William Freeman, Found

By Kathleen Heyworth

William Freeman, born a slave in 1840 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, made his escape to freedom when the 1st Illinois Cavalry came through in 1861. Although not allowed to enlist in the U.S. Army that summer, he became “contraband” and a personal servant to Capt. John McNulta. Late in 1862, McNulta, who by then was Colonel of the 94th Illinois, asked Freeman to help escort a soldier’s remains home from Missouri to McLean County, Illinois, for burial.

Freeman’s next 2½ years are unaccounted for, but in January 1865 he enlisted at Springfield in the 29th Illinois U.S. Colored Troops and shipped out to join the rest of the regiment near Petersburg, Va. In November that unit went to Camp Butler, near Springfield, to receive their final pay. Many of the soldiers, including Freeman, never left town -- he spent the rest of his life there, dying in 1900.

What we know of William Freeman’s history comes from his pension file. He applied in 1880, claiming that he was injured near Petersburg in March 1865 while cutting logs for the breastworks. Confederate bullets sheared off a tree limb that fell on his back. He went to the camp hospital but refused to stay, leaving no record of his injury. He also reported that on April 9, 1865, near Appomattox Courthouse, he took a “lick from the butt of a musket in the hands of the enemy.” Freeman’s only proof of either event was his own word and affidavits of a few of his comrades. Col. McNulta, though not with him in ’65, vouched for his character. He described Freeman as a man “of unusual strength and vigor, standing about 6’1” and weighing about 200 pounds,” with “great activity and unusual powers of endurance.” Of his character, McNulta stated that Freeman was “an honest, reliable and truthful man” in whom he had “implicit confidence.”

Fast forward to 2012. I discovered that Lewis Martin, a private in the 29th USCT who was severely wounded at the Battle of the Crater, was buried in an unmarked grave in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield. I wrote a book about him and other African-American Civil War soldiers, including Freeman, who was also buried in an unmarked grave there. That was the end of the story until April 2016 when serendipity struck. I was perusing old photographs on eBay. Original images of 19th century African-Americans are rare, so when one popped up, I stopped scrolling to investigate. On the back, in period ink, was written “William Freeman, Springfield, Ill. 1868.”

In honor of his service and his life, a gravestone will be formally placed on his grave in the summer of 2017.


UIS Chancellor Speaks of Hope for Lincoln

At the August 18, 2016, opening convocation of the academic year, UI Springfield Chancellor Susan Koch spoke of her campus’s hopes “to establish some form of ‘Lincoln Institute.’ No part of the UI system is better equipped to elevate the stature and visibility of Abraham Lincoln in our state than we are. UIS has an incredibly rich history of working in partnership with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Abraham Lincoln Association, and others to deepen the public’s appreciation for our beloved President Lincoln. Our Lincoln Scholar and Lincoln Legacy Lectures are just the beginning. This year, let’s once and for all make UIS an epicenter for Lincoln Studies. Our beautiful new sculpture of ‘Mr. Lincoln, The Young Lawyer,’ now a beloved campus landmark, is a perfect springboard for expanded leadership for UIS on this element of the new UI system strategic framework.”
Tired and ill, Mary Lincoln returned from Europe in 1880 to take some degree of refuge at her sister’s home in Springfield, Illinois. Here she remained for what proved to be the last two years of her life. In upstairs bedrooms she stored numerous trunks containing purchases she had made over the years. Some people have speculated that Mary suffered from a type of hoarding mania, due perhaps to her having lost so much in her lifetime. In fact, in her final seven years, it was said she tripled the number of trunks it took to store her possessions. Some residents feared the floors of the house might collapse.

Her sister, Elizabeth Edwards, warned Mary’s son, Robert, that they had run out of storage space and nothing more could be sent to her.

In 1882, following Mary’s death, sixty four trunks were shipped to Robert’s father-in-law’s home in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. James Harlan had been an esteemed friend of the Lincoln family, and in 1868 their two families were joined with the marriage of Robert Lincoln and Mary Harlan. It thus became the duty of Robert’s wife, Mary Harlan Lincoln, to unpack and distribute the contents of these trunks. There were reams of fine cloth, children’s clothing, dresses, coats, and numerous other items. Articles were sorted and sent to different places and institutions.

This was a monumental task and, when she finished, three trunks remained, containing items the family wished to save. Stored in the attic, the trunks provided the two Lincoln granddaughters, Mary (Mamie) and Jessie -- aged 12 and 6 when grandmother Lincoln died -- with some old clothes for “dress-up” parties. (Their grandmother Harlan died in 1884.) At some point, Jessie took a bolt of beautiful fabric in colors of lavender and oyster white and made small purses for her friends.

In 1907, Mary Harlan Lincoln gave her parents’ home to Iowa Wesleyan University. This school was favored by her father throughout his lifetime, and the home is adjacent to the college campus. At that point the contents of the three remaining trunks were sorted; some items were given to a long-time housekeeper, Emily Pascal, including several mourning veils; a low walnut stool with a cane seat; a coin silver teaspoon with a hinge lid and the initials ‘M.L.;’ a child’s set of silver with the initial ‘L’ on each piece; and possibly other items. As recently as 2009, a handkerchief from the trunks was returned to Mount Pleasant as a donation. Some of these items are now housed in the historic Harlan-Lincoln House, which still stands and serves as an Iowa Wesleyan University museum. Other items from the trunks may have been given to local friends in this small town of Mt. Pleasant, passed down through generations, and may eventually surface and be returned to the museum.

-- Paul Juhl is a volunteer at the Harlan-Lincoln House in Mount Pleasant, Iowa
REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings Fellow Lincoln Lovers,

Summer is ending and fall is approaching … the warmth cannot end soon enough for me! Of course, I will be wishing for these warm days when winter is here.

Bob Lenz and I had a wonderful trip to Costa Rica. I enjoyed learning about Juan Rafael Mora and his anti-slavery efforts in Central America. We were treated royally, and Bob was honored as the United States “Ambassador” for Mora and his legacy!

Please know, my dear friends, that our Costa Rica trip was not all business, as there was time for fun. Picture this, if you will: Bob and I experienced Zip Lining above the Canopy in the rain forest! A definite WOW! In addition, I had an “opportunity for retail” at the Lincoln Mall and the Springfield Man and Woman store in San Jose, Costa Rica. Just further confirmation that the Lincoln name is loved, revered, and attached to shopping around the world, even if he wasn’t really into “sales and retail”!

Mark your calendar for these upcoming Lincoln events: the Grand Soiree at Lincoln College to benefit the Lincoln Heritage Museum; the Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series at the University of Illinois Springfield; the Ex parte Milligan Symposium at Illinois State University; the Lincoln Colloquium in Indiana; and the Lincoln Forum in Gettysburg. I hope many ALA members will attend and support these events, which keep the Lincoln legacy alive. I hope to see you there.

On a sad note, we recently lost two true friends of Lincoln: our own ALA Board member Frederick “Fred” Hoffmann, and Betty J. Hickey, James “Jim” Hickey’s widow. Their love of Lincoln was well-known, and I will miss both of them at upcoming Lincoln events and certainly at our 2017 Banquet.

Until the next time, enjoy the cool fall temperatures.

Kathryn M. Harris

Please Join the Abraham Lincoln Association

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

Name: ________________________________
Address: _____________________________
City:____________ Zip:_______________
Email:_______________________________
Amount:___________________________

Please Join the Abraham Lincoln Association

Kathryn Harris, John Cravens, Robert Lenz, and Antonio Vargas

To join online please visit our website
www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org

Student……………………$25
Railsplitter……………………$50
Postmaster………………$100
Lawyer……………………$250
Congressman………………$500
President…………………$1,000
Dear Fred,

You lived a good life filled with family and many friends. Kathy and your two daughters, Joan and Ann, their spouses and your most loved grandchildren, Frances, Maelle, Max and Samuel. We will all miss you, but know that you want no maudlin tears. So I will just share a few memories.

You are from a family of well educated people. You attended Butler Grade School and Springfield High School in your hometown. You spent your undergraduate days in Philadelphia at Swarthmore and graduated from the University of Chicago. You then attended the University of Illinois law school. You had lifelong, good friends from all of these schools. We will all miss you.

You loved your three brothers, John, George and Donald and their families and were very proud of them all. But I will not share here the stories you told me about growing up on Park Avenue in the old Hoffmann House. Your father George and your mother Inez were both prominent lawyers and civic leaders. Your mother was the first female City of Springfield official — City Treasurer. Your dad saved the Vachel Lindsay Home and was the ramrod in creating the University of Illinois — Springfield. They were gone from home a great deal, and the boys ran the house during their absence. You and your brothers ran it with joy and a great deal of fun. They will miss you.

I remember when we were in law school at the University of Illinois. We were speaking acquaintances, but not much more. You came back to Springfield to work in your parents’ law office in the Illinois Building. I came back as well and worked in a law firm in the same building and on the same floor. You practiced with the Hoffmann & Hoffmann law firm for 30 years and then with the Sorling Law Firm for the remainder of your career. You became a much respected attorney.

In our younger days, we would often have lunch together and frequently at the end of the day, we would walk to your apartment in one of the old houses on Eighth Street in what is now the Lincoln Home National Park. You kept your green Corvette in the barn that is stil a part of the restored neighborhood. We might tip a few, discuss the events of the day (mostly uproarious laughter over some of the odd things we had experienced) and then I would go home. On the days that I had walked to work with your father, you would give me a ride home.

You loved humor and good stories that you told well. You often were unable to finish a whole story because you would laugh so much as the story progressed.

We both found great humor in the personalities of the various Springfield lawyers of long ago. And then we became them and that made it even funnier as we laughed at ourselves.

For some time you composed and I edited letters to the State Journal newspaper about some perceived local injustice or newly discovered architectural abomination. Pseudonyms were used. We could hardly wait for the Monday morning newspaper that printed the week’s letters to the editor. You would sometimes respond to your own letter, using another pseudonym and tearing apart the letter of the prior week. I think we were the only ones to know and it brought us uproarious laughter.

You loved the symphony and music. You had the best collection of records and a magnificent record player and speakers that you played long before CDs or downloads to a computer. You had a wonderful library encased in a number of lawyer bookcases handed down in your family.

You loved photography and the wide open beauty of the American west. In younger days, you frequently traveled to the National Parks there and brought back photographs that were some of the finest I have seen.

You also loved sports and cars and racing and opera and art and architecture and Lincoln. You were conversant in them all. If there was a major golf event within say 1,000 miles of home, you would take off and attend. Back home you could describe every shot of the tournament.

On your office desk, you had a little metal-working hammer with a flat head and wooden handle. You told me that it had been your grandfather Hoffmann’s. He lived in Chicago where he was a master metal worker and had come to Springfield to create the beautiful metal doors on the Centennial (now Howlett) Building. He did the same for the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. You were proud of him.

You met Kathy and were smitten. She was beautiful and was almost as bright as you (really she just let you think that) and loved music and opera. You were a perfect couple. You asked me to be best man and I rode with your parents to Kathy’s home in Lincoln, Nebraska for your wedding. It was a wonderful bringing together of two wonderful people and their families. The best part, however, was that you asked me to drive the Corvette back to Springfield. What a trip that was and all these years later, the old Corvette still sits in your driveway.

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As a young couple, Kathy taught school at Springfield High School and you practiced law. Your first home was an apartment on Vine Street, but when you started a family you moved to South Lincoln. You and Kathy had two wonderful daughters and you were so proud of their educational success, marriages, spouses, careers and their children, your grandchildren.

You enjoyed your service on the Board of the Abraham Lincoln Association and made many good friends there. You and Michael Burlingame often conversed, but it was more about Italian opera than Lincoln.
You were modest and unassuming. You were strong and gentle. You were a gentleman. You would always help someone who was down. You were generous to many charities and good causes, but wanted no recognition. You were a good guy.

My good friend, I will miss you as will many others.

Godspeed.

Richard E. Hart

--- Richard E. Hart is a Director of the Abraham Lincoln Association

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Lincoln Returns to New Hampshire

By Robert Young and Christopher J. Young

The latest unveiling of Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s Abraham Lincoln: The Man (“Standing Lincoln”) took place on June 26, 2016, on the picturesque grounds of the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site. Six years in the making, the unveiling in Cornish, New Hampshire, held a celebratory atmosphere. Those present knew they were part of something larger than themselves; something that may reasonably be anticipated to last longer than themselves. By being present, as guest speaker Thayer Tolles commented, we all “entered into the narrative” of the great sculptor’s life and legacy.

The 12th N. H. Volunteer Regiment Serenade Band contributed to the atmosphere of the day by filling the air with Civil War-era tunes, providing to visitors and speakers alike a vivid auditory connection to the musical world inhabited by Abraham Lincoln. Among these songs were bouncing polkas, confident marches, and sentimental hymns that had been performed by military bands during the Civil War.

Since the original dedication in 1887 by the father-son duo of Robert T. Lincoln and 14-year-old Jack, in Chicago’s Lincoln Park, replicas of Saint-Gaudens’s “Standing Lincoln” have been unveiled at several locations in the United States as well as in London and Mexico City. The keynote address at Cornish was given by Harold Holzer, who linked the importance of Lincoln’s New England visit in 1860 with his subsequent nomination as the Republican candidate for president of the United States.

Prof. Christopher Young teaches history at Indiana University Northwest. His son Robert is a freshman at Munster (Ind.) High School, a band member, and a Lincoln fan.
Two New Postings at the ALPLM

By Bob Willard
ALA Director

Two major vacancies in the Lincoln world have been filled with the recent appointments of Alan Lowe as Executive Director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Samuel Wheeler as Illinois State Historian.

Mr. Lowe, who, like Abraham Lincoln, can say, “I, too, am a Kentuckian,” comes to Springfield from Dallas, Texas, where he was the Director of the George W. Bush Presidential Library for 6 years; he oversaw the design and operation of that facility, which opened to the public in 2013. With history degrees from the University of Kentucky, Mr. Lowe has spent much of his career with presidential libraries within the National Archives and Records Administration; he began as an archivist with the Reagan Library in California and then served in the Archives Office of Presidential Libraries in Washington, D.C., for 11 years. During that time, he also served for nearly a year as acting director of the FDR Library in New York. He left the National Archives from 2003 to 2009 to head up the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy in Tennessee.

Dr. Wheeler studied history at Illinois State University and the University of Illinois Springfield. He received his Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University in 2008. He was a research assistant and graduate assistant at the Papers of Abraham Lincoln. At SIU, he taught a number of courses on American history. In 2010, Dr. Wheeler returned to the Papers of Abraham Lincoln as research associate. In 2013 he became research historian at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. In July 2016, Dr. Wheeler was named Illinois State Historian by the trustees of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency; he reports to Mr. Lowe.

Although they have worked together for only a short time, both men recognize each other’s value. Mr. Lowe said, “Sam is terrific,” and he mentioned his extensive knowledge of Lincoln and Illinois history, along with his ability as a manager, spokesman, and liaison with important constituencies. Dr. Wheeler noted his new boss’s enthusiasm for the job and the value of his experience gained at historical institutions over his career.

Both Mr. Lowe and Dr. Wheeler stressed the importance of collaboration. “The only way you can fulfill your potential and be successful is to pick great partners,” Mr. Lowe observed. He said that in his first weeks he spent a lot of time meeting with ALPLM partners – educators, funders, managers of other historic sites. He also said that the ALA is “a very important partner for us.” Dr. Wheeler underscored these remarks and added that collaboration is essential between technologists and historians. He said that historians would be wise to embrace technology because “the world wide web provides a world wide audience.”

Dr. Wheeler was an early user of communications technology. While working on his dissertation, he also published a blog (“Lincoln Studies”) that put him in touch with folks from all over. Although his new responsibilities prevent him from continuing the blog, he has a Twitter account (@spwheeler) and he tweets regularly about both Abraham Lincoln and Illinois history. He also intends to devote time to preparing his dissertation for publication, which deals with the little-known subject of Lincoln’s poetry.

The subject of Abraham Lincoln is something that will keep both men busy. Mr. Lowe, who says that his earliest memories include visiting Abraham Lincoln’s birthplace, notes that, “there are multiple dimensions that you can talk about and learn from Abraham Lincoln. It’s an exciting thing, but also somewhat a daunting thing.” Dr. Wheeler thinks the public will never tire of Mr. Lincoln. “It’s too compelling, too significant a story.”

Lincoln and Everett, 1860

By Jonathan White
ALA Director

Shortly after Lincoln’s nomination to the presidency in May 1860, the Buffalo [N.Y.] Commercial published an analysis comparing Abraham Lincoln’s speaking abilities with those of Edward Everett, the vice presidential candidate on the Constitutional Union ticket. The article was reprinted in newspapers in several states during the summer and fall of 1860. It could just as easily have been published on November 20, 1863.

“...We think no one can have read any of Mr. Lincoln’s speeches without admiring the vigor of his rhetoric. In this he is at once the equal and the opposite of Mr. Everett. The latter excels in lengthy sentences of most musical flow. Each word is fitted and polished to a master’s eye, and the general effect produced is that of a light, graceful, somewhat effeminate elegance. It is rather cloying than satisfying. There is diffusion, not concentration, of idea. Mr. Everett is like the Dutch school of painting, truthful to a fault, overlaiden with detail, overcrowded with elaborate ornament. Mr. Lincoln belongs to another school. His style is broad and sketchy, accomplishing at a stroke that to which Mr. Everett devotes an hour, and gaining in force and expression all that is lost in minuteness of execution. Mr. Lincoln speaks in a few well-chosen words, which goes far enough to say just what he means, but not so far as to commit him beyond his intention. Terse is the term which describes his language. It is eminently direct. It seems as if his opinions were so thoroughly elaborated in his mind that he necessarily takes the shortest route to their utterance. At times vehement, bursting forth in a stormy rush of invective or eulogy, it is also restrained by what seems a characteristic prudence. . . .”

--Dr. White teaches at Christopher Newport University
February 11-12 Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium Speakers Announced

Please join us in Springfield at the ALA’s annual Benjamin P. Thomas Lincoln Symposium for these free talks!

**Saturday February 11, 2017 – in the Old State Capitol at 6:00 p.m.**
Daniel Crofts, professor emeritus of history at Rutgers University, on his new book *Lincoln and the Politics of Slavery: The Other Thirteenth Amendment and the Struggle to Save the Union*. (University of North Carolina Press, April 2016).

**Sunday February 12, 2017 – in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library atrium at 12:00 p.m. (charge for lunch is $30.00; listening is free)**

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**Around the Map**

--In Dayton, Ohio, on September 17th, sculptor Mike Major unveiled a new life-sized sculpture of Lincoln that commemorates his speech there on 17 September 1859. The Lincoln Society of Dayton did fundraising and organizing for many years to make this possible. [LincolnSocietyofDayton.org](http://LincolnSocietyofDayton.org)

--In Washington, D.C., on September 24th, the long-awaited National Museum of African American History and Culture, under auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, opened on 5 acres adjacent to the Washington Monument. One feature is a wall of images of holographs of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which ended slavery, as signed by Lincoln and about 140 Congressmen who supported the resolution.

--On April 15th, 2016, the Bangladesh Lincoln Society, in Dhaka, held its 8th annual meeting and discussion, under the leadership of Mr. Mohammed Haque. Write them at bdlincolnsociety@gmail.com

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New in 2016

*Under Lincoln’s Hat: 100 Objects* (Lyons Press), from the ALPLM collections, 240 pp. for $24.00.

The book is half documents and half relics, each image accompanied by a few hundred words of description. It earned this praise from Doris Kearns Goodwin: “*Under Lincoln’s Hat* illuminates the life of our sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln, in the most personal of ways through storytelling and imagery as only the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and its vast collections can do. It is a must-read for Lincoln lovers.”

Available at the ALPLM gift store or through [http://shop.alplm.org](http://shop.alplm.org)

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... and what were they reading in 1916?

Lord Charnwood (Godfrey Rathbone Benson), one-time ambassador from the United Kingdom to the United States, published his incisive study *Abraham Lincoln* with Constable & Co. of London; it appeared a couple of weeks later in the U.S. from Holt. It stayed in print almost non-stop for decades. Now in the public domain, it has appeared from at least 3 publishers in India since 2009.

For the People (ISSN 1527-2710) is published four times a year and is a benefit of membership of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

The 14th Annual Lincoln Legacy Lectures will focus on “Lincoln and Reconstruction: America’s Struggle for Equality.” Two lectures will be presented on October 20, 2016 from 7 to 9 p.m. in Brookens Auditorium at the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS). Dr. Allen C. Guelzo, Henry R. Luce Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College, will discuss “Reconstruction as a Bourgeois Revolution.” Dr. Brooks Simpson, Foundation Professor of History at Arizona State University, will present a lecture on “Abraham Lincoln and Reconstruction: Did Booth’s Bullet Change History?” Dr. Michael Burlingame, Chancellor Naomi Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies at UIS, will offer opening remarks on “Lincoln’s Changing Thoughts on Reconstruction,” and serve as moderator during the question and answer period with the audience.

Co-sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Association

Free and Open to the Public

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2016 Lincoln Colloquium, October 7-8, 2016

Lincoln in Public Memory

Speakers: Barry Schwartz, author of Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era
Richard Fox, author of Lincoln’s Body: A Cultural History
Edward T. Linenthal, author of Preserving History: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum
Eric Sandweiss, Chairman of the History Department at Indiana University

Cost: $60

Friday at Vincennes University, Jasper Campus
Saturday at Lincoln Boyhood Home National Memorial

Co-sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Association

For reservations contact Mike_Capps@NPS.gov