



# FOR THE PEOPLE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

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SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

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

## Richard S. Lowry 2021 Lincoln Day Speaker

Our Lincoln Day speaker will be Rich Lowry, author of several books and since 1997 the editor of *The National Review*. William F. Buckley, Jr., the magazine's founder, chose the 29-year-old Lowry for the post. Mr. Lowry will speak on "Lincoln's Nationalism."

As a syndicated columnist for King Features, opinion writer for *Politico*, and a guest commentator on NBC's *Meet the Press*, ABC's *This Week*, and *Fox News Sunday*, Mr. Lowry has been read and seen by millions. His 2013 book *Lincoln Unbound: How an Ambitious Young Railsplitter Saved the American Dream* was just one of many topics he has tackled, including, most recently, *The Case for Nationalism: How It Made Us Powerful, United, and Free*.

Reviewers of *Lincoln Unbound* were very admiring. *Kirkus Reviews* explained, "Ever since his assassination and swift elevation to the pantheon of our greatest presidents, 'getting right with Lincoln,' in the memorable phrase of one historian, has been the business of our mainstream politicians."



Lowry confines himself largely to Lincoln's pre-presidential career, explaining how the backwoods boy of little schooling and negligible property early on identified with the Whigs rather than the Jacksonian Democrats who captured so many of his similarly situated peers. The Rail-Splitter, he argues, is best understood not as a man of the axe but of the book, not so much by his origins as by his aspirations. For the deeply ambitious Lincoln, enhancing opportunity was the animating principle of his politics, and he committed himself to a program of uplift and improve-

ment that offered the best chance for his fellow citizens to transcend their upbringings."

Veteran critic Charles Krauthammer exulted: "A gem: powerfully argued, beautifully written, and both politically and historically illuminating. Lowry makes an impassioned case for a contemporary Republican renewal on truly Lincolnian lines."

Here is Lowry himself from that book: "We all know the Lincoln of the Second Inaugural and the Gettysburg Address. We need to know the Lincoln of the Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society and of the Lecture on Discoveries and Inventions, both talks in which he vents his favorite enthusiasms. We need to understand his thirst for economic and industrial development. We need to realize that he was a lawyer for corporations, a vigorous advocate of property rights, and a defender of an 'elitist' economics against the unreflective populist bromides of his age. We need to focus on his love for the Founders as guides to the American future. We need to grapple with his ferocious ambition, personal and political."

### Schedule for February 12 and 13, 2021

<https://abrahamlincolnnassociation.org/2021-symposium-events/>

#### Friday, February 12, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Opening of UIS Center for Lincoln Studies. Welcome by Prof. Michael Burlingame.

Symposium: Elizabeth Mitchell  
*Lincoln and the Press: The Mystery Behind His 'Bogus Proclamation'*  
Symposium: H. W. Brands  
*Lincoln and John Brown*

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Speaker, Rich Lowry  
*Lincoln's Nationalism*  
Introduction, Michael Burlingame,  
ALA President.

#### Saturday, February 13, 2021

10:00 a.m.

Symposium: Edward Achorn  
*Lincoln's Second Inaugural*

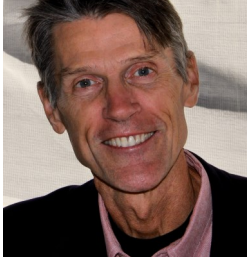
Symposium: David Reynolds  
*Lincoln and 19th-Century  
American Culture*

1:00 p.m.

Roundtable: all four speakers  
will participate. Moderated by  
Michael Burlingame, ALA Presi-  
dent.

## The 2021 ALA Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium

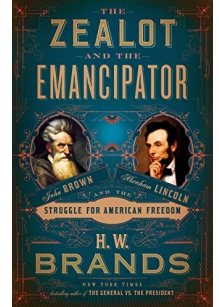
All speaking events, including the Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium, will be presented remotely. Though we'll miss seeing you in person, we trust that by 2022 we can hold those events live in Springfield, and we look forward to reuniting with you then. <https://abrahamlincolnassociation.org/2021-symposium-events/>



### Henry William Brands, Jr.

#### *John Brown and Abraham Lincoln*

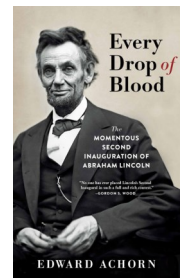
H. W. Brands is an American historian who holds the Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History at the University of Texas at Austin, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1985. He has authored 30 books on U.S. history, two of which have been selected as finalists for the Pulitzer Prize. Born in 1953, Brands grew up in the Portland, Oregon area. He attended Jesuit High School, where he was a three-sport athlete and National Merit Scholar. Brands received his undergraduate degree in history from Stanford University in 1975, returning to Jesuit to teach mathematics. He taught at the high school for the next five years, and earned a M.A. in Liberal Studies from Reed College in 1978, followed by an M.S. in Mathematics from Portland State in 1981. His dissertation was on the Eisenhower administration and its foreign policy during the Cold War.



### Edward Achorn

#### *Lincoln's Second Inaugural*

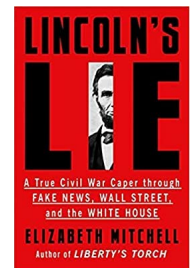
Edward Achorn is the author of *Every Drop of Blood: The Momentous Second Inauguration of Abraham Lincoln* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020), as well as earlier books on baseball history. He is the deputy editorial page editor of *The Providence (R.I.) Journal*. He has won numerous writing awards and his work appears in Best Newspaper Writing, 2007-2008. A Pulitzer Prize finalist for commentary and winner of the Yankee Quill Award, he is the author of two acclaimed books about nineteenth-century baseball and American culture, *Fifty-nine in '84* and *The Summer of Beer and Whiskey*. He lives in an 1840s farmhouse in Rehoboth, Massachusetts.



### Elizabeth Mitchell

#### *Abraham Lincoln and the Press: The Mystery Behind His 'Bogus Proclamation'*

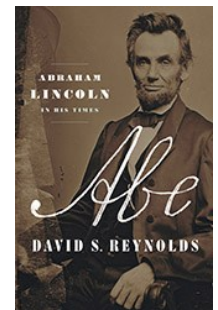
Elizabeth Mitchell's newest book, *Lincoln's Lie: A True Civil War Caper Through Fake News, Wall Street, and the White House*, was published in October 2020. Her other books include *Liberty's Torch: The Great Adventure to Build the Statue of Liberty*, *Three Strides Before the Wire: The Dark and Beautiful World of Horse Racing* and *W.: Revenge of the Bush Dynasty*. Her bestselling e-single, *The Fearless Mrs. Goodwin*, tells the tale of the first female detective in U.S. history. Mitchell was executive editor of *George* magazine. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.



### David S. Reynolds

#### *Lincoln and Nineteenth-Century American Culture*

David S. Reynolds is a Distinguished Professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. He is the author of *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*, winner of the Bancroft Prize and the Ambassador Book Award. His other books include *Beneath the American Renaissance* (winner of the Christian Gauss Award); *John Brown, Abolitionist*; *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson*; *Mightier than the Sword: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Battle for America*; and *Lincoln's Selected Writings*. He is a regular book reviewer for *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. His latest book, *Abraham Lincoln in His Times Abe*, was published by Penguin Press in 2020.



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## President Burlingame's Message

Dear Friends,

As Lincoln so eloquently said in his immortal Second Inaugural Address, "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of Coronavirus may speedily pass away."

While fervently hoping and fondly praying, the ALA has been altering its plans for the High Holidays (February 12-13). The Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium and our evening speaker will be held remotely. Though we'll miss seeing you in Springfield, we trust that by 2022 we can hold both of those events here, and we look forward to reuniting with you then.

Our four symposium speakers will be presenting their talks online, Friday, February 12, and Saturday February 13. On the afternoon of the 13<sup>th</sup>, our speakers will participate in a live (remote) panel discussion. The banquet will not be catered by GrubHub, rumors to the contrary notwithstanding. Instead, it will be virtual, with our speaker, Rich Lowry, delivering his address live online. Information on him and the symposium speakers is given on the first page and opposite this page. <https://abrahamlincolnassociation.org/2021-symposium-events/>

On February 12, the new Center for Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield will be launched with remote fanfare, which we urge you to observe online.

The "Lincoln's Springfield Cottage" project has made significant progress, garnering enthusiastic letters of support from Senators Durbin and Duckworth, Congressmen LaHood and Davis, the mayor and city council of Springfield, other local officials and civic organizations, as well as from prominent Lincoln scholars around the country. We have raised more than 75% of our goal of \$400,000.

Please help us reach that goal by donating, which you can do online at the ALA website via Paypal, or by sending a check to Kay Smith, ALA Executive Manager, P. O. Box 1865, Springfield, IL 62705.

Give in the spirit of Lincoln, who memorably wrote to a client on Independence Day 1851: "As the dutch Justice said, when he married folks 'Now, vere ish my hundred tollars?'" (Adjust for inflation, please.)

Your humble servant,  
Michael Burlingame  
President

## WELCOME TO OUR 28 NEW MEMBERS FROM 6 STATES

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Wilmette, Illinois

Carol Dickerson

Freeport, Illinois

William Edwards

Bloomington, Illinois

Dr. Joseph R. Forni

Fairport, New York

Hayden Fraker

Bloomington, Illinois

James Fraker

New Rochelle, New York

Edith Graham

Chicago, Illinois

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Tyler, Texas

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Bloomington, Illinois

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Bloomington, Illinois

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membership-2/](https://abrahamlincolnassociation.org/membership-2/)





## Stephen A. Douglas Reassessed

By Martin H. Quitt

The removal of the Stephen Douglas statue from the Illinois statehouse grounds has been accompanied by misstatements and a lack of historical understanding. Douglas was a racist, but his relationship to slavery was complicated and needs a full airing. His stand against religious bigotry also should be known. As head of the House and later the Senate Committee on Territories when a virulent nativism was on the rise, he welcomed the immigration of all white Europeans, whether Irish Catholics, Jews, or Protestants. And he supported their right to vote even before they became citizens. His legacy also includes a strong argument for modern federalism, the introduction of national presidential campaigning, and a fervent devotion to the Union.

For Douglas, local self-determination was not merely an intellectual construct that he applied to public policy issues, such as slavery. It was the reason for his place in the sun. Douglas was born and schooled in Vermont, apprenticed to an attorney in New York, but achieved rapid success only in Illinois. What he could accomplish in his adopted Western state he could not do in the East. He loved Illinois because at age 20 he passed the bar and opened his law office – which he could not have done in New York without several more years of training that neither his patience nor his stepfather could afford. The varied practices of states made his spectacular rise possible, and he never forgot it. During his campaign for the presidency in 1860 he recounted to the people of his native state how going west had supplied opportunities unavailable in Vermont.

Douglas favored the right of local majorities to adopt their own ways. He was less concerned with individual rights. He believed federal territories should have the same decision-making freedom that states enjoyed. He was wary of federal power imposing uniform national policies on localities. He fit within a tradition of experimentation and diversity that originated in colonial America, which had hosted a variety of utopian ventures: church-centered Puritan towns in Massachusetts, Quaker pluralism in Pennsylvania, feudalism in Maryland, patroonships in Dutch New York, and slave plantations in the South. A historian once wrote that America was a graveyard for utopias, but he missed the salient fact that only here could such ideas be tried out. While respecting local majorities to implement their own rules, Douglas was willing to sacrifice individual rights

generally on the grounds that others, like himself, could move somewhere else in America to find compatibility.

A new utopian religion was the Church of Latter-day Saints, whose Mormon followers sought a refuge from hostile state governments. As Illinois Secretary of State, Douglas supported the quasi-autonomy of Nauvoo, the center of Mormon immigration to the state. Then as a member of the Illinois Supreme Court in 1841 he dismissed on procedural grounds an extradition case from Missouri against Joseph Smith, the religion's founder. Mormons hailed Douglas as their champion. Whigs charged that he was currying favor with Mormon voters, while they ignored his conviction: "Every man has a right to worship as he believes." Raised a Methodist in Brandon, where his grandfather was a founder of the local congregation, Douglas had no deep religious attachment. His second wife was Roman Catholic and he agreed to a wedding in her church because he was indifferent to religious preference. She became his trusted advisor and political partner.

Douglas introduced a bill to organize the Nebraska Territory to facilitate the development of the first transcontinental railroad. His purpose was to knit the expanded country together, not extend slavery. The most inflammatory portion of the Kansas-Nebraska Act he shepherded was its nullification of the Missouri Compromise of 1820-21, which had attained a sacred status in American politics. Douglas claimed that no federal law or accord had ever freed a slave. His own adopted state of Illinois was a good example. It was carved from the Northwest Territory, which under the original ordinance and the eponymous statute of the First Federal Congress prohibited slavery therein. Yet, as Douglas emphasized, slavery existed in Illinois for decades before the constitution of 1848 expressly banned it. He noted that in 1776 all 13 states had slavery, but by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century more than half of them had abolished it. He predicted that most states eventually would do likewise.

So why does he deserve to be remembered? He promoted American geographic diversity as a means of accommodating the varied cultural ways brought by immigrants. Federalism for him was a vibrant political force that enabled people of different backgrounds and beliefs to find a place in America. His openness to all white immigrant groups made him an influential voice in welcoming Europe's oppressed and persecuted. He promoted the right of all male

inhabitants to vote in federal territories whether or not they had attained citizenship. His unique national campaigning heralded the future of presidential politics. He was in the main a principled man who also knew how to win popular support. He was one of the most influential politicians in the United States during the decade prior to the Civil War.

Finally, after losing the election he committed all his energy to preserve the Union and support Lincoln. He never lost sight of the big picture in politics – loyalty to the Union. Although he imbibed and exploited the pervasive racism of his age, to offer untruths about him and judge him by the new standards of 2020 is shortsighted. It diminishes the importance of historical change and the need for understanding past eras on their own terms.

His first wife inherited a Mississippi slave plantation that he wanted no part of because it would hurt him in Illinois politics. But when she died early, his two young sons became the heirs. Douglas served as their trustee, for which he received compensation. He did not fully acknowledge his total control over the slave plantation. While his sons were his dependents, effectively he was a slaveowner, an identity he shunned. He deluded himself into believing that he was acting merely in a fiduciary capacity, while he benefitted financially from managing the enterprise.

Douglas broke precedent in 1860 by campaigning for the presidency in three-fourths of the states. Had the transcontinental railroad been built, he would have traveled to the Far West. In contrast Lincoln adhered to tradition by staying home. While few politicians had as firm a knowledge of local conditions as Douglas, to his credit he did not trim his speeches to suit audiences. He wanted to unite the country and avoid the imminent breakdown should an unacceptable candidate win the presidency. If he had won the election, his campaign innovation would have become the new standard. But he lost.

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*Martin H. Quitt is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Massachusetts Boston and author of Stephen A. Douglas and Antebellum Democracy (2012) as well as two later essays for the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association.*  
[martin.quitt@umb.edu](mailto:martin.quitt@umb.edu)

## The Tragic Story of Fido and Charles Planck

By Brian Steenbergen  
ALA Board Member

Perhaps the most endearing habit of Fido, the Lincoln family dog, was “showing his congeniality by depositing his muddy yellow fore paws plump on the breast of anyone who addressed him familiarly.” That congeniality may have got Fido killed.

Dorothy Kunhardt suggested in *Life Magazine* (Feb. 15, 1954) that Fido may have joined the Lincoln family sometime around 1855, based on their purchase of ‘Bottle Vermifuge’ from the Corneau and Diller drugstore. (Vermifuge is an anti-parasitic used to treat tapeworm.) Fido’s pedigree was undistinguished, described as mongrel with no discernable ancestry.

Fido no doubt expended much energy chasing Willie and Tad around the yards and neighborhood of the Lincolns’ home at 8th and Jackson. As Kunhardt observed, “A dog always belongs really to the children of a family.” Winter evenings might have found Lincoln wrestling his youngest boys and playing with Fido on and around their black horsehair sofa. Those evenings may have been the impetus, or perhaps just a reminder, of an oft-used Lincoln riddle: “If you call a dog’s tail a leg, how many legs does a dog have?” Boys’ answer: “Five.” Abraham’s answer: “No, four. Calling a tail a leg don’t make it a leg.”

Much like Mrs. Lincoln, Fido was frightened during thunderstorms. This fear, as well as practical considerations, explain why Fido could not make the trip from Springfield to the White House in 1861. The journey to Washington would take 13 days, punctuated by frequent cannon fire announcing the arrival of the President-elect along the route. Poor Fido would have been terrified.

It was determined that Fido would be placed in the care of the Roll Family. John Roll was among Lincoln’s oldest friends in Springfield, and his two children, John and Frank, were roughly the same ages as Willie and Tad. Along with Fido came the black horsehair sofa; Fido needed his refuge.

Dogs and children are resilient, and Willie and Tad found new friends and adventures in the White House. Fido no doubt fell into daily life at the Rolls’ home, John and Frank replacing Willie and Tad as his companions. William Fleurville, a.k.a. “Billie the Barber,” wrote Lincoln a letter of condolence at the White House after Willie’s death, adding “tell Taddy that his and Willie’s dog is alive and kicking, doing well. He stays mostly at



*The author recently traced Charles Planck’s gravesite at Grand Rapids Veterans Cemetery, Grand Rapids, Michigan, set the image of Fido by it, and took this photo.*

John E Rolls with his boys who are about the age now that Tad and Willie were when they left for Washington.”

In the wake of Lincoln’s fame, William Herndon, Lincoln’s law partner, disgustingly observed that people wanted hairs from the tail of Lincoln’s horse Old Bob, and that even the dog running about the Lincoln house had assumed a form of “beauty and power.” In the months following Lincoln’s funeral and burial in Springfield, Fido resumed his life, roaming the streets of Springfield and showing his affection by depositing those familiar muddy fore paws on anyone he could.

The available historical evidence points to one Charles Planck as Fido’s killer. Accounts vary as to what actually happened. In 1866, according to a much later newspaper version of the story, Planck was a “half-intoxicated man” plunging a knife into Fido after Fido placed “his paws on the breast” of Planck. A separate story, on Feb. 20, 1893, in the *Journal*, has Planck “whittling a stick with a sharp, long bladed knife. By accidental move while the dog was expressing himself in caresses the blade was buried deep in his body.”

Either way, the mortally wounded Fido limped away to his final refuge “behind the chimney of the old Universalist Church.” Fido’s “lifeless body was discovered” a month later and “buried by loving hands in a spot that is kept sacred to this day.”

Not much is known of Charles Planck. He was the son of Springfield grocer Jacob C. Planck, whose path crossed those of attorneys Lincoln or Herndon in a couple of small matters. Charles enlisted at Springfield as a volunteer on August 15, 1862, and soon mustered into Company G of the 114<sup>th</sup> Regiment as a private. He was described as 20 years old, brown hair, blue eyes, fair complexion, standing 5’ 6”. The 114<sup>th</sup> saw a lot of rough action, including at Brice’s Crossroads and the Battle of Nashville. In June 1864 now Corporal Planck was listed among those thought lost or missing from a battle at Guntown, Mississippi, but who later returned. He was discharged on March 7, 1865.

Two days before he was mustered in, Planck was quoted in the *Daily Illinois State Journal* excoriating the “Liberality of B.A. Watson.” The Watsons, a big family of bakers/confectioners on the south side of the square, had catered Lincoln’s nomination party in May 1860. Apparently, Watson had promised Planck \$50 if he would enlist. When Planck asked Watson for the money, Watson offered a “note, payable when discharged from the service – if killed, to give it to my nearest heirs.” The indignant Planck gave the note back to Watson, saying “he can save his liberality and money too. This is true patriotism, generally shown by small men.”

Planck is known to have had at least two encounters with Springfield law enforcement following his discharge. In September 1865 he was beaten and robbed by two men on North 7th St. In March 1868 he was involved in a shooting of Peter Burns; Burns had a history of violence, suggesting that Planck may have been acting in self-defense. Sometime in the 1870’s Planck and his wife Hattie, whom he had married in 1867, moved to Detroit, where he worked as clerk and expressman. On February 25, 1907, when he requested a record of his enlistment, he was living at 443 Fourth Avenue in Detroit. In April 1915 he moved to the Grand Rapids Veterans Home, where he died two years later on March 21, 1917. Planck is buried in the Grand Rapids Veterans Cemetery.

Perhaps Fido’s playful habits simply reflected his master’s plea to move past the war “with malice toward none” and “to care for him who shall have borne the battle.”

*Brian Steenbergen is an ALA Board Member who lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



# Slavery in Lincoln's Hardin County, Kentucky

## Abraham Lincoln's Earliest Encounter of African American Slaves

By Richard E. Hart

*ALA Former President and Board Member*

From the earliest days of the European settlement of Kentucky, African American slaves were present. Abraham Lincoln's first encounter with slavery was as a young child living in Kentucky. This aspect of Abraham's early life and its impact on his earliest judgments and attitudes about slavery, however, has been mostly ignored or simply overlooked.

### 1811-1816 at Knob Creek Farm

Abraham Lincoln was born at Sinking Spring Farm in Hardin County, Kentucky on February 12, 1809. There he, his sister Sarah and his parents lived until the following year when they moved nine miles to a twenty-acre farm known as the Knob Creek Farm. The family lived there until it moved to Indiana in 1816. These were important formative childhood years in Abraham's life.

### Thomas Lincoln's Slave-Owning Neighbors

Census and tax assessment records for those formative years provide clear evidence that slavery existed in Hardin County while Abraham lived there, and it existed in close proximity to the Thomas Lincoln family home on Knob Creek. In 1810, there were at least 97 African American slaves living in Hardin County. These slaves were owned by 18 men and one woman. These and additional slaves were an important part of young Abraham's environment while he lived in Hardin County.

### Thomas Lincoln Enrolls Abraham and Sarah Lincoln in Catholic Neighbor Zachariah Riney's School

In the fall of 1815 Thomas Lincoln and his family were living at the Knob Creek Farm when Thomas enrolled 6-year-old Abraham and 8-year-old Sarah in a subscription school taught by Zachariah Riney, a 52-year-old Roman Catholic neighbor and friend. The school was the first they attended and it lasted for about three months and had about 20 students. It was a one-room, dirt floored, log cabin located about 2 miles northeast of Thomas's Knob Creek Farm, where the town of Athertonville, Kentucky now stands at the fork of Cumberland Road and Pottinger's Creek Road. It was near, if not adjacent to, the Atherton Ferry, mill and distillery on

Rolling Fork River. Peter Atherton owned seven slaves in 1813 and eight between 1814 and 1816. No doubt Abraham and Sarah often saw Atherton's slaves while attending Riney's school.

Riney had come to Kentucky with a large group of St. Mary's County Maryland Catholics who formed a substantial part of the population of Bardstown, 18 miles from the Knob Creek farm. Holy Cross Church, one of the first Catholic churches west of the Allegheny Mountains, was under construction by 1792. But the untold stories of the proximity of the Catholic Cathedral, monastery, and school are another part of Abraham Lincoln's early environment that has been ignored and whose stories will await another day for telling.

### Slave Coffles Pass Lincoln Cabin

While living at Knob Creek from 1811 to 1816, young Abraham not only saw the slaves living in his neighborhood but he also saw the coffles of slaves herded south along the Bardstown - Green River Turnpike, part of the old Cumberland Trail. The Trail was adjacent to and visible from the Lincoln Knob Creek home. The Trail was one of the overland African-American routes slave dealers used to transport coffles of slaves in chains while going south to Nashville and other slave markets.

This was most probably the first time Abraham thought about slaves living in his neighborhood and those slave traders marching down the road within view of his family's cabin and with slaves in chains.

Thomas and Nancy's explanations must have described the activity in a negative judgmental way, and this would most probably have been the first time Abraham would have thought about the slave traders and slavery. Seeing people of color in chains driven down the road like cattle must have been an indelible image of injustice and inhumanity for Abraham.

Most probably he asked his parents about what he saw. In 1816, his parents belonged to the Little Mount Church, a church against slavery sometimes called an abolitionist church and one that was formed to express that opposition. They had previously belonged to Kentucky churches deemed Separate Baptist, but withdrew over the issue of slavery. In Indiana they joined another anti-slavery church.

Their Kentucky community had not only been saturated with slavery arguments pro and con, for twenty-five years before Abraham Lincoln's nativity, but, on the very date of his birth, the church within two miles of where he was born was in the midst of the most prolonged disturbances which had ever occurred in the congregation over the subject of slavery. But membership of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln in the abolitionist church is yet another story for another day.

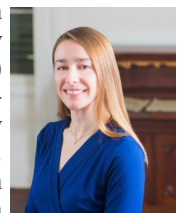
We will probably never know why the parents were anti-slavery. Was it a strict moral judgment that slavery was inherently bad no matter when or where accepted? Or was it an economic judgment? The Lincolns opposed slavery because the slave labor competed with their labor as well as other non-slaveowning small farmers of the Upper South. Slaves were not compensated and thus gave an unfair competitive advantage to slave owning farmers. As we will never know, perhaps it was a blend of both of these factors.

These early contacts and explanations were the genesis of Abraham's future judgments and thoughts about slavery.

The child is indeed the father of the man.

### Mast Appointed Director of Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation (ALPLF) has named Erin Carlson Mast its new President and CEO. The Foundation works closely with



and exclusively supports the exhibits and programs of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

Mast is a leader in the museum and historic site field and current CEO and Executive Director of President Lincoln's Cottage in Washington, D. C. She brings to the ALPLF a distinguished track record in leading successful capital projects, research and exhibits, public programming, and partnerships focusing on Lincoln's Washington Cottage.

## Lincoln's Curious String of New Salem Romances

By Guy Fraker  
ALA Board Member



New Salem is well known as the place where Lincoln matured from a callow youth to a political leader and nascent attorney. The difficult path he traversed there in matters of the heart is less known.

The story of his meeting Ann Rutledge in 1831 is well known. Lincoln boarded in her father's tavern, but the Rutledges left New Salem and moved a few miles to Sand Ridge in 1833. The friendship then blossomed into a full-scale love affair, according to contemporary accounts. The relationship tragically ended with Ann's death from typhoid fever in August 1835. She was buried in Old Concord Cemetery in Sand Ridge, where legend has it that Lincoln was a frequent visitor to the grave site. Skepticism about the romance that arose in the early and mid-20th century has mostly subsided, thanks to Douglas L. Wilson and others who painstakingly analyzed contemporary sources.

Recent research by Kathy Bazzoli of the Sharpsteen Museum in Calistoga, California, suggests a subsequent romance with another New Salem charmer, Susan Reid. It provides evidence of the extended reach of the story of Lincoln's early life. Born in Kentucky in 1815, Susan came to central Illinois with her family in early 1836. Susan and Lincoln met at a social event for young people hosted by Elizabeth Abell at her home near New Salem. Lincoln was quite taken by Susan, who was 5' 7", with grayish-blue eyes, according to an interview in the *San Francisco Call* on May 22, 1897. She was "unusually bright" and still had her "rugged beauty."

The courtship that ensued included horseback rides, and attendance at church and Sunday school together. She noted Lincoln's honesty and lack of

guile, but said he was "homely," "very awkward," and "very bashful." She also called him a "queer fellow," because he was so "superstitious." Lincoln proposed to her twice, but she quickly rejected both. Shortly after his proposal she married William Boyce of New Salem on June 18, 1837, noting that Lincoln's ardor had caused her to move more quickly into the marriage. Contemporary evidence confirms that they did know each other. Lincoln and Boyce had fought side-by-side in the Black Hawk War. Later they joined in signing petitions related to roads in the area. In July 1837, Lincoln represented Susan's father, Louis Reed (*sic*), in the case of *Reed v. Fleming*, in which Reed sought money damages. The case ended in a hung jury. Both Susan Boyce and William P. Boyce were listed as witnesses.

The Boyces left Illinois and moved to Texas in the 1840's, eventually landing in Calistoga, where *The Call* caught up with Susan for the interview. She was 82 at that time. The story was picked up by the *Iowa State Register* from *The Call* on June 4, 1897, noting that Boyce was a gambler, and that Susan had picked a gambler over Abraham Lincoln. The story commented, "There is woman's perversity for you." She died in 1907, or 22 years after the death of her husband.

It was shortly after the abrupt termination of the Reid courtship that Lincoln turned to his friend Elizabeth Abell to inquire about her sister Mary Owens, whom Lincoln had met when she visited New Salem from Kentucky for a month in 1833. His account of the courting of Mary Owens is set forth in a letter to Eliza Browning on April 1, 1838. Lincoln and Elizabeth Abell conspired to bring Mary back to Springfield for the purpose of possibly marrying Lincoln. Mary, born in 1808 (thus 5 years older than Ann and 7 years older than Susan), was cultured and educated. She had a jovial and companionable personality. Her appearance was described as striking. She was 5' 5", but apparently on the heavy side, having grown so between the years 1833 and 1836 when she returned to New Salem. They courted briefly before Lincoln left for the legislative session in Vandalia in December 1836. His letter to her on

December 13th describes his pain because she had not written him, with his "spirits so low." On May 7, 1837, he wrote again to outline the dim prospects of life in the new capital. He said that she "would not be satisfied with life in Springfield" and described his own limited prospects. Finally, on August 16<sup>th</sup>, he penned a remarkably unflattering letter, stating that he felt duty-bound to enter into marriage, and he would do so if she wished. She never answered that letter. Lincoln's 1838 letter to Eliza Browning was uncharacteristically unkind in his description of Mary, noting her defective facial features and "her unfortunate corpulence."

After Lincoln's death, Mary Owens reluctantly corresponded with William Herndon to describe the lack of courtesy and manners he had displayed during the brief courtship. She married Jessie Vineyard in 1841, with whom she had five children. They migrated to Missouri, where she died in 1877.

Lincoln's letter to Eliza Browning provides closure to these episodes. "I have now come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying."

A review of the three forays into romance suggests that the first was a genuine, deep love for Ann Rutledge. The next two suggest a man bent on marriage as soon as practicable. What was driving Lincoln at the time? Was it the deep sorrow and loneliness of lost love caused by Ann's death? Was it the fact that most of his contemporaries were married? Had he concluded that a suitable spouse was necessary for the twin careers he had chosen?

The answer to these questions can only be answered by Lincoln. But we do know that two years later he met someone as anxious to marry as he was: Mary Todd.

*Guy Fraker is an ALA Board Member and an attorney in Bloomington, Illinois. He thanks Ann Scullion of Livermore, California; Curtis Mann, Curator of the Sangamon Valley Collection of the Lincoln Library in Springfield; and Hannah L. Brauer of the staff of the University of Illinois Library.*



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## “COTTAGE” COMMITTEE REPORT

*By Sue Massie  
ALA Board Member*

Several months ago, the “Lincoln’s Springfield Cottage Committee” was formed to pursue a long-held dream of distinguished historian and author Michael Burlingame. Burlingame, now president of Abraham Lincoln Association, envisioned experiencing the home purchased by the Lincolns, a simple cottage with four rooms downstairs and two sleeping rooms above. It bore little resemblance to the elaborate 2-story Lincoln Home now featured in the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

Architectural plans are now being prepared by architects Melotte Morse Leonatti Parker Ltd. A booklet has been published describing the project, its purpose, location, cost, and potential, and letters of support, endorsements, and proclamations. The overwhelming support of these endorsements will no doubt aid in the replica Cottage eventually becoming part of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site.

Fundraising has begun. Already more than 75% of the esti-

mated \$400,000 cost has been contributed or pledged. The City of Springfield and Sangamon County have both pledged sizeable donations. Local businesses are contributing electrical, HVAC, and plumbing supplies. Many Abraham Lincoln Association members, Lincoln scholars, and the public have also given generously.



Sue Massie

Please consider a year-end gift to the Cottage Fund. Send to: The Abraham Lincoln Association  
PO Box 1865, Springfield, IL 62705 or  
use the ALA website: [abrahamlincolnassociation.org](http://abrahamlincolnassociation.org).

Thank you.

## Kathryn Harris Named Citizen of Year

Kathryn Harris, former ALA President and current Board Member, has been selected as First Citizen of Springfield for the year 2020. She was named the *State Journal-Register's* 57th annual First Citizen Award winner on November 29. More than 30 nominations were received for the award. Initially given in 1963, the First Citizen Award recognizes civic-minded people in greater Springfield for their unselfish commitment to helping their fellow citizens and working to make the community a better place to live.

**Congratulations Kathryn!**

