

For the People

A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association

Volume 3, Number 2

Summer 2001

Springfield, Illinois

Mr. Lincoln and Mrs. Partington

by Dr. James M. Cornelius *

Was Abraham Lincoln a rube or a well-read man? His brief meeting with one of England's wealthiest and oldest aristocrats casts an interesting light upon this debate.

The young Marquis of Hartington, heir to the Duke of Devonshire and representing a cotton-manufacturing district, held a junior post in Lord Palmerston's Cabinet in 1861-1862. Like so many well-off Britons of his day, he felt it time to learn about the sister-nation and arranged a visit to the White House. When the privately educated, sensitive, and aloof lord was introduced to the president, the poor boy from Kentucky blurted out, "Hartington? That rhymes with Partington!"

The nonplussed marquis may not have deserved much better treatment—his Southern sympathies became fixed soon thereafter during three months spent amongst the cotton planters, for he had snuck through Union lines to see the land of the aristocrats—but it does not seem likely that Lincoln intended an insult at the time. Who was Partington, and why did the name stand to the fore in the president's mind?

Mrs. Ruth Partington existed more in folklore than in fact, and for antebellum Americans her name was a byword of humble determination combined with a sometimes inspired mangling of the English language. She was said to be a respectable inhabitant of a cottage on the beach in Sidmouth, Devonshire. The bud of her reputation blossomed when Sydney Smith, a well-known political re-

former, poked about thirty miles from there in 1831 to a crowd angry that the House of Lords had just thrown out a parliamentary reform bill. The Lord's attempt reminded Smith of the great storm at Sidmouth in 1824, when "there set in a great flood upon that town—the tide rose to an incredible height, the waves rushed in upon

the houses." Dame Partington was "seen at the door of her house, with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea-water and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean." Just as she ought not have resisted the tempest breaking her steps, thought Smith, politicians

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"Partingtonian Philosophy"
From Life and Sayings of Mrs. Partington (1854)

President's Column

by Donald R. Tracy

The Washington-based organization Citizens Against Government Waste recently included the Lincoln Presidential Library in its *Congressional Pig Book Summary* for 2001. In response to my March 19 memo to Abraham Lincoln Association members, I received copies of letters sent to senators and representatives from thirty-one members expressing strong support for the library. The letters came from members in Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. All of the letters expressed the importance of preserving such a critical time in United States history for the future of our children. The letters generally stated their disagreement with classifying the Lincoln Presidential Library as "pork" and suggested surprise that a wonderful project could be so labeled.

Although all of the letters were well written and extremely helpful to the cause, I have chosen three letters that fairly summarize the sentiments behind our collective support for the Lincoln Presidential Library. Robyn J.

Unless otherwise indicated, photographs are courtesy of the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield

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Fancett, of Australia, wrote the first letter. This letter expresses the need to preserve Lincoln not only for American citizens but also for the entire world. Nancy Hill of Tempe, Arizona, wrote the second letter. The letter illustrates the importance of the Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library and why such historical documents should be showcased for future reference. The third and final letter was written by Professor Norman Ferris of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Dr. Ferris expresses his concern for "the growing hunger among Americans for a connection with the great men and women of our nation's past." All of the letters exhibit our members' pride in supporting a major governmental commitment to preserving and enhancing the collective memory of one of the world's most-admired leaders.

Letter of Robyn J. Fancett

Dear Sir,

I have just finished reading your Memorandum, and I'm so outraged by this organization "Citizens against Govt. Waste," I just had to write you. Outraged, is the only word to describe how I am feeling.

The Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum is not a waste of Government spending. It is vital this project takes place and I cannot believe that these people don't understand the importance. For future generations, and all people everywhere interested in Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln was voted the most admired and respected United States President of all time by 100 historians. For this alone, and in Lincoln's own words "it's all together fitting." This must be done, to respect him, and history. I may not be an American citizen, but was very much looking forward to revisiting the states, and being able to visit the Library/Museum and would be very disappointed if this pro-

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Member News

Condolences are extended to former ALA president, Dan Bannister, on the death of his wife Audrey.

Dr. John Daly, Director of the Illinois State Archives, suffered a massive heart attack and is at Memorial Medical Center, Springfield, Illinois.

Phillip Shaw Paludan was named the Naomi Lynn Lincoln Chair in History at the University of Illinois at Springfield. He will assume this new prestigious position beginning in autumn 2001.

Michael Burlingame has retired from Connecticut College and relocated to Washington, D.C. to continue work on volumes three and four of his

multi-volume Abraham Lincoln biography.

William Gienapp has completed his one-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln.

Harold Holzer has been named Vice President for Communications and Marketing for the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Richard Norton Smith will be the curator of a major Lincoln exhibition for the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Matthew Pinsker has completed a manuscript on Abraham Lincoln and Anderson Cottage for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

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Mr. Lincoln and Mrs. Partington

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ought not try to resist the tempest of public opinion.

Enter Benjamin Penhallow Shillaber (1814-1890), who came to be one of the best-known humorists in nineteenth-century America. A humble newspaperman, he picked up this character and began to write squibs about her in the *Boston Post* in 1847. In one, she cared not "whether flour was dear or cheap, she invariably had to pay the same money for a half-dollar's worth." She became well known, and Shillaber went on to edit the humorous weekly the *Carpet-Bag* in 1851-1853 (whose contributors included one S. L. Clemens). *Life and Sayings of Mrs. Partington* appeared in 1854 and sold quickly and well. The illustrations in this and later collections invariably show humble homes where willful young boys scampered unchecked. In one tale, Mrs. Partington misunderstands a remark by her minister about our sins, and replies, "I consider washing-powder as a great blessing to mothers." Indeed, her unmanageable nephew Ike Partington had appeared in a column in 1848, a literary foil to the kinds of boys normally found in the didactic children's books of the day. Tad Lincoln, later known for ransacking the White House, was cut in Ike's mold.

According to *Harper's Weekly* in 1871, Mrs. Partington's "treatment of

the English language is proverbial." But it was her hardheadedness in the face of an uncooperative human nature that must have appealed to some of her fans, too. In Lincoln's case, it is easy to see why such a character would stick in his mind, even when he was about to hold a discussion on the cotton embargo with an Englishman (a word-mangler such as Mrs. Malaprop, who graced a 1775 play by Sheridan, was a provincial lady of fashion and airs—the kind Mary Todd might have encountered). Mrs. Partington seems the spawn of the Work Ethic Belt, where fighting back the elements and getting by on seasonal allotments of food was second nature to the hardy folk. Were Shillaber's columns run in the Springfield newspapers that Lincoln was often seen reading?

Whether aspiring lawyer and politician Lincoln actually read Shillaber's squibs is probably less important than knowing that Mrs. Partington's name was common coin to people with an ear for the language and a heart for the daily struggle, as Lincoln undoubtedly was. Whether the Marquis of Hartington had heard of her seems rather less likely—at least not until he was introduced to her by the natural aristocrat in the White House.

* James M. Cornelius is on contract with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Save the Date!

The following events should be of interest to many of our members:

September 15 — Lincoln Colloquium, Springfield, Illinois

October 4-5 — Third Annual Conference on Illinois History, Springfield, Illinois

November 10 — Gerald Prokopowicz, Ralph G. Newman Lecture at Lincoln College, Lincoln, Illinois

November 14 or 15 — Michael Burlingame, Annual ALA Membership Dinner, Bloomington, Illinois

The Farewell Address—Was It an Afterthought?

by Allen C. Guelzo *

One of Abraham Lincoln's most moving utterances was the short speech of farewell that he gave to his Springfield neighbors on the morning of February 11, 1861, as he stood on the rear platform of the special Great Western Railroad passenger train that would take him to Washington and his inauguration as the sixteenth president. There are many accounts of his final, eloquent leave-taking by Lincoln, beginning with the newspaper versions written by Henry Villard for the Associated Press (and the *New York Tribune*), Henry M. Smith of the *Chicago Tribune*, and Edward L. Baker, the editor of Springfield's *Illinois State Journal*. William Herndon and Ward Hill Lamon both left personal remembrances of the departure in books written years later. At least one private letter, describing Lincoln's delivery of the speech in simple but moving detail, survives from James Cook Conkling to his son, Clinton L. Conkling, and was published in 1944 by Harry Pratt in *Concerning Mr. Lincoln*.



Jesse W. Weik

In 1916, however, as Jesse W. Weik, William Herndon's longtime associate in Lincoln research, was assembling materials for the book that would eventually become *The Real*

[Lucian] Tilton who was the Supt. of the [Great Western] railroad and aboard the train ordered it stopped and it backed to the spot where the crowd was still standing. There Mr.



One of the few photographs showing Springfield's Great Western Railroad Depot as it appeared at the time of Lincoln's Farewell Address—as a one-story building.

Lincoln (1922), Weik came across the trail of another eyewitness account of the farewell that promised to add still more detail to descriptions of the speech. On November 26, 1916, Weik wrote to Clinton L. Conkling in Springfield, asking whether he could confirm one peculiar detail: that the farewell speech had almost never been given at all, because the train began pulling out before Lincoln could speak, and had to be called back into the station for the speech to take place. "The train with Mr. Lincoln aboard had started and gone a hundred or, possibly two hundred feet when Mr.

Lincoln made the speech." This suggested to Weik that either (a) the celebrated farewell speech might have been conceived by Lincoln as an afterthought, and Lincoln asked for the train to be stopped in order to make a last off-the-cuff comment to his friends, or (b) that Lincoln had prepared a speech, but had not informed Lucian Tilton, or failed to remind him at the right moment, so that the speech might have never been delivered at all if Tilton had not at the last moment reversed the train back into the station for Lincoln to speak.

Weik asked Conkling to contact a

Springfield businessman whom Isaac R. Diller had described to him as "a man who heard Lincoln deliver his farewell address at the depot. . . I cannot remember the mans name but he is in the hardware business. I believe his name is German and begins with Zum-." That was more than enough information for Conkling to trace down Louise H. Zumbrook, a Springfield hardware dealer. Conkling not only had two interviews with Zumbrook, but also drew a map of the railroad depot to make clearer the exact location of the events Zumbrook described. The Zumbrook account is concerned not with the speech, but with recreating in vivid detail the sequence of events surrounding it, the location of the Great Western railroad station, and the positioning of the train on a "stub" siding so that Lincoln could be close to the people in the station when speaking.

I am seventy-six years of age [Zumbrook told Clinton Conkling on December 5, 1916]. I came to Springfield, Illinois in 1853. In February 1861 I was working for Dr. William Jayne. One evening during the month he said to me, "Louie, if you go down to the Great Western Depot tomorrow morning you can see Mr. Lincoln leave for Washington." The next morning I went to the Great Western Passenger Depot, which was then situated on the southwest corner of Tenth and Monroe Streets. The north end fronted on Monroe Street and the side on Tenth Street, and was used as a Passenger Depot and the south end as a Freight Depot. The whole of it is now used, with some changes, as a Freight Depot of the Wabash Railroad. At that time the main track of the Great Western Road ran north and south through Tenth Street as it does now. There were some side tracks south of the Depot. The office and lumber yard of George L. Huntington was at the time on the northwest corner of the two streets. On the east side of Huntington's Lumber yard and between it and the main track there was a stub side track which came in from the north and ran south along the west side of the main track and along the east side of the lumber yard until it came to a stop about ten feet north of the north line of Monroe Street. This stub side track did not at that time cross the street.

I got there between six and seven o'clock in the morning. When I got there, the train on which Mr. Lincoln left was standing on the stub side track just north of Monroe Street. The party was on board.

It was a chilly morning and a drizzling rain was falling. I was there some minutes, perhaps ten minutes, before Mr. Lincoln spoke. He came out on to the rear platform about ten feet from the side walk and talked to the crowd, which numbered perhaps between one and two hundred. There were not very many. I heard his address from beginning to end. After he had finished, the train moved north on the stub side track and thence on to the main track and then disappeared without stopping. Before Mr. Lincoln commenced to talk I was talking with people in the crowd and I was told by them that the train was first on the main track, but that they had switched it on to the stub side track so he could speak to the people as they stood on Monroe Street, and without their standing on the main track, because some thought it would be safer. I did not see the train go up the main track and then come back. When I first saw it, it was standing on the stub side track.



Clinton L. Conkling

Zumbrook's account made it clear to Weik that Lucian Tilton's jockeying of the train from the main track to the stub side track was not an afterthought, but a safety precaution, so that the crowd could hear Lincoln speak from the rear platform without standing in the way of other possible traffic on the main track in Tenth Street. This did, however, require that the sparse crowd leave the shelter of

the Great Western passenger depot, and cross to the north side of Monroe Street to gather around the rear of the train as it lay on the stub side track (which did not extend across Monroe Street). Conkling drew a map of the train lines in Tenth Street from Weik, noting each landmark and their relative distances. The drawing conforms substantially to a more contemporaneous illustration, Augustus Koch's *Bird's Eye View of Springfield Illinois* (1872), which clearly shows the Tenth Street passenger depot, plus three lines of track in Tenth Street and a stub spur, used for passenger boarding.

Weik evidently had hoped for something a little more dramatic—the almost-undelivered farewell, the train that had to be backed up at the last moment so that Lincoln could become eloquent—than Zumbrook's prosaic account of a train backed onto a siding simply to avoid a railroad accident in a busy street. Possibly for that reason, poor Zumbrook never made it into Weik's account of the departure from Springfield in the final pages of *The Real Lincoln*. But the Zumbrook account does perform an important little service for us in pinning down exactly where and how Lincoln's most affectionate public speech was delivered.

*Allen C. Guelzo is a professor of American history at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. The correspondence between Weik and Conkling is in the James C. and Clinton L. Conkling Papers at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois. The standard work on the Lincoln inaugural train is Victor Searcher, *Lincoln's Journey to Greatness: A Factual Account of the Twelve-Day Inaugural Trip* (1960). James C. Conkling's letter to his son is in *Concerning Mr. Lincoln, In Which Abraham Lincoln is Pictured as he Appeared to Letter Writers of his Time* (1944). The Zumbrook account contradicts Ward Hill Lamon's description of the sequence of events at the farewell (in *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln*, 1911), since Lamon has Lincoln reach the train through the crowd, turn on the rear platform, and then deliver his farewell.

Lincoln on the Electoral College

by Thomas F. Schwartz

The recent presidential election introduced the American public to the butterfly ballot and variations on the chad—the small, perforated rectangles comprising the punch ballot. Although then Vice President Albert Gore received the greatest total number of popular votes across the country, Americans were reminded that presidents are not elected directly by the people. Rather, the Electoral College indirectly elects United States Presidents. Andrew Jackson was an

early advocate arguing for the elimination of the Electoral College. Even though he received the greatest total popular vote among a field of four presidential candidates, he did not receive the necessary electoral vote. The election was thrown into the House of Representatives where Henry Clay instructed his supporters to back the candidacy of John Quincy Adams. With Clay's backers, Adams won the election. The son of President John Adams, John Quincy Adams immediately named Henry Clay his secretary of state, seen as the stepping stone to

the presidency.

Andrew Jackson quickly denounced the “corrupt bargain” between Adams and Clay, denying the Hero of New Orleans the presidency. Jackson insisted that the election was stolen from him and argued that the Electoral College needed to be abolished to prevent future elections from being decided by “corrupt bargains.” He had allies in Congress introduce legislation proposing to change the Constitution to elect the president by direct popular vote. The legislation never advanced beyond committee. Jackson, however, easily beat John Quincy Adams in the following 1828 presidential contest.

Much has been made of Lincoln’s staunch Whig beliefs. It is therefore surprising to discover that Lincoln did not always support the Electoral College, an institution that comported with Whig political theory. In a letter to Josephus Hewett, a former Springfield lawyer, Lincoln expressed the following views on the Electoral College: “I was once of your opinion, expressed in your letter, that presidential electors should be dispensed with; but a more thorough knowledge of the causes that first introduced them, has made me doubt. Those causes were briefly these. The convention that framed the constitution has this difficulty: the small states wished to so frame the new government as that they might be equal to the large ones regardless of the inequality of population; the large ones insisted on equality in proportion to population. They compromised it, by basing the House of Representatives on population, and the Senate on states regardless of population; and the executive on both principles, by electors in each state, equal in numbers to her senators and representatives. Now, throw away the machinery of electors, and the compromise is broken up, and the whole yielded to the principle of the large states.”

Books for the Beach

If you have not decided on which books to take with you to your vacation destination, several suggestions are being offered.

Kenneth J. Winkle has written about Lincoln’s early years using quantitative data and recent findings from social history. It is not Lincoln “by the numbers,” but an engaging narrative.

Based upon his Harvard dissertation, which was directed by David Herbert Donald, Michael Vorenberg

offers a long-overdue examination of the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Treatment of Lincoln’s DNA comprises but a portion of Philip Reilly’s book. It will also be of interest to those who did not excel in science.

And what would the summer be without a good murder mystery?

Please make all checks out to “IHPA.” Illinois residents must add sales tax to their totals.

Kenneth J. Winkle, The Young Eagle: The Rise of Abraham Lincoln

Retail: \$28.95 ALA: \$21.50 IL Sales Tax: \$1.56

Michael Vorenberg, Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment

Retail: \$29.95 ALA: \$24.50 IL Sales Tax: \$1.78

Philip R. Reilly, Abraham Lincoln’s DNA and Other Adventures in Genetics

Retail: \$25.00 ALA: \$20.00 IL Sales Tax: \$1.45

Elliott Roosevelt, Murder in the Lincoln Bedroom: An Eleanor Roosevelt Mystery

Retail: \$22.95 ALA: \$17.95 IL Sales Tax: \$1.30

Shipping fees: \$17.95 to \$50, add \$7.00

\$50.01 to \$75, add \$8.00

\$75.01 to \$100, add \$11.00

Federal Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Established

The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission has been established with an initial congressional appropriation of \$461,000. The purpose of the commission is to plan for the two-hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth on February 12, 2009. Among the statutory requirements, the commission is responsible for the design of a coin, a stamp, and a joint session of Congress. This language mirrors that of the sesquicentennial celebration in 1959. The com-

mission is comprised of two members selected by the president of the United States: Professor James O. Horton and Mr. Harold Holzer; three members selected by the Speaker of the House: the Honorable Ray LaHood, Ms. Joan Flinspach, and Illinois First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan; three members selected by the Senate majority leader: the Honorable Jim Bunning, Professor Gabor Boritt, and Judge Frank Williams; two members selected by the House minority leader: the Honorable David

Phelps and Louise Taper; two members selected by the Senate minority leader: the Honorable Richard Durbin and Dr. Jean T. D. Bandler; and one member each selected by the governors of Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky: the Honorable James R. Thompson, Darrel E. Bigham, and Judge Tommy Turner. Eight of the fifteen commission members are members of the Abraham Lincoln Association. Congratulations and good luck to all of the commission members.

A MEDITATION UPON WATCHING GEORGE RYAN BREAKING GROUND FOR THE LINCOLN LIBRARY

by Dr. R. S. Bradley

THE COLD, THE COLD, COLD, COLD SUN,
MY LOVE LIES IN THE GRAVE
IN THE COLD, COLD, SUN

BY NIGHT HE WILL NOT COME,
NO JOY NOR MILLING CROWD;
MY LOVE LIES IN THE GROUND
IN THE COLD, COLD, SUN

WHEN THE SPADE INTO THE EARTH,
WAVE AFTER WAVE OF GEESE FLEW O'ER;
OLD GLORY SNAPPED A SMART SALUTE
IN THE COLD, COLD, SUN

LINCOLN, LINCOLN, FALLEN COMMANDER,
WHOSE SPIRIT RIDES, WHOSE SPIRIT RIDES,
IN THE COLD, COLD, SUN

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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

- Railsplitter \$ 25
- Postmaster \$ 75
- Lawyer \$ 200
- Congressman \$ 500
- Presidential \$ 1,000

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

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

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

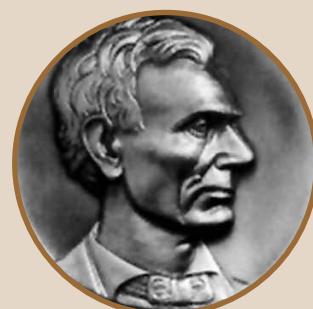
Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____



Web site: www.alincolnassoc.com

President's Column

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ject fails. It would be almost a crime not to build this Library/Museum for such a deserving figure of American history.

I don't know whether someone like a past President, George W. Bush for example, with his own Library and Museum, could help in any way possible, being according to my history book, seventh cousin, four times removed of Abraham Lincoln himself, may be able to do something to make this organization rethink its stance on this subject. This organization may take notice of a past President, I think anything is worth trying in this situation.

I know the Smithsonian has a Presidential section in its museum, but it is not only on Lincoln, a little corner tucked away somewhere is just not enough for such a great man. Lesser President's have Library/Museums, i.e. Nixon, Johnson, Kennedy, and this great American President is considered not respected and admired enough by Americans, and people like myself, to deserve a Library/Museum of his own. It's disgraceful of these people to label the Lincoln Library this way. I just hope someone comes up with a brilliant idea, to change the current opinion, and that the Library and Museum, will go ahead.

I hope to receive some good news from you on this subject in the very near future. Unfortunately, I cannot write to a congressman or woman as I am not an American citizen, but I do admire and respect the office of President and Abraham

Lincoln would have to be the President I admire most, and the most deserving of his own Library/Museum.

Letter of Nancy Hill

Dear Senator McCain:

During the summer of 1998, I used archival items from the Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library in my Master's thesis research. I was a great privilege to use those materials, and I hope that future researchers will be able to do the same. An Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum will provide proper storage and care for that priceless part of our national heritage, and will enable many more people to benefit from it.

Ask several persons to name the two or three greatest presidents in American history. I assure you that each one will name Abraham Lincoln. Ask those same citizens if they believe that funding for the Lincoln Library is "pork," and you will be reminded that the American people recognize the difference between wasteful spending and meaningful investment.

I respectfully urge you to support funding for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Please help to ensure its future as an important part of the education infrastructure of our nation.

Letter of Norman Ferris

Dear Senator Thompson,

I am writing to express my fervent support for the allocation of federal funds

for constructing a Presidential Library and Museum to honor Abraham Lincoln and preserve a priceless collection of Lincoln artifacts in Springfield, Illinois.

Surely, if recent chief executives like Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Jimmy Carter were deserving of such support, the first and greatest of all Republican Presidents, Abraham Lincoln, deserves commensurate backing from the Congress.

As a retired professor of history, I am aware of the growing hunger among Americans for a connection with the great men and women of our nation's past. This is especially true of the increasing interest in Lincoln and his legacy, as is evident from the constant stream of popular books, television dramas and articles devoted to the sixteenth president and to the American Civil War.

To call federal appropriations for this project "pork" is to spit on spending for the Smithsonian Institution, the Gettysburg National Cemetery, Independence Hall, and many other historical sites, memorials and repositories of learning that have contributed so much to the preservation and enhancement of our civilization.

The proposed \$10 million dollar appropriation for the Lincoln Library and Museum has already been fully considered and approved by all the appropriate committees and subcommittees of both the Senate and the House of Representatives. I earnestly hope that you will give strong support as part of the administration's forthcoming budget.

For the People

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