sixth and Adams. Yet a youthful John complained to his girl friend back in Providence about the lack of intellectual stimulation. There was no one to talk to here. With young John, it truly was a matter of "How you going to keep 'em down on the farm after they have seen Paris," or in Hay's case, Providence.

Hay went on to serve as an American statesman and official whose career in government stretched over almost half a century. Beginning as a private secretary and assistant to Abraham Lincoln, Hay's highest office was Secretary of State under Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. During much of his life, Hay was also an author, biographer, and poet. He and John G. Nicolay published the classic 10-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln in 1886.

The Manuscripts Room of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library was once one of my favorite places to spend an afternoon looking through files of folks who lived in Lincoln's Springfield. While looking through the folder of the George Lathrop and

Hannah Huntington family, I discovered two John Hay letters that are basically unknown. The one addressed to the Huntingtons' son Charles, then a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, was partly published in a journal in 1945. The one to their daughter Alice, then 16 or 17, who seems to have been the object of Hay's amorous interest, is first published here.

The George and Hannah Huntington home near the Governor's Mansion on S. 2nd St. at Jackson was the perfect environment for John Hay to spend quality time in Springfield. Hannah, noted for her personal beauty and intellectual attainments, was a social favorite in all the great functions during the time of Abraham Lincoln. George was very fond of music and other arts. He became Musical Director of the Springfield Philharmonic Society. Paul Angle noted "In other Springfield homes - those of ... George L. Huntington ... 'strangers,' as they were called, were no less welcome."

Hay wrote the first letter to Charles Lathrop Huntington on January 24, 1860. John was 22 years old, living in Springfield and clerking in his uncle's law office. Charles was a 19-year-old midshipman at the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland.

### **Letter to Charles L. Hutchinson**

Jan[uary] 24, 1860

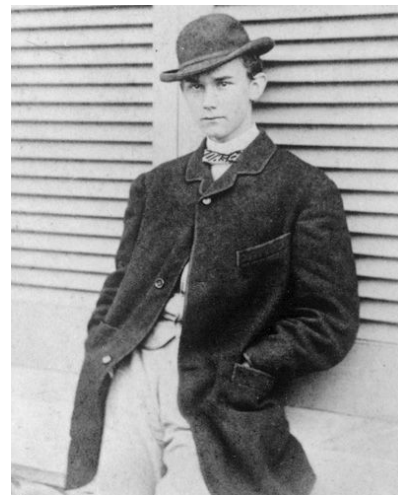
Springfield, Illinois

"Friend of my Better Days"

I spent the early part of this evening so pleasantly in the society of your sister and your cousins, that it is not surprising that the thought of you and yours should be with me in the dead silence that reigns at midnight in this quiet office. The memory of kind voices and the spirits that sprang into being under the delicate touch of your sister[']s fingers, are haunting me now, and making my sleeplessness very pleasant. You see how my thoughts have culminated. Is it strange that I should think of you, when I have heard this evening such frequent and loving mention of your name? Besides, I was shown your counterfeit presentment, in which I could see no change (except the inevitable traces of passing years) from the time when you

used to strike us youth from the rural districts dumb with admiration of your oratory. So, I have determined, if such a hasty impulse deserves the name of determination, to endeavor to rekindle a flame upon an altar which is well-nigh cold, to call back your errant fancy to the days "when we were first acquaint" and when we lay, in guileless confidence upon the cherishing breast of Illinois State University.

Of course, all the years since then have made very little change. There is not much in the present results which is strange, but how strangely the scenes of the last five years would have seemed, had they been revealed in some apocalyptic hour in the rough-timbered rooms of the college or the wild woods of the Sangamon. Your life, has, I suppose been more varied with adventure than mine. Yet mine has been passed among scenes and persons so diverse, that some of the contrasts cast an air of unreality over memory. "Now safely moored my perils o'er," for there is no temptation here and one is virtuous perforce, I read law on cloudy days and look out of the window on sunny ones, wear my hair at the last stage of abbreviation, eschew rhymes late hours and enthusiasm, don't black my boots, nor write for the Journal and occasionally vary the monotony of the evenings with a Spiritual Circle or a Dutch Ball.



**John Hay**

*(Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9)

My life is and shall be from this time forth and forever more (Amen!) very quiet & commonplace. There is **nothing romantic** about the career of a second rate lawyer in a country town. Yet I go to my fate with indifference, if not with joy & when I get my first case, I will steal a pun from [Charles] Lamb & say "My first best cause least understood" & hand over the fee to my long-suffering washerwoman.

But for you, I hope better things. A Naval Officer's life has some coloring in it. It is a very pleasant phantom in my mind. Around it a thousand vague associations are clustered, beautiful genial jolly and brave – Long Tom Coffin – Lawrence & [John] Paul Jones – Captain [Edward] Cuttle [in Charles Dickens's novel *Dombey and Son*] – and the Ancient Mariner, Storms – sunshine on the sea – tropical islands – Faraways – Mermaids & long yarns – and dear little girls looking over the white capped waves for an expected sail, or sitting at windows, in the twilight, far inland, and singing. 'My love, he is a saillior-boy only 19 years old.'

Say, Charlie, can[']t you write me a letter?

Yours of course

John Hay

### Letter to Alice Huntington

The second letter is dated only 'Monday' but is also likely to have been from 1860. Alice Huntington (born July 6, 1843) was the younger sister of Charles. Alice was known as a "fine pianist." Hay, who frequently visited the Huntington home in Springfield, "always addressed [her] as La Princess." Alice was not in Springfield at this time.

Miss Alice,

I have of late been entirely incapable of resisting temptation. This morning I sat down to my desk, without my book or any other preventive to idleness – I found pen ink and paper lying provokingly near, and before I could think, your name, (most musical) was at the head of this page. I am certainly not going to write you a letter, but wish merely to remind you of a world you have left inconsolable, that the delights of rural life may not entirely obliterate Springfield from your memory.

The postponement of your return spread confusion and dismay among the ranks of your friends. Frank, after receiving a dispatch from headquarters commanding his return, went mourning; he "gang like a ghaist" [i.e., went like a ghost] and left this morning, refusing to be comforted. Your devoted friend [i.e., Hay], who, you kindly informed me, was "fooling away his time" is a walking image of despair – except at dinner-time. And a young gentleman

recently from the North, who is very dear to me from the cognizance of the Theta Delta Chi [badge] that he wears upon his heart [i.e., on his jacket], sits with dreamy eyes gazing vacantly at his neglected German [lesson], and like the dying Falstaff "babbles o' green fields." While "Yours respectfully" pursues the even tenor of his way, only hoping that like Lady Clara Vere de Vere [in a Tennyson poem] you may,

"break a country heart

For pastime ere you come to town"

and so be less destructively inclined when you return – and holding himself ready to join the inspiring song of welcome of your friends "Aint we glad that you're out of the wilderness." --

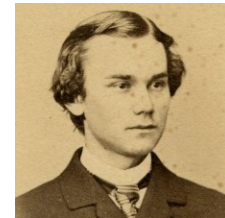
But I promised not to write a letter so I subscribe (a la mode du Macawber)

Myself

Very sincerely

Your friend

J Hay



John Hay

## Hay-Nicolay Dissertation Prize Winner

### Thomas D. Mackie, Jr.



Thomas D. Mackie, Jr.

The purpose of the Hay-Nicolay Dissertation Prize is to recognize and encourage young scholars to conduct research on Abraham Lincoln and his times. The Hay-Nicolay Dissertation Prize is awarded each year by The Abraham Lincoln Association and the Abraham Lincoln Institute to recognize the best doctoral dissertation dealing with Abraham Lincoln and his legacy.

The Abraham Lincoln Association and the Abraham Lincoln Institute, Inc. select the recipients. The first year, both organizations selected recipients. The award alternates between each organization from year to year. A panel of five scholars representing each entity serves as the jury.

**Thomas D. Mackie, Jr.,** Ph.D. has been selected as the 2018 recipient of the Prize for his *A Shrine for President Lincoln: An Analysis of Lincoln Museums and Historic Sites, 1865-2015*. The Prize is accompanied by a \$1,000 stipend, and will be presented in Springfield, Illinois at the Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium on the evening of February 11, 2018.

Tom is the former director of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum in Harrogate, Tennessee. He received his doctorate from Western Michigan University.



## Lincoln Roundup

### UIS Chancellor Susan J. Koch

On October 18, 2018, UIS Chancellor **Susan J. Koch**, an ALA Director, provided narration for the Illinois Symphony Orchestra performance of Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*, reading selections from Lincoln's own words. The concert opened the Symphony's season which celebrates the Illinois state bicentennial. *Lincoln Portrait* was chosen to celebrate Lincoln and Illinois. You may see a portion of Chancellor Koch's reading at <https://youtu.be/jQjgR9ZlWr4>.



Chancellor Susan J. Koch

For more information about *Lincoln Portrait*, check the latest (Winter 2019) issue of the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* which contains an article, "Belonging to the Ages: The Enduring Relevance of Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*" by Kaylyn Sawyer.

### Doris Kearns Goodwin

ALA Distinguished Director and presidential historian **Doris Kearns Goodwin** visited Springfield in October to discuss her latest book, *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, and help raise money for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

In her closing remarks she reflected on what Abraham Lincoln had taught her.

"I don't know that there will ever be another subject like Abraham Lincoln. I really felt ... that if you could just be more like him you'd be a better person. I'm sure many of you feel that way too. It's not just that he was a great president, that he won the war, ended slavery, and saved the Union. It was his kindness, his sensitivity, his empathy, his willingness to let those

past resentments go. I had the feeling that he had the normal human emotions of envy and anger and jealousy, but somehow he would say, 'You have to damp them down because they'll fester if you allow them inside. They'll poison you.' So every time one of those emotions comes, I just think of Lincoln saying to me, 'Stop. Don't do this. We don't have time. We don't have time for those kind of feelings.' If only that spirit could come across our land today. That's why it's so wonderful to be here with him. There really is nobody like him. There's nobody like him. So the fact that you all help support him - that you keep his memory alive through this Museum and this Library - I'm so grateful to you. I feel a part of him, and he will be with me for the rest of my life. Thank you so very much."

### Lincoln Room in U. S. Capitol

Legislation introduced by Representatives **Darin LaHood** and **Raja Krishnamoorthi** to name a room within the U.S. Capitol Building as the "Lincoln Room" unanimously passed the U.S. House of Representatives in the final days of the last



New Lincoln Room in the U.S. Capitol

Congress. This legislation named room H-226, which is currently part of the Majority Whip's office, after Abraham Lincoln. Room H-226 once served as the post office of the House while then-Representative Abraham Lincoln served in Congress from 1847-1849. The room adjoins the original House chamber (now Statuary Hall), and is near a marker that identifies the location of future President Abraham Lincoln's desk.

LaHood said, "Having the honor to serve the same nine counties as then-Congressman Lincoln did from 1847-1849 and seeing this legislation pass during the final weeks of Illinois' bicentennial year is a rewarding way to close out the 115th Congress. This legislation is most fitting to

permanently name this office after Illinois' most famous son."

LaHood acknowledged the support of ALA, and especially the efforts of the late John Elliff, an ALA director, who tirelessly advocated the naming of this room as a permanent reminder that Abraham Lincoln once served in the House of Representatives.

### Chuck Hand Passing

**Chuck Hand**, of Paris, Illinois, died on October 10, 2018, after an illness of about one year. He had been a high-school history teacher for three decades and a well-known collector of and dealer in Lincolnia. His annual catalogue will be missed by many. He bequeathed some holdings to the Edgar County Historical Society, while the rest of his 5,000 items are now at Alexanders' Books on the Square in downtown Springfield.



Chuck Hand in the classroom discussing the Lincoln assassination

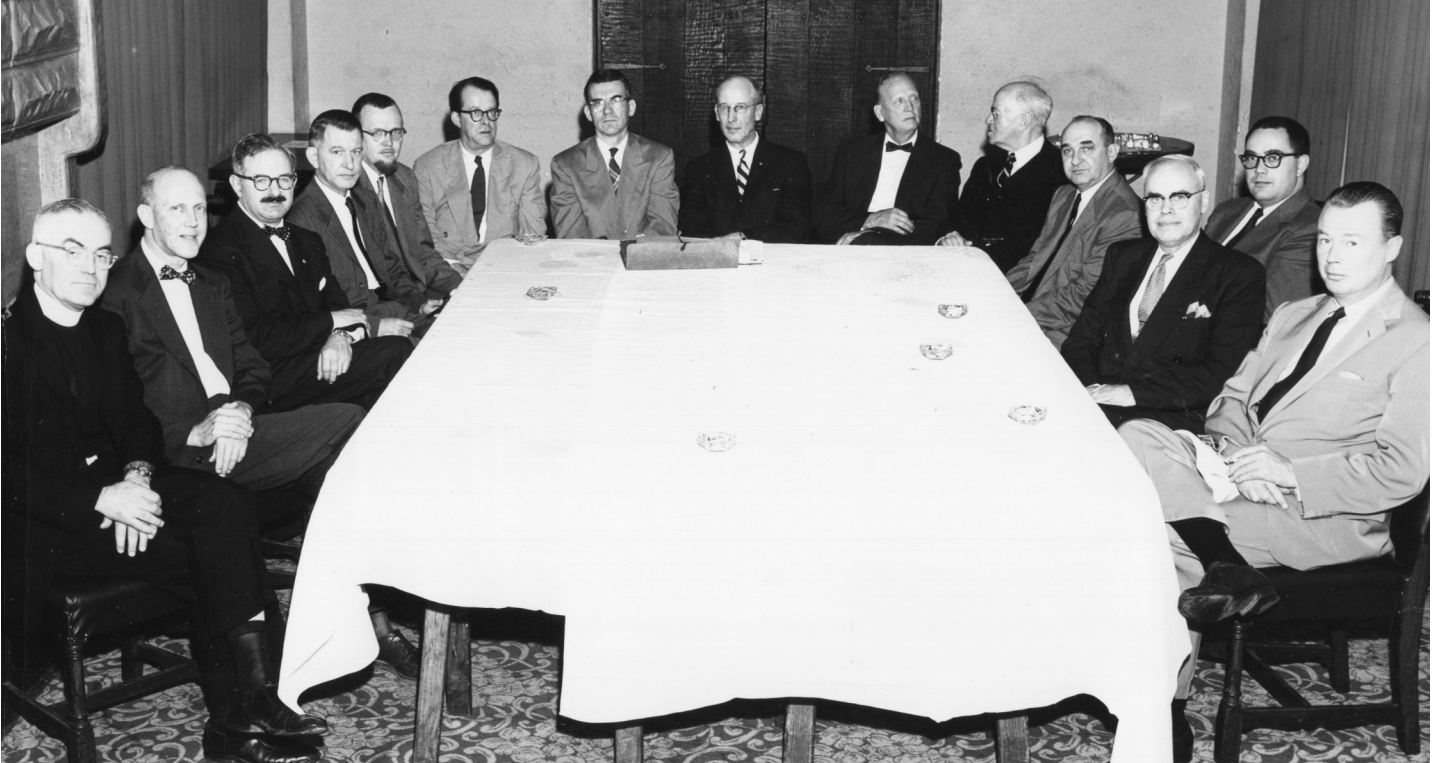
### Holzers Sell Lincoln Collection

**Harold Holzer** and his wife **Edith** have lovingly collected Lincoln images and other artifacts for nearly all their 47 years of marriage. In September they offered more than 700 items in the collection for sale to the public. Holzer's essay from the catalog and some illustrations of selected items can be seen online at <http://bit.ly/HHauction>

Items from the collection included *Portrait of the beardless Lincoln*, by John C. Wolfe, a fourth edition of the famous "Wigwam Print" (the first standalone print of Lincoln), and a commission of William O. Stoddard as secretary to the president signed by Lincoln, 1861.

## *Planning the Civil War Centennial*

This photograph, recently discovered by former ALA president Dick Hart, pictures a veritable who's who of Lincoln and Civil War scholars gathered round a table in Memphis, Tennessee in November, 1955. They are the Board of Directors of the Civil War Centennial Association. Included are a number of ALA luminaries including Ralph Newman, founder of Chicago's Abraham Lincoln Book Shop; Bruce Catton, award-winning Civil War author; Benjamin P. Thomas, one-time ALA Executive Secretary and renowned Lincoln biographer; and Clyde Walton, Illinois State Historian.



(Left to right) Joseph T. Durkin, Christopher Crittenden, Ralph Newman, Paul B. Freeland, E.B. Long, Carl Haverlin, Bell I. Wiley, Bruce Catton, Frank L. Owsley, Robert Selph Henry, Benjamin P. Thomas, Robert L. Kincaid, Clyde Walton, and Ezra Warner.

## Bill Read Fondly Remembered

(1953-2018)

Board member William "Bill" Read died suddenly at his home near Toronto, Canada, on October 7, 2018. Bill had just returned from a trip to Indiana where he was able to combine his two great interests, mystery novels and Lincoln. He attended a Sherlock Holmes conference in Indianapolis and also found time for his first visit to Lincoln's Boyhood Home National Memorial in Spencer County.

Several years ago when Bill was asked how he became interested in Lincoln, this is what he said:

*During a trip to Gettysburg in July 1963, I found and purchased the complete Carl Sandburg set.*

*Thereafter, I have been studying (and collecting) Lincoln and his era.*

*Discovering the ALA in 2008 and attending the ALA Banquet annually since 2009, is always a highlight of my year. I appreciate the opportunity to learn and witness various facts and perspectives of President Lincoln's life and era. To interact with those of the same interest is a rare and special event.*

Bill was a rare and special friend. We will all miss his happy face and personality at the annual Lincoln events in Springfield. God rest his soul.





## The “Standard” Gettysburg Address Tablets

By Sara Amy Leach



To commemorate Veterans Month in November 2018, the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) installed an historic cast-iron Gettysburg Address tablet in the lobby of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) headquarters in Washington, D.C. The artifact connects President Abraham Lincoln, his iconic Gettysburg Address, and the national cemeteries for agency employees and visitors.

NCA oversees the majority of U.S. national cemeteries, currently 136. These solemn landscapes contain a Gettysburg Address tablet because of the Abraham Lincoln birthday centennial or bicentennial. The exhibited artifact was made in 1909 for the former commemoration. A century later, damage forced NCA to remove it from Los Angeles National Cemetery and relegate it to the administration's History Collection. As an official project of the Lincoln Bicentennial commemoration in 2009, NCA produced replica Gettysburg Address tablets for this and other national cemeteries.

The first permanent display of Lincoln's speech in a national cemetery came in legislation to preserve the battle site at Gettysburg. The act of February 11, 1895 (a day before the 86<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lincoln's birthday) also allocated \$5,000 to erect a monument to the speech at the cemetery with a “suitable bronze tablet” of the Gettysburg Address. Completion of the Gettysburg Address Monument was delayed until 1912.

Meanwhile, in 1908 Congress authorized tablets for all of the other national cemeteries. There would be 77, to cost a total of \$3,000. This act was confirmed by the *Report of the Chief of Ordnance* of 1909-1911: “In the foundry and forge shop ... a number of cast-iron tablets containing President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address ... have been made for placing in National Cemeteries.”

Notably, the project stalled until around Memorial Day 1909 due to a “matter of friendly controversy among interested parties,” reported The [Washington D.C.] *Sunday Star*, “almost entirely due to difficulty in determining the text of the Gettysburg Address.” In 1895, Government Printing Office personnel had apparently changed Lincoln's punctuation to comply with its own editorial style when the law was published as statute. Both congressionally funded projects awaited a decision. During a “painstaking” process, War Department officials considered three variations of the speech, input from the late president's son Robert T. Lincoln, and “the best historical advices (sic) that we could obtain.” Consensus led the government to select the Bliss (or Baltimore Sanitary Fair) Version for “standard use of the Lincoln Gettysburg Address.”

With that decision, work began. By July 1909, the Rock Island Arsenal, in Illinois, had contracted with the Moline Scale Company for 50 tablets. Each measures 56 inches by 33 inches and weighs about 350 pounds. By August they were at the arsenal to be “copper plated.” The [Davenport, Iowa] *Daily Times* described the Gettysburg Address tablet as “one of the most interesting pieces of work ... from a historical and patriotic standpoint” executed by the company. The government even printed a penny postcard with a facsimile of the tablet;



Gettysburg Address tablet exhibit at the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, D. C., November 2018.

the rate on a complementary foreign-postage card would have been the new 2-cent Lincoln stamp.

National cemetery development slowed for many years. In 1973, the U.S. Army transferred 82 national cemeteries to the VA, which began to construct new burial options across the country for its veteran population – but Lincoln's speech was overlooked. To correct this, in 2009 the federal government again recognized an anniversary of Lincoln's birth by installing a “standard” Gettysburg Address tablet in 62 national cemeteries. Rock Island Arsenal again produced them, but this time, a replica was cast in iron by using a 1909 tablet loaned by Rock Island National Cemetery. The replica on the rostrum at Los Angeles National Cemetery enabled an original Gettysburg Address tablet to go on exhibition in Washington, D.C.

Sara Amy Leach joined the National Cemetery Administration in 2001, initiated its History Program, and is senior historian. Previously she worked at the National Park Service in history and cultural-resource management positions.

## Did You Know...

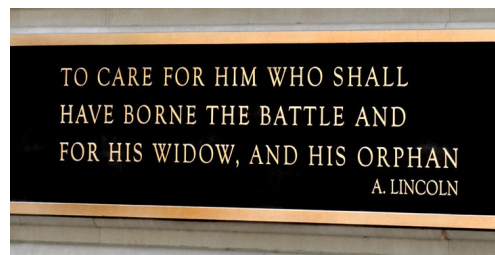
that the motto of the Department of Veterans Affairs are Lincoln's words?

They are, in fact, from the stirring final paragraph of the Second Inaugural Address.

With the words, “To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,” President Lincoln affirmed the government's obligation to care for those injured during the war and to provide for the

families of those who perished on the battlefield.

Today, a pair of metal plaques bearing those words flank the entrance to the Washington, D.C. headquarters of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Lincoln's immortal words became the VA motto in 1959, when the plaques were installed, and can be traced to Sumner G. Whittier, administrator of what was then called the Veterans Administration.



**New Salem Lincoln League  
2019 Annual Meeting  
Celebrating New Salem's 100th Anniversary as Illinois State Park**

Sunday, February 17, 2019 3:00 p.m.  
Visitors Center Auditorium  
Centennial Celebration Presentation by Guy Fraker  
“What if Lincoln Had Not Been Stranded on the Dam?”  
Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site  
Route 97/123 Petersburg, Illinois.  
Social hour afterward with refreshments and music  
Free and open to the public.

Another milestone year, 2019 marks the centennial of Lincoln's New Salem as an Illinois State Park! The pioneer village where Abraham Lincoln lived during the 1830's vanished from the landscape shortly after Lincoln departed and its residents moved to other locations and livelihoods. However, New Salem's memory persisted, especially when the one-time neighbor became the 16th president of the United States.

To honor Lincoln's life-changing period at New Salem, in the early 1900's local people organized as the Old Salem Lincoln League to purchase the pasture above the river. As part of Illinois's centennial celebration, the Old Salem Lincoln League hosted events and started the historic replication of the village. The League's efforts resulted in the site being transferred to the State of Illinois in 1919 to become one of our first state parks! Only three state parks (Starved Rock, Fort de Chartres, and Fort Massac) are older.



**Photograph taken at New Salem by Robert Shaw in January 2019.**

Today's New Salem Lincoln League continues the effort started over a century ago. The League is partnering this year with The Abraham Lincoln Association and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to recognize the 100 years of public stewardship which has allowed hundreds of thousands of visitors to experience the pioneer life of Lincoln's time. At the League's annual meeting Guy Fraker of The Abraham Lincoln Association will discuss “What if Lincoln Had Not Been Stranded on the Dam?” Events planned for 2019 will also be previewed.

The League hopes you will plan to attend this free event. If you are not already a member, the New Salem Lincoln League, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, would welcome your help in our support of many of the site's popular special events, volunteer activities, and rehabilitation projects.

**McLean County Museum of History  
Acquires Lincoln Letter**

The McLean County Museum of History in Bloomington, Illinois, recently acquired a historically invaluable letter written by Abraham Lincoln to Kersey Fell.

The Merwin Foundation purchased the authenticated document on behalf of the Museum to enhance its collection, and to help tell the story of the man who would become the 16th president and his ties to McLean County. The letter is dated November 1, 1859. The letter appears in the Basler-edited supplement published in 1974 as volume 10. In the letter, Lincoln says he knows not when he will be in Bloomington next.

Museum Executive Director Adam Lovell explains, “The McLean County Museum of History does not regularly purchase items for the collection. This was a special circumstance where we were able to secure an outside private foundation to purchase the item on our behalf. The Merwin Foundation purchased the letter on behalf of the Museum to enhance our collection and to help tell the story of the man who would become the 16th president and his ties to McLean County. This will be one of the crowning artifacts in our collection.”

Local author and Lincoln historian Guy Fraker says, “The letter, delivered to Fell's office at 106 W. Washington Street, fittingly, is back on W. Washington 160 years later.”



## George L. Painter Looking for Lincoln Lectures

Lincoln Home National Historic Site invites the public to attend the George L. Painter Looking for Lincoln Lectures on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site Visitor Center, 426 South Seventh Street, Springfield, Illinois. The Visitor Center will open one half hour early, at 8:00 A.M.

Lincoln Home National Historic Site is pleased to present this annual lecture series in partnership with the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Together, Lincoln Home NHS and "Looking for Lincoln" present stories that focus on the central Illinois communities that Lincoln impacted or that impacted Lincoln.

The program will include recognition of Lincoln Home National Historic Site's "Journey to Greatness: Character Lessons from the Past" youth initiative and a review of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area 10th anniversary accomplishments.

Author Erika Holst, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Illinois State Museum, will discuss her book *Looking for Lincoln in Illinois: Historic Houses of Lincoln's Illinois*, and musician Chris Vallillo will talk about and perform music that influenced the Civil War and modern Civil Rights eras in a program titled "Chris Vallillo, From Civil War to Civil Rights."

To obtain further information regarding the Lectures, contact Lincoln Home National Historic Site at 217-391-3221.



## Membership Matters

Dear Friends and Members,

**There are important benefits** to membership in the Abraham Lincoln Association. Education is one of the greatest benefits. Our journal is a significant resource that ranks high on the value scale. The book reviews and scholarly articles are a vital and permanent resource. Our quarterly *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* is an ideal way to stay informed and in touch with what's happening in the Lincoln world.

**For me personally**, the greatest benefit in membership has been the ability to give back to the Lincoln story. I believe that by studying Abraham Lincoln, we are all made better. Just as our Founding Fathers from colonial America were made better by reading about great lives, so are we all.

**As a statesman**, Lincoln has few equals; as an inspiration he is unsurpassed. His presidency ushered in one of the defining moments in world history. In doing so, Lincoln delivered a message of hope, forgiveness, and reconciliation, a message that inspires "the better angels of our nature."

**That's why** I give back through the ALA. I want the next generation of history enthusiasts to learn from Abraham Lincoln, just as I have, and, I suspect, many of you have.

Joseph Garrera, Membership Chairman

## Welcome New ALA Members

**Joshua Bader**

Starkville, Mississippi

**John Carl**

Evansville, Indiana

**Jonathan Dunn**

Springfield, Illinois

**Jacob Hagstrom**

Bloomington, Indiana

**Eileen Meyer**

Fernandina Beach, Florida

**Sylvia Rodrigue**

North Easton, Massachusetts

**Michele Smith**

Chicago, Illinois

**Ron Spear**

Newburgh, Indiana

## Join The Abraham Lincoln Association Today

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

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Springfield, Illinois 62705

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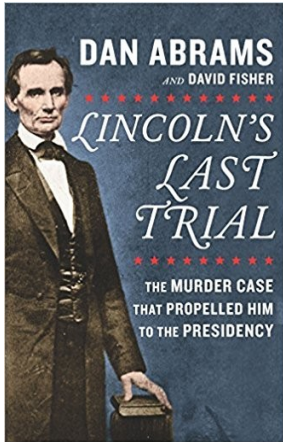
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## ***Lincoln Trail Homestead Landscaping Project Completed***

*By Ronald Spears*

The Friends of Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park recently completed a landscaping project to enhance the highway to the park. This state park near Decatur honors the area that the Lincoln family first called home when they moved to Illinois in 1830. In celebration of the Illinois Bicentennial, the Friends group joined

other volunteers to raise the funds, purchase the trees, and plant groupings of native trees every half mile along the Lincoln Memorial Highway.

After the park was established in 1938, Macon County dedicated property to create a scenic highway to access the park. The landscaping plan was originally proposed but not completed before now. The Friends of Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park is a committee of the Macon County Community Environmental Council formed to bring the park up to standards of other Lincoln sites in Illinois, making it a desired Lincoln destination.

With the inadequacy of state funding in support of these Lincoln sites, the generous support of Friends groups is essential. This particular park has much to offer history lovers as well as those loving nature, hiking, biking, and kayaking or canoeing on the Sangamon. Coalitions of groups supporting preservation of all those interests may serve to help preserve Lincoln history as well.

*Ronald Spears is a Director of  
The Abraham Lincoln Association.*



**The Sangamon River at the Lincoln Trail Homestead, just east of Decatur, Illinois.  
This photograph was taken by President Bob Willard in 2005.**



**Lincoln presenter Randy Duncan and  
Ronald Spears**

