



FOR THE PEOPLE

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 2

SUMMER 2023

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

www.abrahamlincolnnassociation.org

Fire in the Hold!

By Brian Steenbergen, an ALA director

Mr. Lincoln was serving his only term in Congress as the lone Whig from Illinois when in May 1848 Mary Lincoln wrote from Lexington, Kentucky, to her husband, hinting that she would like to join him on his trip back to Springfield. “You know I am so fond of sightseeing & I did not get to New York or Boston or travel the lake route,” she explained.

So Mary and the boys went east. After the first session of the 30th Congress adjourned in mid-August, Lincoln, Mary, and their boys Robert and Eddy went to Maryland and Massachusetts as he stumped for Zachary Taylor for president. “Detained by the illness of [our] youngest son,” the Lincolns did not leave New England until 23 September. From Boston they traveled by train to Buffalo, New York, where they boarded the steamship *Globe* on 26 September. (After the Lincolns were married in 1842, they spent a year residing in the *Globe* Tavern in Springfield. One can image Lincoln joking to his wife, “Molly, we’re moving back to the *Globe*!”)

The *Globe* began plying the waters of the Great Lakes in June 1848 and by September had already made several round trips between Buffalo and Chicago. She had been built in the Detroit River by D. C. M. Goodsell. Although she was new, her engine and much of her furniture came from the steamer *Boston*, wrecked earlier at Milwaukee. The *Globe*’s owner, Mr. Robinson, of Detroit, employed the veteran and trustworthy James Sanderson of Milwaukee as her captain.

The *Globe* was advertised as “entirely new, of 1,300 tons burthen, being the largest boat on the lakes. Cabin extends the whole length of the upper deck and is finished and fitted up in the most fashionable and comfortable style with State and Family Rooms ... and for speed, comfort, and safety she is not equaled by any other boat on the lakes.”

Delayed about 3 days by weather en route, the *Globe* did not arrive in Chicago until the early morning hours of 6 October. From Chicago the family traveled along the Illinois & Michigan Canal, then the Illinois River, before arriving by stage in Springfield late on 10 October.

(Their arduous 1848 journeys are detailed in Wayne C. Temple’s book *Lincoln’s Connections with the I & M Canal ... and His Invention* [1986].)

It was a close call. The *Chicago Journal* of 6 October, as copied by the *Buffalo Weekly Republic* on 17 October (see image), reported that while the *Globe* was being unloaded a box was discovered to be on fire! “Upon examination it was found to contain some combustible material

“The *Chicago Journal*, of the 6th, says:—
“This morning as the goods from the steamer *Globe* were being landed, a box was raised from the hold and discovered to be on fire! Upon examination it was found to contain some combustible material which had been packed among other goods, and was in a slow state of combustion. The box was directed to —.” We should think accidents enough had resulted from the carrying of inflammable substances on board steamboats and sail craft, to put an end to the jeopardy of life which results therefrom. In the above case, had the *Globe* been detained a day longer, we might have been compelled to chronicle her destruction, with, perhaps, the loss of all on board. It is quite time some stringent laws were enacted to put a stop to these hazards. It strikes us human life is too valuable to be placed in competition* with freight for it is to make the freight that these combustibles are carried.

... in a slow state of combustion. . . . [H]ad the *Globe* been detained a day longer ... her destruction, with perhaps, the loss of all on board” would have been the story.

The fire smoldering in the cargo hold of the *Globe* while the Lincoln family were on the Great Lakes

was much like the fire of slavery smoldering in the country over the coming decade. The parallel continued. The *Globe*, like the Lincolns, continued to sally forth, until 3 days after Lincoln was elected to the presidency on 6 November 1860, the boiler on the *Globe* exploded and blew the ship to pieces on a Chicago River dock. At least 15 people were killed. In the coming months the nation, too, would explode into civil war. It would take 4 years, and hundreds of thousands of lives, including his own, but Abraham Lincoln would safely navigate the ship of state to port.

Reminders: Please join us for a free one-day ALA Symposium at Cantigny Park, in Wheaton, Illinois, on **Saturday 17 June**. For further information: www.abrahamlincolnnassociation.org.

Beginning on Thurs. 15 June at Springfield’s Hoogland Ctr.: *The Lincolns of Springfield*, a musical that premiered in Santa Barbara in Oct. 2022; slated to run for 6 weeks.

The Grim Harvest

By Lee D. Eutsey

My dear Sir

I will willingly comply with your request if upon return of Dr. Brown the embalmer from Springfield it is found that a lock can be spared.

Very truly yours

Robert T. Lincoln

Hon G.V. Fox

Asst. Sec of Navy

Washington May 1

Robert Lincoln sent this reply to Gustavus V. Fox on the same mourning stationery that Mary Lincoln used, bordered all in black. The martyred body of his father had not yet reached its final destination by train at Springfield. From the moment the President breathed his last on April 15, his “mythic potency already contained in his living frame was magnified beyond measure in his bruised and rigid corpse,” in the words of Richard Wightman Fox in *Lincoln’s Body* (2015). His “thatch of wild republican hair” (quipped W.H. Russell of the *Times of London* in 1860) instantly became a highly prized trophy relic to anyone who could nick one off.

Secretary Stanton and Speaker Colfax were two of the first intimates of Lincoln to procure some of the precious, irreplaceable hair. At the White House second floor bedroom where the President’s body was taken, he was put under a constant watch by guards of honor -- major generals and their officers. At noon, a cranial autopsy was performed and several locks of hair were cut from the rear of his head. Neither Surgeon-General Joseph Barnes or his assistant surgeons, nor civilian physicians or guests in attendance, bold enough to hold out in appeal, left empty-handed. Almost every hair relic obtained was later described as originating from “near” or “vicinity of the wound.”

A steady flow of “members of the Cabinet and Senators with their wives,” including “almost all the eminent statesmen and politicians of that famous era” visited the body in that bedchamber, wrote an army surgeon who had had been assigned to help guard the body (Robert Reyburn, *Fifty Years in the Practice of Medicine and Surgery, 1856-1906: Autobiography* [1907]). Reyburn went on to write, “Many locks of the President’s hair had been cut off for his family, and we had very urgently pleaded for one of them, but to no avail. One of the generals who was present, however, noticed that in cutting off the hair one of the locks had dropped on the floor and had remained unnoticed. He said to us: “Doctor, I can’t give you any of the President’s hair, but I see a lock of it has dropped upon the floor, and if you capture it I shall make no objection.”

In both the instances of the dividing of the President’s scalp, ear to ear, by the pathologist’s knife for the autopsy, and by the embalming-surgeon to then suture the scalp closed again, cutting down the “great black mass of hair”

would have been a necessary imperative to their work. And to anyone else, why not? After all, the back of Lincoln’s head was going to rest on a silk pillow, wasn’t it? Thus, their deeds were hidden from sight, forever. So, by turns, Mary’s dressmaker got a lock, as did the White House usher and the chief doorkeeper. Mary’s Kentucky cousins did, and one of their brothers-in-law also indulged. Even a guard at the bedroom door was allowed hair, for his aunt back in Illinois.

The state funeral would be in the White House that coming Wednesday 19th. One might assume that the body’s lying in full view of major generals, in a splendid coffin in the East Room, would discourage anyone from collecting some hair for himself. And yet, enter Ninian W. Edwards, brother-in-law from Illinois, who felt entitled under those circumstances to cut off a lock for his own purposes. But who had a better opportunity to this grim harvest than the men of the D.C. firms, which served in the public’s trust, in the preparation of and care for the body? Meet Dr. Charles DeCosta Brown, of Brown and Alexander, embalming company, and Frank T. Sands, of Sands & Harvey, government undertakers. More than one modern collection that includes postmortem Lincoln hair shows that personal gifts were made of the hair by Dr. Brown. A 1917 Geo. D. Smith auction catalogue (p. 139) reveals this description of a lot put up by Brown’s family: “Lock of Hair from Lincoln’s Head removed by Dr. Brown the Embalmer whilst the Remains were in his charge.” Even Sands’s partner, R. F. Harvey, is the source of one extant lock, now in a small museum in Gettysburg, Pa., gifted to an acquaintance.

But of all the postmortem locks of hair in modern collections, none could possibly prove more difficult to justify than one from the late Oliver Barrett’s, described in the 1952 auction catalogue as “hair taken at the tomb.” That is, 36 years of opening and closing Lincoln’s different burial containers provided a last “grave” opportunity for someone to clip some hair from the head of the long-ago entombed Lincoln. So they nicked it.

All of this might sound improbable to the modern reader. Maybe even impossible. A Victorian Age scalping of an assassinated, war-time President, by friends and strangers in broad daylight? The rear of the President’s head, an unholy wasteland of stubble and suture work? But consider this if you will. Robert Lincoln wrote to the Assistant Secretary of Navy, expecting that the embalmer Dr. Brown may be carrying “spare” locks of his father’s hair with him when he returned. Robert expected the distinct possibility that Dr. Brown (and not Sands) would be holding onto hair. Was there some back-channel knowledge or particular arrangement that was understood by Robert, or was he guessing? In either case, a second note from Robert, written on the same stationery, presumably after Brown’s return, was delivered to Gustavus V. Fox. Inside was an ample lock of dark hair, “willingly” promised in the first note.

--Mr. Eutsey, of Bloomington, Illinois, is a Lincoln postmortem historian and speaker.

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Did Lincoln Actually Say “Brady and the Cooper Institute made me President”?

By ALA President Michael Burlingame

“Brady and the Cooper Institute made me President,” Lincoln allegedly said, but the evidence for that claim is unconvincing. Harold Holzer reproduces those words in his monograph *Lincoln at Cooper Union: The Speech That Made Abraham Lincoln President* (Simon & Schuster, 2004, p. 5), citing James D. Horan’s biography of the eminent 19th-century photographer Mathew Brady (Crown, 1955, p. 32). Holzer misidentifies the source of the quotation: “Horan quoted Lincoln’s friend, later White House aide, and biographer, Ward Hill Lamon.” In fact, Horan quoted Mathew Brady, not Lamon: “when Brady and Lincoln met at the White House, Brady recalled that when Marshal Ward Hill Lamon said, ‘I have not introduced Mr. Brady,’ the President remarked, ‘in his ready way,’ ‘Brady and the Cooper Institute made me President.’” Holzer correctly notes that there “is no corroborating contemporary evidence that Mr. Lincoln ever said anything of the kind.” (pp. 5-6, 285n.4) Holzer might have added that no credible reminiscent testimony from Lamon, or anyone else, corroborates Brady’s self-serving claim.

At another point, Holzer (pp. 100, 302n.46) identified the source of the quotation as the painter George Henry Story, who allegedly witnessed Lincoln having his picture taken at Brady’s Washington studio on February 28, 1861. Story, whose reminiscences are quoted in Roy Meredith’s biography of

the photographer (Scribner’s, 1946, pp. 67-68), alleged that he heard Lincoln say: “Brady and the Cooper Union speech made me President.” Holzer himself was justifiably skeptical: “But George Henry Story also added of the incoming president: ‘His hands were small and shapely,’ casting doubt on everything else he remembered of that 1861 encounter, including the compliment to Brady.” In his endnote to this passage, Holzer cites an 1891 interview Brady gave to George Alfred Townsend (Washington correspondence by Townsend, 10 April 1891, *New York World*, 12 April 1891, p. 26).

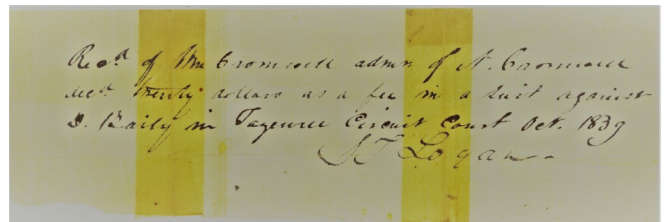
Holzer (p. 100) also quotes Brady’s statement to the artist Francis B. Carpenter: “My friend Brady, the photographer, insisted that his photograph of Mr. Lincoln, taken the morning of the day he made his Cooper Institute speech in New York . . . was the means of his election.” Yet Brady did not tell Carpenter that Lincoln believed the photograph had made him president; Carpenter states only that Brady made the boastful claim.

Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher do not include this suspicious quotation in their invaluable compilation *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford U.P., 1994), but if they had done so, they would probably have awarded it the grade of F or, at best, D. The Fehrenbachers’ is a complicated grading system, but in short, the quotation is so poorly supported by evidence that it should not be used.

Nance’s “Owner,” 1839

A newly revealed, privately held receipt reads, “Rec’d of Wm. Cromwell adm’r of N. Cromwell dec’d twenty dollars as a fee in a suit against D. Bailly in Tazewell Circuit Court

Oct. 1839 S T Logan” Nance Legins-Costly first sought her freedom from Nathan Cromwell in 1836; Stuart & Lincoln were involved; here Stephen T. Logan, separately, is involved; in 1841 on appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court Lincoln with Logan won her freedom. New markers to her unveiled: Peoria, June 14; Pekin, 17th.



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If you have already renewed for 2023, we warmly thank you. -Joe

Below left: On 16 May 2023 a 1930s model of the Lincoln Tomb moved to the Long Nine Museum, Athens, Illinois (15 miles n. of Springfield). Its base is 6' x 10'; this height is 9'; rest of the obelisk will be nearby. Weight: 800 lbs. of wood. Will County Museum, Lockport, Ill., was the donor. Planning by Jim Siberell; restoration by Fred Brown of Springfield. Consulting historian, David L. Finnigan. Another model collapsed in 1979. Where is Mead's 1st model?



Remarkable Lincoln Memorial-Shaped Coin!

A Two-shaped Tribute: In 2022 the Republic of Ghana issued a coin bearing Lincoln's likeness on one side (for the 100th anniversary of the Daniel Chester French sculpture and Henry Bacon's Lincoln Memorial) and Queen Elizabeth II on the reverse. Ghana was the first African nation to receive independence from the British, in 1957, and remains an original member of the Commonwealth of Nations.



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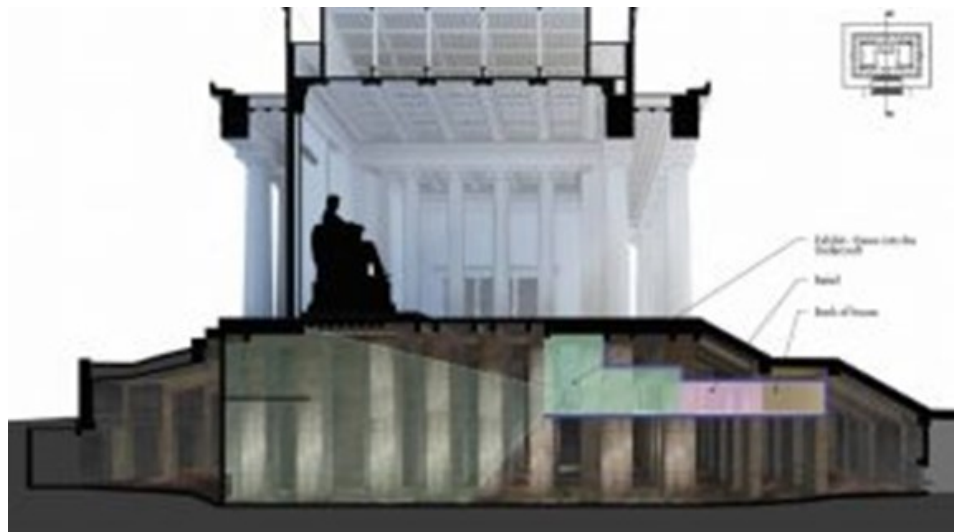


On the Broadway bus, NYC

Expansion Ahead at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

On 2 May 2023, the website Construction Specifier reported that the National Park Service had awarded \$69 million in contracts to build a new “immersive” museum under the Lincoln Memorial. The project will add further upgrades to “enhance visitor experience.” The goal is to finish by the time of the celebrations surrounding the nation’s semiquincentennial – our 250th birthday since 1776. New restrooms, a bigger bookstore, and mainly an exhibit about the Memorial itself are the features.

The project will create 15,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space that tells a complete story of the Lincoln Memorial and provides a look at the structure’s foundations in a cavernous area known as the undercroft. New museum exhibits and multi-media presentations will highlight the construction history of the Memorial and discuss how it has become the nation’s foremost backdrop for demonstrations and other gatherings. The project also includes a refurbished elevator to the chamber level. Access to the Memorial, including the steps and chamber with the statue of Abraham Lincoln, will remain open to the public during the construction, though the basement area exhibits, restrooms, and elevator will close in spring 2023 with temporary restrooms, bookstore, and an accessible lift available for the duration of the work.



Renderings subject to change / courtesy National Park Service
