



# FOR THE PEOPLE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION  
[www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org](http://www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org)

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SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

## The Bixby Letter

By Michael Burlingame

*Chancellor Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies, University of Illinois Springfield and a Director of The Abraham Lincoln Association*

In 1995, the *Journal of The Abraham Lincoln Association (JALA)* ran an article, “New Light on the Bixby Letter,” which argued that Lincoln’s much-admired condolence letter was actually composed by John Hay. Earlier authors had noted that Hay told some people (among them the British statesman John Morley and the American journalists William Crary Brownell and Walter Hines Page) that he had written the document but did not want his authorship revealed until after he died. Moreover, people close to Hay (among them his secretary Spencer Eddy and the journalist Louis Coolidge) testified that he had written it, though they did not claim that Hay himself had told them so.

The evidence shedding “new light” included Hay’s scrapbooks into which he pasted some of his own compositions, clipped from newspapers. Two of those scrapbooks, in which the overwhelming majority of items are clearly Hay’s own writings, contain the Bixby letter.

Further evidence cited in that *JALA* article included a simple stylistic analysis showing that Hay had frequently used the verb “beguile,” a word that does not appear in Lincoln’s collected works. In addition, Lincoln did not employ the phrase “I cannot refrain from tendering to you,” which Hay did in some letters.

Years earlier, Roy Basler, who eventually became editor of Lincoln’s *Collected Works*, had pooh-poohed the argument that Hay wrote the Bixby letter, suggesting that anyone who believed it should “procure a copy of Thayer’s *Life and Letters of John Hay* and read a few of Hay’s compositions.”



John Hay in 1862,  
*Brown University Library.*

90 percent of the time, the method identified Hay as the author of the letter, with the analysis being inconclusive in the rest of the cases.” The authors conclude that Hay was “almost certainly” the author of the Bixby letter. In conjunction with the evidence adduced in the 1995 *JALA* article, this new computer analysis suggests that the qualifier “almost” is unnecessary.

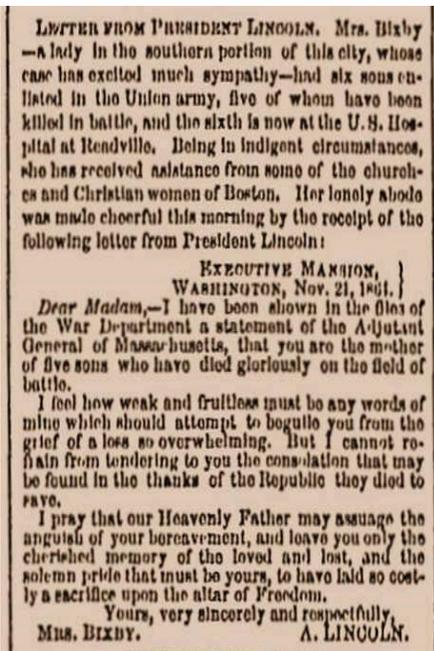
Recently a team of researchers at the Centre for Forensic Linguistics at Aston University in Birmingham, U.K., took Basler’s advice and compared 500 of Hay’s compositions in Thayer’s volumes -- and some other works by Hay -- with 500 of Lincoln’s compositions. The Bixby letter is short, and since most programs used to identify authorship work only with longer texts, the team (Jack Grieve, Emily Carmody, Isobelle Clarke, Hannah Gideon, Annina Heini, Andrea Nini, and Emily Waibel) came up with a new program: “n-gram tracing,” a method that “involves searching for occurrences of sequences of linguistic forms (e.g., characters, words) extracted from the disputed text in the possible author writing samples to find the possible author who uses the highest percentage of these forms.”



Lydia Parker Bixby

In spring 2017, the team wrote up their findings for an article submitted to the journal *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*. In it, they report that “nearly

The *New Light on the Bixby Letter* article referred to in this article may be viewed in the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Volume 16, Issue 1, Winter 1995, pp. 59-71. [hdl.handle.net/2027/po.2629860.0016.107](http://hdl.handle.net/2027/po.2629860.0016.107)



Abraham Lincoln’s letter to Mrs. Bixby,  
*Boston Evening Transcript.*

### New Lincolniana

**The Archibald Williams Family of Quincy, Illinois.** Archibald Williams of Quincy, Illinois, a legal and political friend of the future president, is the subject of a book by a descendant, retired Colorado College professor of political science Robert D. Loevy, who had access to unpublished family letters.

**The Lost Gettysburg Address.** Charles Anderson was a pro-Union slaveowner in Kentucky who escaped from a Confederate prison. Soon thereafter as Lt. Governor of Ohio, he gave the third speech at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863. It was given in the Presbyterian Church to Lincoln and other gathered notables that day. The full text of his speech was found on a Wyoming ranch in 2002 and is now published as the appendix to a biography of Anderson’s amazing life by David T. Dixon, *The Lost Gettysburg Address*.

**Mary Lincoln for the Ages.** Jason Emerson’s compilation of a bibliography of books and articles about Mary Lincoln, 1860 to 2017, will finally reach print in late 2018 from Southern Illinois University Press. The title will be *Mary Lincoln for the Ages*. Might some scholar please try to update the Monaghan bibliography of Abraham, published in two volumes in 1943?

**Lincoln and Ethics** Steve Beckett and Guy Fraker, both ALA directors, penned a short two-part series on Lincoln and ethics in the Illinois State Bar Association’s Journal, in July and November 2017.

**Murder in the Lincoln White House.** Colleen Gleason is author of *Murder in the Lincoln White House*, part of a recent surge in novels set in and around the famous building, and the famous man: Jonathan Putnam’s two ‘Lincoln and Speed’ mysteries beginning in early Illinois will be joined by two more in the near future.

**Lincoln in the Bardo.** In a different vein, George Saunders’s sci-fi / Buddhist-influenced novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* (Random House) won the Man Booker Prize, a leading U.K. literary award, in October 2017.

### Welcome, New Members

We welcome nine new members from five states.

**Joshua Claybourn**  
*Newburgh, Indiana*

**Steven Peskind**  
*St. Charles, Illinois*

**George Dekle**  
*Lake City, Florida*

**Larry and Marcia Schafer**  
*Arvada, Colorado*

**Thomas and Marina Eovaldi**  
*Evanston, Illinois*

**Yvonne Singley**  
*Springfield, Illinois*

**Michael P. Hardy**  
*Macomb, Michigan*

Thank you for joining and we hope that you will be able to attend the banquet and lectures in February 2018.

### Join the Abraham Lincoln Association Today

Now is the time to renew or become a new member of the ALA.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Railsplitter.....\$50  
(Student.....\$25)  
Postmaster.....\$100  
Lawyer.....\$250  
Congressman.....\$500  
President.....\$1,000

or join online at  
[www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org](http://www.abrahamlincolnassociation.org)

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## Letter From President Harris

A warm hello to my Fellow Lincoln Lovers,

Summer is fading and the cooler days of autumn are upon us. What a relief to see those hot and sultry days and nights fade in the rear view mirror. I will, however, be among the first to yearn for those days in a few months.

As the calendar year enters its last quarter and the cold weather sets in, Lincoln events tend to wind down, but one major event remains: the Lincoln Forum in Gettysburg, on November 16-18. It will highlight noted Lincoln scholars and introduce new research and researchers in the Lincoln field. This opportunity follows quickly on the heels of The Lincoln Colloquium at the Chicago History Museum that was held on October 21, and the Conference on Illinois History that was held on October 5-6 at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library ... once again new research and researchers were featured on a variety of topics including music, living history, the Civil War, and, of course, Lincoln. Participants learned of statewide plans for the Illinois Bicentennial Celebration (1818-2018) as presented in remarks from Stuart Layne, Executive Director of the Illinois Bicentennial Commission ([www.illinois200.com](http://www.illinois200.com)); opportunities and ideas for local events were also featured. Louise Bernard, Director of the Museum of the Obama Presidential Center, shared plans for Illinois's second presidential museum; visit [www.obama.org/the-center](http://www.obama.org/the-center) for more details. And the Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series at the University of Illinois Springfield, on October 12, paid tribute to Lincoln's role in education.

I encourage you to seek out educational opportunities in your area that help to keep his life and times relevant to our time and that will round out or further expand your personal knowledge of our 16<sup>th</sup> President. And if you have ideas to help our Association celebrate the Bicentennial of the Land of Lincoln, please share your ideas with us.

Until next time, enjoy the fall weather and holidays.

Kathryn M. Harris,  
President



## Librarian of Congress Visits Springfield



Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, and Kathryn Harris, ALA President, at the Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum. Dr. Hayden, who has family in Springfield, visited the Museum in September as part of her research into the 1908 Springfield race riots.

## Preston Manning, *A Horse for Mr. Lincoln*

Reviewed by William Read

While it is not unique for politicians to pen historical novels -- in the United States, William S. Cohen and Newt Gingrich come to mind, both with co-authors -- it is far less common for a politician from outside the U.S. to write historical fiction about American history.

The Hon. Preston Manning is a founder of the Reform Party of Canada, and served as the Leader of the Official Opposition from 1997 to 2000. Abraham Lincoln has long been one of Mr. Manning's political heroes. He often told his children stories of the 16<sup>th</sup> President, and in order to soften the gloom of the actual events at the end of the story, a fictitious continuance evolved. Over the years this 'invention' was refined and distilled into the contents of this 74-page book. It is worth noting that Mr. Manning's historical facts and figures are entirely accurate, and that he is the sole author, with illustrations by Henri de Groot.

The story is related by the ever-interesting John Hay to his daughter two months before his death in 1905. It begins with the trip to Gettysburg in November 1863, where President Lincoln attends the dedication ceremonies and gives the immortal Gettysburg Address. The following morning, before departing for Washington, Hay goes for a ride and encounters soldiers from the 12<sup>th</sup> Illinois Infantry, Buford's Brigade, who held the High Ground at Gettysburg until the infantry could arrive.

The three feel that the President is holding the High Ground in Washington, just as they did at Gettysburg, and they want to present him with a horse in appreciation. (They are aware that the

horses President Lincoln rides are often not suited for one of his stature, his legs being too long and dangling, and feel that he should have a horse that 'fits.')

Hay tells them to look him up in Washington when they have the horse. Time passes, and the soldiers contact him, asking to present a horse in the week of April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1865, when their unit passes through Washington en route to being disbanded. Hay arranges for a 15-minute appointment on Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM.

The appointment is kept, and the presentation made, after which the President extends hospitality to the three veterans.

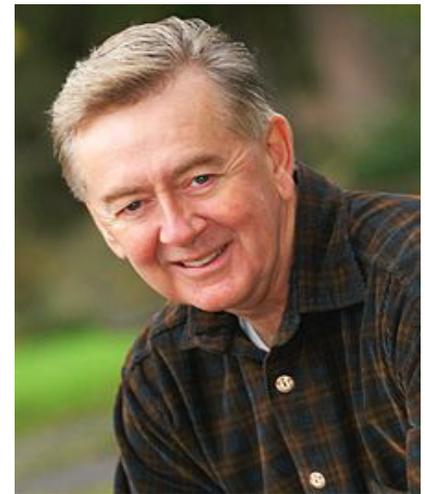
At this point, historical fact and fiction part ways. Time passes, and as the hour to leave for Ford's Theatre nears, Mrs. Lincoln arrives, and after a brief 'discussion,' the evening's plans are cancelled. The President sends Andrew Johnson in his stead, remarking, "After all, what's a Vice President for, anyway?"

Vice President Johnson is assassinated at Ford's Theatre in place of Abraham Lincoln, and the ensuing events are very different from those with which we are familiar.

This is where Preston Manning's lifetime of political experience is particularly evident, with his speculating on the actions and political ramifications of Lincoln's extended Presidency to a full second term.

Without giving spoilers, the speculative historical events are given a realistic interpretation in conjunction with

President Lincoln's known statements and character. Mr. Manning provides fascinating accounts of Reconstruction, the Transcontinental Railway, Indian relations, and a successful mentoring of Ulysses S. Grant as his successor. This novel concludes with a satisfying account of the former President's retirement and travels.



Author Preston Manning

There are currently a great number of very good books of fiction about Abraham Lincoln, speculating on his continued life or events in his actual life loosely based in reality. What Preston Manning has achieved is a highly realistic set of probabilities of the effect on major events that the continued guidance of a benevolent President Lincoln would have had.

*William Read lives in Bradford, Ontario, Canada and is a Director of The Abraham Lincoln Association.*

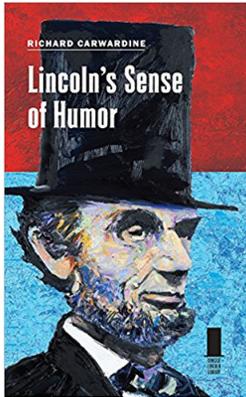
## ALA Director Erika Holst Joins Illinois State Museum

Board Member Erika Holst has accepted a position as the Curator of Decorative Arts and History at the Illinois State Museum, where she will begin work on November 1. In this capacity, she will oversee the ISM's vast and significant collection of historic artifacts. Her goal is to use these objects to get people engaged with the state's history through exhibitions, publications, presentations, and outreach events.

Holst is leaving her job as Curator of Collections at the Springfield Art Association, where she has overseen all aspects of historic Edwards Place for the past seven and a half years. During her tenure there, Edwards Place underwent a full-scale restoration of its first floor, as well as the restoration of the "Lincoln courting couch" and the "Lincoln wedding piano," both of which were originally owned by Mary Lincoln's sister Elizabeth Todd Edwards. Holst was also responsible for creating many popular public programs, including murder mysteries, concerts, and original plays. "It was a very difficult decision to leave the Art Association," said Holst. "I love Edwards Place and the staff. However, I'm very excited for the new challenge before me at the Illinois State Museum. It has been my dream to have this job since I was 22!"



Erika Holst



## Lincoln Birthday Banquet

**February 12, 2018**

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Hotel  
7th and Adams, Springfield, Illinois

**Richard Carwardine**  
Oxford University

will speak on “Lincoln’s Humor”

**Tickets \$85**

see next issue for reservation details



## Benjamin P. Thomas Symposium

**February 11 - 12, 2018**

**Sunday, February 11, 2018**

6:00 p.m. at the Old State Capitol, Springfield Illinois

**Guy Fraker**

attorney from Bloomington, Illinois, will speak on his new road tour/guide book about the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

**Free and open to the public**

**Monday, February 12, 2018**  
**Symposium**

11:00 a.m. at the Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois

**Kate Masur**

professor at Northwestern University, will speak on John E. Washington, the first African-American to publish a book on Lincoln, *They Knew Lincoln* (1942). Masur has written the introduction to the first reprinted edition (2017).

**Michael Burlingame**

professor at University of Illinois Springfield, will speak on other African-Americans in Washington, D.C., who knew Lincoln.

**Free and open to the public**

**THOMAS SCHWARTZ LUNCHEON**

1:00 p.m. at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
cost \$30.00, reservations required

**Jason Emerson**

expert on the Lincoln family, will speak on his new volume just out from Kent State University Press *Lincoln in Love: Poetry by, for, and about Mary Lincoln*.

**Roundtable featuring all four speakers**  
**2:30-4:00 p.m., second floor of Library**  
**Book Signing**

**Free and open to the public**

## University of Illinois Springfield Announces Establishment of Center for Lincoln Studies

On October 10, 2017, the University of Illinois Springfield announced that it was establishing a Center for Lincoln Studies, a project long supported and advocated for by The Abraham Lincoln Association. Much credit and thanks for this accomplishment goes to Michael Burlingame, an ALA Board member and professor at UIS.

The UIS projects that the Center for Lincoln Studies will grow into a national base for scholarship, teaching, and public history about Lincoln's life, his leadership, and his legacy. As it reaches its full strength, the Center may include activities such as the following:

- publishing scholarship,
- creating and facilitating online history projects,
- fostering innovative public history interpretation,
- hosting visiting scholars,
- engaging broad campus and community audiences, and, most importantly,
- offering an interdisciplinary learning laboratory for students.



“Springfield is the right place to establish a national center for the study of Abraham Lincoln's life, his era, his leadership, and his legacy. The University of Illinois Springfield will be the perfect home for this ambitious and important endeavor,” a UIS spokesperson stated.

“At the University of Illinois, we have two goals at the core of our mission: to transform lives and serve society,” said Chancellor Koch. “This fundraising campaign is a strategy for taking UIS -- with donors' help -- toward greater excellence and greater impact for our community, our state and beyond.”

The UIS Center for Lincoln Studies will be a national base for scholarship, teaching, and public history about Lincoln's life, leadership, and legacy. It will incubate and sustain university / community collaborative projects, connecting UIS students with opportunities in Springfield, as well as connecting Lincoln to a national and international context. To learn more and to support this endeavor, please contact the UIS Office of Advancement at 217.206.6058 or by email at [giftinfo@uis.edu](mailto:giftinfo@uis.edu).

## Lincoln Research Center Established in Indiana's Allen County Public Library

In 2008, the Lincoln Financial Foundation of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, closed its Lincoln Museum. Museum documents were moved to the basement of the downtown Allen County Public Library, while busts, artwork and personal items went to the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis. Using objects from both cities, as well as borrowed items, the Museum soon mounted a sensational show called ‘Five Generations of the Lincolns.’

In October 2017, the family of former Lincoln Financial CEO and Lincoln fan Ian Rolland announced that it was donating \$1 million toward a \$5 million goal to create the Rolland Center for Lincoln Research on the main floor of the Allen County Public Library. “We're going to start off with a million,” said Mimi Rolland, Rolland's widow. Ian Rolland, who retired in 1998 as CEO of Lincoln Financial, died in July 2017.

The goal is two-fold: (1) to build a new display area within the Allen County Public Library, where its several thousand letters, documents and photographs related to Abraham Lincoln may be housed and displayed on a rotating basis; and (2) to provide grants and scholarships for students, faculty, and other researchers to use the collection.

Ian Rolland earlier raised \$9 million to keep this Lincoln collection in Indiana with a commitment to digitizing the documents and photographs, said Stephanny Smith, the library's community engagement manager.

As a result of Rolland's successful fundraising, the staff at the Allen County Public Library have scanned thousands of documents, books, artworks, etc. to the Library's free website, a boon to users everywhere.

The new Rolland Center will build upon that concerted tradition of public access and live display. The announcement that the family of Ian Rolland was donating \$1 million toward the new research center was made just after former Indiana governor, Mitch Daniels, spoke at the 2017 annual Rolland Lecture.

Sara Vaughn Gabbard, a director of the ALA and the veteran editor of *Lincoln Lore*, made the announcement.



*Ian Rolland*

## Tad Lincoln's Unknown Nurse

By Michael Burlingame

After Willie Lincoln died on 20 February 1862, younger brother Tad still lay very ill with a fever and seemed near death. Dorothea Dix on February 21 called at the White House to express her condolences and detail a hospital volunteer, Maria Hall, to help care for Tad.<sup>[1]</sup> The 25-year-old Hall reported to the bedroom of Mrs. Lincoln. Over the next week the bereaved First Lady remained in bed. "I doubt not but I saw the best there is in her," Hall wrote her sister. "She is very impulsive, gay and totally undisciplined."<sup>[2]</sup> Now and then, the First Lady would enter the boy's room and cry uncontrollably, prompting Tad to tell his mother: "I wish you would not come in here. You make me cry."<sup>[3]</sup>



Maria Hall cared for President Lincoln's son Tad, 8, after his 11-year-old son Willie died of typhus.  
Photograph courtesy of Powers family



Photograph courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

The few days that Hall spent at the White House deepened her admiration for the president, if not his wife. "I love him and am proud of him more than ever," she wrote one month later. "He is honest, pure-hearted as the sun is bright; his devotion to his child was beautiful." She "saw Old Abe . . . in his child's bed take care of him as if he were a tender woman." (Hall spent the night of February 21 with Tad, but thereafter his father took over that role, urging the young woman to get some sleep.) One day Lincoln asked Tad if it would be all right if he took care of some paperwork in the boy's room. The lad

smiled broadly and exclaimed, "Oh, yes!" His father brought a writing table into the room and toiled away for hours. Hall "saw him sign nearly two hundred commissions for army officers." Somewhat disapprovingly, she noted that Lincoln "was only too kind and indulgent for the child's good and anyone else's" and described Tad as a "spoiled child and quite ungoverned."<sup>[4]</sup> Maria Hall was within a few days replaced by a regular nurse, Rebecca Pomroy, who had lost all her family except for one son who was then serving in the army.<sup>[5]</sup>



[1] Maria Hall Richards, "Lincoln Cheers His Sick Boy," *The Delineator*, February 1921, pp. 11, 52; Maria Hall [in Washington] to her sister Mary, March 27, 1862, typescript provided by Hall's great-granddaughter, Barbara Powers.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Maria [Hall] notes supplied to her friend Mrs. Clara S. Palmer of Chicopee, Massachusetts, reproduced in Mrs. Palmer's talk delivered to the Mercy Warren Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, *Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican*, February 21, 1909.

[4] *Ibid.*; Maria Hall to her sister Mary, March 27, 1862, typescript provided by Hall's great-granddaughter, Barbara Powers.

[5] Hall recalled that "the days of my ministration ended when Mrs. Pomeroy [sic] could be spared from her wards, and she came to give better care, no doubt, to the boy than I knew." Richards, "Lincoln Cheers His Sick Boy," p. 52. This misrepresents the actual chronology of events. Actually, Hall spent February 21 at the White House. The next day she was relieved by Pomroy and spent the weekend at home with her parents. On Monday 24th, she returned to help Pomroy and continued to do so till Thursday 27th, when she ended her White House service.

## Helm Place Faces Uncertain Future

Kentucky home of Emilie Todd Helm, Mary Lincoln's half-sister

Helm Place, a Greek Revival mansion in Lexington, Kentucky, was built in the 1850s by a descendant of the original land owner, Abraham Bowman, who received the land for service in the Revolutionary War. The mansion, originally called Cedar Hall, sits on a hill at the end of a majestic lawn.



Helm Place was purchased in 1912 by Emilie Todd Helm, Mary Lincoln's half-sister. Emilie and her children spent the last decades of their lives there. Emilie remained an unreconstructed Confederate until her death in 1930. Emilie's youngest daughter sold the house in 1946 to William H. Townsend, a Lexington

lawyer, author and accomplished Lincoln scholar and collector. Townsend, who died in 1964, amassed an amazing collection of Lincoln and early Kentucky artifacts, many of which remain in the house with the Helm family's possessions. Townsend's daughter Mary married Joseph Murphy in 1960 and left the 150-acre property to the Kentucky Man-

sions Preservation Foundation in trust in 2011. Since then, it has been a house museum containing Lincoln, Helm, Todd and Townsend and other artifacts, including a table made by Thomas Lincoln. The Foundation said that it is no longer economically feasible to operate the property as a house museum.

In May 2017 a Fayette County (Kentucky) circuit judge approved terminating the Murphy trust and removed all restrictions in place to allow the sale of Helm Place, should the Foundation wish to do so. The judge wrote that proceeds from the sale of Helm Place "could go towards preservation efforts for historic structures in Kentucky."

**FOR THE PEOPLE**

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Lincoln Reading  
by Kerr Eby, 1916

## 1959 Abraham Lincoln Association Banquet

Willy Brandt, 44-year-old mayor of West Berlin, spoke at the 1959 ALA Banquet in the Springfield Armory before 1,500 guests. The event was a part of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Celebration. The University of Illinois Symphony and Glee Club performed Aaron Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait*. In the Spring 2004 edition of *For The People*, Thomas Schwartz wrote a beautiful description of that banquet including the full text of Brandt's speech based upon Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. See: [abrahamlincolnassociation.org/newsletters/6-1.pdf](http://abrahamlincolnassociation.org/newsletters/6-1.pdf)

Recently, a photograph of that banquet appeared on eBay and Mary Shepherd was the successful bidder in purchasing the photograph that is shown here for the ALA collection.

Long-time ALA member Phyllis Herndon Brissenden was among those on the floor, and Nancy Lanphier Chapin was among those in the balcony.



Photograph of the main hall in the State of Illinois Armory on the occasion of the ALA's February 12, 1959 Lincoln Banquet. Willy Brandt, Senator Everett Dirksen, Governor and Mrs. William Stratton and Springfield Mayor and Mrs. Nelson Howarth sat at the head table on the stage. Numerous foreign Ambassadors were also present.