

THE LINCOLNIAN



160 Years Later...and Lincoln's Words Still Resonate Today



(Courtesy: Library of Congress)

This photograph shows the participants and crowd at the first inauguration of President Lincoln at the U.S. Capitol on March 4, 1861. Lincoln is standing under the wood canopy, at the front, midway between the left and center posts. His face is in shadow but the white shirt front is visible (Source: Ostendorf, p. 87) More is known about this photograph: (See page 2)

First Lincoln Inauguration (*Continued from page 1*) “A distant photograph from a special platform by an unknown photographer, in front of the Capitol, Washington, D.C., afternoon of March 4, 1861. 'A small camera was directly in front of Mr. Lincoln,' reported a newspaper, 'another at a distance of a hundred yards, and a third of huge dimensions on the right ... The three photographers present had plenty of time to take pictures, yet only the distant views have survived.' (Source: Ostendorf, p. 86-87) The photograph was published in *Lincoln's Photographs: A Complete Album*/ by Lloyd Ostendorf, Dayton, OH; Rockywood Press, 1998, pp. 86-87. (Information from the Library of Congress)

Our cover highlights this event because an important date (March 4th) approaches – and we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the 160th anniversary of the inauguration and of the words Lincoln spoke on that date. After all, we have heard those words of Lincoln so frequently repeated that they are embedded in our memory and being. These are timely words and thoughts today for our divided nation. In recent months alone we have heard portions of the speech's closing, whether as separate thoughts or combined, with predictable regularity:

“I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.” (*Please turn to page 23.*)

Summary of LGDC Finances Year-End 2020 (prepared January 7, 2021)

Account Balances as of 12/31/2020*	Balances as of 12/31/2019
Birely Fund (Monthly Speakers): \$4,392.12	Bank: \$29,881.11
Life Fund**: \$5,505.72	PayPal: \$2,000.00
Landes Fund (Birthday Banquet Speaker): \$577.02	YEAR-END: \$31,881.11
Elliff Fund (Scholarships): \$1,617.07	
Checking (Operating Account): \$19,071.32	
Bank Total: \$31,163.25	
PayPal Total: \$6,679.66	
2020 YEAR-END TOTAL: \$37,842.91	Year-Over-Year Change (2019/20): \$5,961.80
*Funds in the dedicated accounts are used to pay expenses associated with their respective purposes and/or hold reserves to pay for such expenses in the future.	
**The Life Fund was not established and did not solicit donations for any expressed purpose. Funds in this account have been designated as the organization's reserves pursuant to a vote by the board of directors.	

As our by-laws require, we are herein publishing our annual financial report, as prepared by our Treasurer, Matt Perdoni.

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Introducing the All New LincolnGroup.org Website

Opening a communication platform to share our appreciation for Lincoln with a new generation

The Lincoln Group is ramping up its social media and internet presence. The Board of Directors has recognized this new era of Zoom meetings as the time to upgrade our website. After a three-month planning process, the Board has directed that the Lincoln Group has a national mission based on the advantage of Lincoln expertise available in Washington. We have decided to add to our educational purpose by making local events and information available to a broader Lincoln audience. To support this vision we have created a robust new platform for extending our mission of promoting Lincoln's ideals and engaging a new generation of enthusiasts.

The Board recognized that expertise was required to make our website an effective instrument. We have engaged the Fire Starters Group for their experience in creating websites that support successful brand images. The new site at LincolnGroup.org is visually attractive, informative, and highly interactive. The Board has agreed to accept responsibilities to assure that we have a stream of new message content and respond to email and social media requests and discussions. Our members represent our greatest asset. We need you to use this opportunity to express your interest in Lincoln and help keep our public material fresh. "Liking" us on Facebook is only a start.

Among the features of the new site are a quick note about upcoming speakers, discussion of current events and a blog commentary on Lincoln's relevance on issues of the day. We have links to past content and to videos of past presentations and relevant events. And a direct invitation to join and be a part of, as Harold Holzer recently described us, a vibrant organization that is actively promoting Lincoln's ideals in the community.

Specific role leaders are Ed Epstein who will handle the planned "Lincoln in the news feature," list new Lincoln books and contribute articles to a new blog. David Kent will edit blog articles before they are posted on the site. John O'Brien will coordinate the site through the implementation period, receive chat content from site visitors and respond to them. Fire Starter consultant Eric Macalma will remain the web master for the duration of implementation, handling technical matters.

Other items that will require members to step forward include an "If Lincoln could Tweet" feature, a video library, and updating or adding information about Lincoln related sites and events in the DC area. So, with this new approach to communicating with our members and Lincoln fans, there is an opportunity for every member to contribute your thoughts to continuing to make the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia the most active voice in making Lincoln's influence felt when it is needed as never before. Let us know your interest and help us spread the good word.

Upcoming Events: Lincoln Group Programs



Dr. Michael Burlingame will speak at the annual Lincoln Birthday banquet on February 9, 2021. The virtual event will be co-sponsored by the Lincoln Group and the Civil War Round Table of DC. The evening's schedule will be as follows: 6:00 p.m. ET Social Zoom; 6:30 p.m. Business Agenda; and 6:45 program presentation. A link for the event will be furnished.

The Topic for the Evening: President Abraham Lincoln's philosophy on race relations is complex. In 1862, he met with a small delegation of free black clergymen, not to discuss African Americans' voice in government, but a plan to colonize them abroad. The meeting's minutes were recorded as follows:

Having all been seated, the President, after a few preliminary observations, informed them that a sum of money had been appropriated by Congress, and placed at his disposition for the purpose of aiding the colonization in some country of the people, or a portion of them, of African descent, thereby making it his duty, as it had for a long time been his inclination, to favor that cause; and why, he asked, should the people of your race be colonized, and where? Why should they leave this country? This is, perhaps, the first question for proper consideration. You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffer very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason at least why we should be separated.

Lincoln held a belief common among whites in both the North and South that it would be impossible for whites and blacks to live together peacefully in a United States without slavery. His support for colonization was long-standing, promoted by his political role model, Henry Clay. The reason Lincoln took the unprecedented step of inviting black leaders to the White House was to convince them to support his vague colonization plan. While Congress had appropriated money for colonization, there was as of August 1862 no definite location decided on where to colonize the black population after emancipation. At the meeting, Lincoln

mentioned Liberia, in West Africa, founded by the American Colonization Society in the 1820s, or some place in Central America or the Caribbean. It was clear that not only did the President want the support of these black leaders for colonization, but he also wanted them to determine the details of where and how colonization would be accomplished. He left them with a charge to come up with an appropriate colonization plan and report back to him when they finished.

While the black leaders that met with Lincoln agreed to consider the idea, no plan ever was forthcoming, as it was clear colonization had little appeal among most members of their race, free or slave. While Africa might be the land of their ancestors, African Americans were as attached to the land (of their birth or immigration) as any white person. A small percentage of black Americans found the idea of colonization appealing or were at least willing to give it a try, but the scant record of Lincoln's colonization initiatives during the war evaporated most of this support. What most African Americans wanted during the Civil War was freedom and equality in their home country. Given their opposition and the dawning realization over the course of the war that colonization was impractical, President Lincoln and other northern leaders gradually gave up on the idea, especially as it became clear that the fears of an emancipation race war were proving unfounded.

Dr. Burlingame currently holds the Chancellor Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield. Born in Washington DC, he attended the Phillips Academy, Andover; graduated from Princeton University and received his Ph.D from Johns Hopkins University. As a freshman at Princeton University, Dr. Burlingame took the Civil War course taught by the eminent Lincolnian David Herbert Donald, who took him under his wing and made him a research assistant. In 1968, Dr. Burlingame joined the History Department at Connecticut College in New London, where he taught as the May Buckley Sadowski Professor of History Emeritus, until retiring in 2001. He joined the faculty of the University of Illinois at Springfield in 2009. He is the author of *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* (a two volume set) and *The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln*. *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* won the 2010 Lincoln Prize, sponsored by the Gilder-Lehrman Institute for American History and Gettysburg College. The book also was a co-winner of the annual book prize awarded by the Abraham Lincoln Institute of Washington, D.C., and won the Russell P. Strange Book Award given annually by the Illinois State Historical Society for the best book on Illinois history. In addition, Burlingame has edited or co-edited several volumes of Lincoln primary source and other materials including documents from Presidential Secretaries John Hay, John G. Nicolay and William O. Stoddard.

And in the Coming Months:



Curt Fields as General Grant

On March 20, 2021, Dr. Curt Fields, appearing as General Ulysses Grant, will discuss the general's relationship with Abraham Lincoln. An active living historian, Dr. Fields is the preeminent Grant reenactor and has portrayed General Grant at numerous battle reenactments including the sesquicentennials of Ft. Donelson, Shiloh and Vicksburg and at the anniversary of Lee's surrender at Appomattox. A career educator, he taught for eight years at the junior and senior high school levels and then served 25 years as a high school administrator. He has been an adjunct college professor and now is an educational consultant. He also speaks on leadership as demonstrated and advocated by General Grant. He is the same height and body style as Grant and therefore represents a realistic portrayal of the general. His interest in portraying Grant arose from his study of the Civil War and subsequent respect and admiration for the general. He has conducted extensive research on his subject in order to deliver an accurate persona of the man in his first-person presentations.

The Lincoln Group also supports the Abraham Lincoln Institute which this year plans Zoom meetings at 4 p.m. on alternate Mondays, extending from March 22 through May 5. See page for background on this program, starting on page 19.



On **April 20** our speaker will be **Jason Emerson**, a journalist and an independent historian who has been researching and writing about the Lincoln family for nearly 20 years. His topic: Mary Lincoln, the subject of his most recent book, *Mary Lincoln for the Ages*, (Southern Illinois University Press). The book, part narrative historical inquiry and part analytical bibliography, reexamines nearly every word written about her, revealing how views about her have evolved over the years opening the door for new questions and debates about her legacy. Emerson is a former National Park Service park ranger at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. His previous books include *Giant in the Shadows: The Life of Robert T. Lincoln*; *Mary Lincoln's Insanity Case: A Documentary History*; *The Madness of Mary Lincoln*, *The Dark Days of Abraham Lincoln's Widow, as Revealed by Her Own Letters*; and *Lincoln the Inventor*.



On May 18 Richard Striner will discuss his latest work, *Summoned to Glory: The Audacious Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Rowman and Littlefield publishers, 2020, 560 pp.). Striner not only emphasizes Lincoln's audacity but also the workings of his mind, stressing his cunning, his overall honesty, his strategic thinking and his flexibility. Striner also authored *Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle to End Slavery* (Oxford) and *Lincoln's Way: How Six Great Presidents Created American Power* as well as many other works on American history. His published work goes far beyond presidential studies. He also is the author of books on economics, architecture, film, education and public policy. He recently retired after serving 30 years as a professor at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland. Striner resides in Pasadena, Maryland where he devotes himself full-time to book authorship, public speaking and consulting.



Lucas Morel will speak on **June 15** on his book *Lincoln and the American Founding* (Concise Lincoln Library Series, Southern Illinois University Press, July 2020). He is a Professor of Politics at Washington and Lee University. In his book he argues that the most important influence on Abraham Lincoln's political thought and practice was based on what he learned from the leading figures and documents from the birth of the country. He concludes that to know Lincoln well one must understand America's founding. Moreover, Morel sees the adaption of Lincoln's thoughts and words on human equality and individual rights as a possible means of mending our current polarized discourse. Morel also teaches in the Master's Program in American History and Government at Ashland University in Ohio, summer programs for the Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy, and high school teacher workshops sponsored by various organizations including the Gilder-Lehrman Institute.

A former president of the Abraham Lincoln Institute, he serves as a consultant on Library of Congress exhibits on Lincoln and the Civil War and on the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, which will plan activities to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. His previous books include *Lincoln and Liberty: Wisdom for the Ages*, editor; *Ralph Ellison and the Raft of Hope: A Political Companion to "Invisible Man"*, editor; *Lincoln's Sacred Effort: Defining Religion's Role in American Self-Government*; and *The New Territory: Ralph Ellison and the Twenty-First Century*, co-editor.

The Lincoln Group continues to hold its dinner hour evenings virtually pursuant to current health issues and has planned to Zoom into its meetings this spring. Keep posted for further updates.

Lincoln Group Profile: Dr. Jon Willen

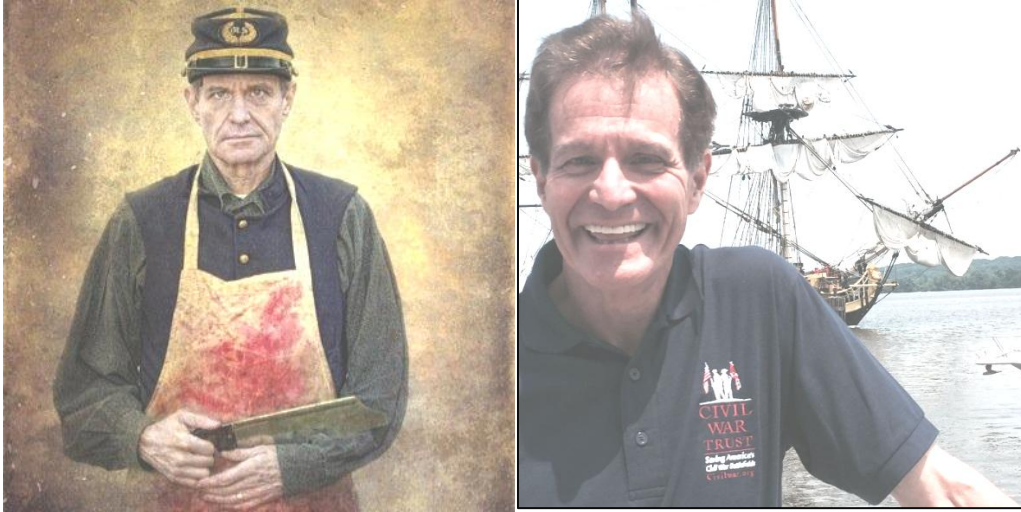
In normal times – that is, before the pandemic - our members primarily would know Jon Willen as our Vice-President for Programming, the individual who arranges our speakers for dinner programs and other special events. His interest in Lincoln's era and his avocation as a Civil War reenactor prepared him with the knowledge and contacts to perform this role. However, in 2020, Jon started wearing another hat as he became our go-to expert in another field. His experience as a physician, specifically, as an infectious disease specialist, placed him in the unique position to answer our questions about COVID-19. Meet the man who has served the Lincoln Group in these two capacities.

Born in Ohio, Jon's interest in medicine came naturally as his father was a veterinarian. At an early age Jon became interested in the Civil War through his reading of Bruce Catton. At around age 12 his father took the family to visit Gettysburg and Jon was "hooked." As fascinated as Jon was with the subject, when time came to attend college he chose to focus on medicine rather than on history. After receiving his bachelor's degree in psychology at Tulane University, he attended Wake Forest University School of Medicine, followed by an internship and residency at George Washington University Medicine and an Infectious Disease fellowship at UCLA Medical Center, the latter which he completed in 1978. Jon chose infectious diseases as his field of specialty because the field seemed to be one where most of the patients recovered and there was very little chronic disease. Of course this was in the days before HIV. He practiced medicine in suburban Los Angeles for 37 years as an infectious disease specialist until his retirement in 2014. Meanwhile his interest in the Civil War continued.

As an infectious disease specialist, he became fascinated with the fact that most of the deaths in the Civil War resulted from infectious diseases. This information ignited his interest in Civil War medicine. In 1997 he visited a reenactment in California, introduced himself to the medical reenactors at the site and eventually joined their group, becoming a reenactor as well as a lecturer on the subject. While learning about the medical aspects of the period, he, in turn, became captivated with the medical aspects of the Lincoln assassination as well as with the Sixteenth President's various medical conditions. He is impressed by the fact that as an attorney Lincoln was involved with many malpractice cases, mostly for the defense, most of which he won.

For his reenacting gig, Jon has portrayed both Union and Confederate army surgeons. One is a surgeon of 24th Virginia on the Confederate side, and another, Daniel Brinton, chief surgeon, 2nd Division, 11th Corps, Army of the Potomac, for the Union. The Brinton portrayal took place at the George Spangler Farm where Britton actually operated during and after the Battle of Gettysburg. To portray both the blue and the gray, Jon has Confederate and Union medical officers' uniforms, with the confederate version actually handmade by a seamstress. The reenactors wear aprons to protect their uniforms when operating.

Reenacting is not without its more humorous moments. Jon remembers such incidents as having a table collapse after placing a patient on it. In addition, the reenactors occasionally use real



Jon Willen: A Man for all Eras – Lincoln Aficionado, Civil War Reenactor and Pandemic Blogger

amputees as their “patients.” Following completion of the “operation, they will have the patient raise his stump as the “doctors” exclaim “we are such great surgeons that the stump has already healed.” Patients may be urged to yell after the operation “you cut off the wrong leg.” Jon uses both period and reproduction instruments, and his group, The Blue and Gray Hospital Association, has a vast array of all types of medical instruments, many of the period, some, reproductions. Jon adds that in the old days, the reenactors used to obtain instruments from dealers. Now they obtain them from eBay or various sutlers who sell reproduction instruments and equipment. The items are becoming less available for purchase. He is particularly pleased to have many medical instruments and a period amputation kit. He notes that over the years he has probably read every book ever written on Civil War medicine and continues to research the topic for both his presentations and his reenacting commentary.

Jon’s interest in Lincoln per se has continued to grow over the years. He has visited many Lincoln sites including most of those in Illinois as well as the Lincoln shrine in Redlands, California. He frequently visits the site of the Gettysburg address while touring or reenacting in the area and he actually participated in the 2015 Lincoln funeral reenactment. At the latter event the reenactors were able to repeat the march that accompanied the hearse from the train station to Oakwood cemetery. Marching with them were the sailors from the USS Abraham Lincoln. Jon’s group also had access to the replica of the Lincoln funeral car and they participated in the funeral ceremony where Judge Frank Williams portrayed the minister who gave the eulogy. The site that continues to impact on him the most is the Lincoln Memorial which he visits often, mainly to read the Second Inaugural which he consider to be Lincoln’s finest speech. (His favorite Lincoln quote is the last line of that speech).

Jon became involved with the Lincoln Group when he moved back to Washington in 2014. First he saw a brochure about the Lincoln Group at the National Archives and then attended a meeting of the Lincoln Group at the New York Ave Presbyterian Church where John Elliff and John O’Brien were engaged in a discussion about Lincoln and slavery. What he has most enjoyed

about my involvement with the Lincoln Group is getting to know the various members of the group and their diverse interests and backgrounds.

Always in motion, Jon also is president of the Civil War Round Table of DC and is on the board of the Society of Civil War Surgeons. One is likely to see Jon at various historic sites in the area as he is a docent at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Anderson House, the headquarters of the Society of the Cincinnati, and the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Silver Spring, Maryland. He and his wife are avid fans of theater and concerts, belonging to most of the theaters in town and are subscribers and members of the Kennedy Center where Jon's wife is a volunteer. They have attended the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, Oregon every summer for over the past 25 years. His son is an attorney who specializes in Internet law and first amendment issues in regard to technology while his daughter-in-law is a professor of International Law at the University of Michigan Law School.

Enter Covid-19: As many members know, Jon has provided a blog on the virus, providing frequent updates for the better part of the past year. He started the project on March 3, 2020 with what he thought would be a one-time pandemic update. Since then he has continued to update the blog almost on a daily basis and now has over 900 followers on Facebook. To follow the blog, all you have to do is friend him on Facebook. If you're not on Facebook, you can let him know, as he does email the information to several people each day. If you have questions and are not on Facebook, Jon asks that you email him directly at cwsurgeon60@gmail.com.

Unfortunately, as far as the future of the pandemic, Jon thinks that the next two months will probably be the worst that we have experienced. It will probably be sometime this summer before the vaccines begin to fully take hold and we will be able to return to some degree of normalcy. He adds, however, one never knows – there are new vaccines coming on board; yet, at the same time there are now new variants. Jon advises that we may be wearing masks and practicing social distancing for some time to come.

What would Lincoln do? Jon believes that Lincoln would have handled the pandemic in the same fashion that he handled the Civil War. He would have educated himself on infectious diseases and public health, he would have taken the advice of experts, and would have exhibited strong leadership, including setting an example, by wearing a mask. Repeat, Lincoln would have worn a mask.

In his public service role, Jon recently received special recognition from the Lincoln Group Board for his effort in keeping members and the general public informed as to what we needed to know regarding the pandemic. On the next page, you will find a copy of the citation presented by the Board as well as an image of the award itself, a "golden mask," no less.

The Lincolnian is a quarterly publication of the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia. Direct correspondence to:

Wendy Swanson, Editor

www.lincolngroup.org

The Lincoln Group invites readers to submit articles for publication in The Lincolnian, including articles which address today's national challenges by drawing on the wisdom, statesmanship, humanity, and leadership of Abraham Lincoln.

To Dr. Jon Willen,

In recognition of your epic efforts to keep us armed with the truth in the protection of our health and families;

and Whereas, you have persistently provided updates on the best medical information on the pandemic;

and Whereas, your expertise is recognized as a tremendous asset for our members and your legion of readers;

Now Therefore, this special tribute has been designed in your honor and presented with sincere appreciation.

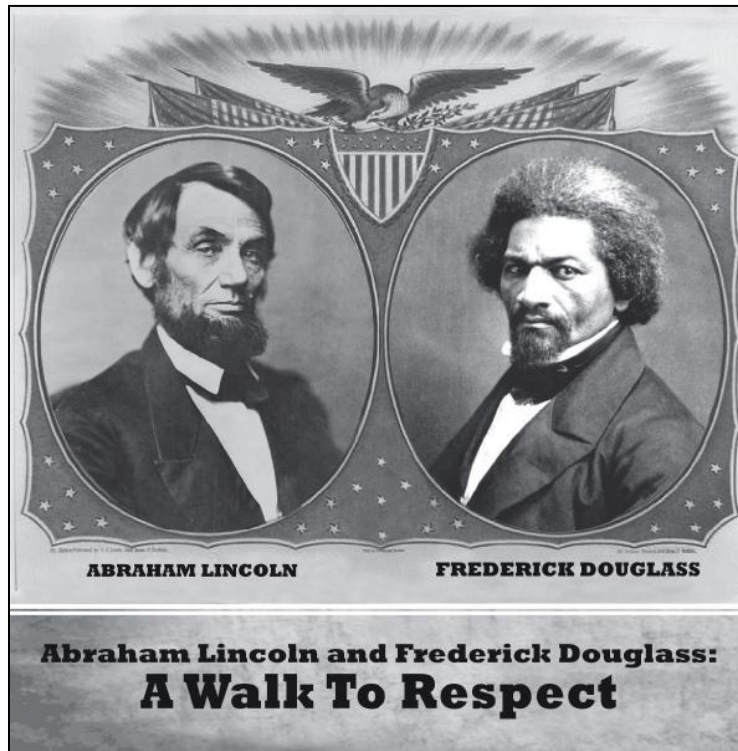
The attached image award was created by our Canadian friend, graphic designer Kieran McAuliffe, and recommended by past president of the Lincoln Group, Ed Steers. The Board joins in the profound sentiments of many who have come to appreciate you and your work teaching about the medicine of the past and protecting health today.

Thank you

**John O'Brien
President**



A Lesson for Today from History



In this time when our country is deeply divided, how do we reach a common ground among opposing factions? That question is being asked at all levels of our society. At the same time many hunger for the opportunity on a personal level to discuss relevant, though difficult, issues but are not sure how to start the conversation. Sarasota's The Patterson Foundation has provided one approach for addressing these issues through a work that combines history with the arts.

The Tool: Beth Duda's play "Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass: A Walk to Respect," provides food for thought on how to address and reach understanding on opposing opinions. Two men – Abraham Lincoln (Michael Krebs) and Frederick Douglass (Joel PE King) – were alike in some ways but very different ideologically. The play follows the bumpy road they travel that leads not only to respect but also to emancipation. Much of the play's dialogue will be familiar to students of Lincoln and his era – the words spoken by the actors portraying Lincoln and Douglass are the actual words of the historical figures, taken from their speeches and writings well. We know these words and phrases well. However, often hearing the words spoken, as in a play format, enhances their power and meaning and that is what occurs during this performance. The play starts with Douglass' declaration that "if there is no struggle, there is no progress" and proceeds to document the conflicts and differences between the two men. For instance, as Lincoln enumerates each of his steps along his road to prominence, Douglass responds, emphasizing his own status at the time, with a retort, that response usually being "slave." This is a powerful and illuminating moment indeed, one that clearly defines the differences between the two men. As the play proceeds, each character moves to gain greater understanding of the other and his perspective – and the audience absorbs how this connection is made. "The Walk to



The Players: Powerful Performances by all. From left to right, Michael Krebs (Abraham Lincoln); Joel PE King (Frederick Douglass), Cedric Hameed (Narrator/Word Poet) and Beth Duda (Playwright/Director). Lincoln Group members will remember Michael Krebs who visited as Lincoln at several of our special events including the anniversary programs of the first and second Lincoln inaugurations.

Respect” is a lesson on the power of listening and communication and the need for openness. A third player, embodied by word-poet Cedric Hameed, serves as narrator for the work, providing his own original contemporary interpretation to connect the episodes of history portrayed. His poetry is integral to the lesson being shared. The parallels of that time to ours are obvious: disunity, racial tensions, danger. Through this work, the audience, along with Lincoln and Douglass, take “A Walk to Respect,” and arrive at a starting point on their own journey to introspection, discovery and understanding.

The Inspiration: Beth Duda of The Patterson Foundation has a theatrical background as an actress, playwright, teaching artist and director. While exploring ways to honor the Foundation’s 10th anniversary, she was researching Frederick Douglass for a possible Black History Month event. In doing so, she learned that Abraham Lincoln and Douglass actually had met. She previously involved Lincoln reenactor Michael Krebs in a Foundation event and hoped to bring him back to Sarasota for another program. Her research – two primary sources were Doris Kearns Goodwin’s *Team of Rivals* and David Blight’s *Frederick Douglass* - unveiled one fact that especially intrigued her and ignited her concept for the play. She discovered that Mary Todd Lincoln had gifted Lincoln’s walking stick to Douglass to commemorate their friendship. She wanted to examine the path that led to this gifting and friendship: the result was her play “A Walk to Respect.” Beth Duda opines: “Lincoln and Douglass provide inspiration and hope. Their love of country and their willingness to connect with each other to build respect and understanding set the example for us to aspire to a better tomorrow.”

Discussion: The Foundation made an online version of the play available for viewing in December. After watching the screening, the audience was invited to a virtual “after action” discussion, featuring a panel consisting of the playwright and the actors; each panel member described reactions to the play and lessons gained from the experience. All emphasized its relevance to today’s raging issues. In addition, audience members were asked to provide, through the online chat, a word or words that encompassed their thoughts about the play. The most frequent responses recorded, shown in a word cloud, were: “powerful, listening, relevant and hopeful.” Many saw the play as an ideal tool to initiate meaningful discussions on today’s issues within our schools and other organizations.

“A Walk to Respect” is a play for our time, a starting point for discussions on the difficult issues we face today. The Foundation had begun to present the play and follow-up discussions to high school students before the pandemic intervened and hopes to continue doing so once health-related conditions allow. Four other showings have been given to the general public. Interested schools and organizations are able to arrange a viewing (virtual, of course) of “Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass: A Walk to Respect,” followed by a panel discussion. There is no charge for this event. The following link may be used to contact the Foundation for arranging a virtual screening: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdz-i7Ds9SP4QgPkqrMX1RG-NmA2QbAvZHGX-LaHw-map599g/viewform?fbclid=IwAR29C89PUIyaecb-7ji2dvM4CD_WelcH7Tri76kQRP9ROE96fC7LqcQCljo

The Patterson Foundation offered audience members the opportunity to take this conversation further. The viewers had the opportunity to attend a series of follow-up virtual discussions centered on personal “walks to respect,” using Lincoln and Douglass as examples and inspiration, to make connections with community members while exploring ways to build trust through personal development, active engagement and shared aspirations.

Individuals differ as to the type of communication approach that results in optimal learning and comprehension. Here a presentation combining the arts and history, and using the verbal and visual as well as audience interaction, proved extremely effective. Whatever the approach – whether traditional or innovative – Lincoln (and Douglass!) still have much to teach us and we, much to learn.

“Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass: A Walk to Respect” was produced by The Patterson Foundation in partnership with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe. The Patterson Foundation strengthens the efforts of people, organizations, and communities by focusing on issues that address mutual aspirations, foster wide participation, and encourage learning and sharing. *(Editor’s note: Thanks go to Linda Elliff who shared information about this program so that I was able to attend the December screening.)*

Lincoln in the News

By Ed Epstein

When the House of Representatives debated impeaching President Donald Trump on Jan. 13, Abraham Lincoln was a major presence in the chamber, almost a participant in the historic debate. The leaders of the House -- Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy and GOP Whip Steve Scalise -- all invoked Lincoln's words to make their divergent cases. Several rank-and-file members also quoted him.

The use of Lincoln's wisdom, from his Second inaugural address, his 1862 annual message to Congress, and his 1858 "house divided" speech, showed that Lincoln, who historians generally rate as America's greatest president, is a figure who appeals to Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives. They study his words but draw different conclusions about his meaning and how his message should be applied to circumstances in today's hyper-partisan, bitterly divided nation.

What's more, the widespread use of the words of Lincoln, America's secular saint, showed that politicians feel there is no downside to quoting the man who saved the Union and freed the African-American slaves. In kicking off the House debate that eventually ended with 232-197 vote in favor of impeaching Trump for a second time in the closing days of his presidency, Pelosi opened by quoting Lincoln at length.

"Madam Speaker, in his annual address to our predecessors in Congress in 1862, President Abraham Lincoln spoke of the duty of the patriot in an hour of decisive crisis for the American people. 'Fellow citizens,' he said, 'we cannot escape history. We will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility.'" Pelosi added: "My fellow Members, my fellow Americans, we cannot escape history. Let us embrace our duty, fulfill our oath, and honor the trust of our nation. We pray that God will continue to bless America."

Across the aisle, Scalise joined most other Republicans who spoke during the debate on impeaching Trump for his role in the events of Jan. 6 that led to hundreds of rioters breaking into the Capitol, in not defending the events of that day. Instead, he joined his fellow Republicans in calling for the House to put the events of Jan. 6 behind it. In doing that, he invoked Lincoln.

"Many speakers today have invoked one of our nation's greatest leaders, President Abraham Lincoln," Scalise said. "Maybe we should follow some of Lincoln's wisdom that he has imparted upon us in moments like this.

"As Abraham Lincoln was giving his second inaugural address in March 1865, Lincoln issued us a challenge. This is what he said: 'With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.'

"Madam Speaker, in times like these, let us not reach out to our darkest demons, but instead, like Lincoln, seek the higher ground. May God bless this great United States of America," he concluded. It's notable that Scalise is one of Congress' biggest Lincoln fans. When he was majority whip, Scalise had an office just off Statuary Hall, just a few feet from the site of Lincoln's seat during his single term in Congress from 1847 to 1849. Scalise unofficially named the room for Lincoln and started displaying Lincoln memorabilia. In 2019, Congress officially named the room for Lincoln.

Scalise's infatuation with Lincoln is also notable because the congressman comes from Louisiana in the deep south, again showing how Lincoln has become a national figure who surmounts old regional differences.

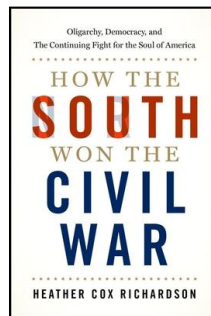
But Hoyer was having none of the Republicans' pleas for putting the impeachment aside. "For four years, Donald Trump has made no efforts to hide his ambitions or his lacking of Republican principles -- not our principles, but the principles that Abraham Lincoln was just quoted as

having said. Your president, our president, has never displayed those in the four years he has been president of the United States,” Hoyer said just before the House voted. (Note: *The Congressional quotes come directly the Congressional Record.*)

Book Reviews by David J. Kent

This continuing column reviews two books about Abraham Lincoln in each issue. One review will come from the recently released literature. The other review will take a look at an older but worthwhile read – a classic Lincoln tome or one of the more obscure books. The goal is to introduce, or reintroduce, the Lincoln literature to LGDC members, both for their enjoyment and to stimulate research ideas. This issue we start with a book that spans the entire history of America and its relevance today. The second book delves deeper into Lincoln’s relationship with the South. Comments and feedback are welcome to davidjkent.writer@gmail.com.

Recently Released



How the South Won the Civil War: Oligarchy, Democracy, and the Continuing Fight for the Soul of America

by Heather Cox Richardson
(Oxford University Press, 2020, 272 pp)

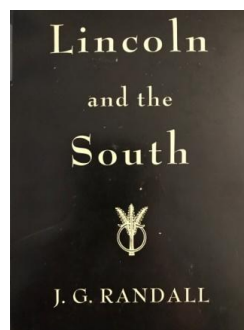
A stunningly important book by a renowned history scholar. Heather Cox Richardson gained a large following during the tumultuous year 2020, bringing historical perspective to the ongoing battle between oligarchy and democracy. The basic premise woven throughout the book is what Richardson calls the American paradox - the competing claims of equality and subordination that characterize our national history. We find that this paradox arose early; the same men who constructed a nation based on equality were owners of slaves. These wealthy white men considered themselves as the true arbiters of how the nation should be governed, not surprisingly to their own benefit, while touting a vision of equality that conflicted with that reality. "All men are created equal" thus didn't include all men - blacks, Indians, paupers, not to mention women, were excluded. Thus, we have the paradox that remains the basis of our ongoing battles behind what constitutes "American."

Richardson sees the roots of this paradox as soon as settlers arrived on these shores from Europe, displacing and abusing the native societies already here. The attempt to create a more equal society through a constitutional framework received pushback from the slave powers. The

freedoms gained by African Americans in the Civil War through Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments received pushback from white supremacists. These gains toward equality were further eroded during the Jim Crow and segregation eras. As the nation rapidly expanded westward following the Civil War, the fantasy of "independent individuals" was created in the frontier cowboy, who supposedly needed no government intervention - making it on their own hard work and guile - while actually existing only because of government intervention that gave free land to westward settlers, built a railroad to transport people and goods, and continued to push Native American populations into smaller and smaller enclaves. Westerners found themselves relating to southern slaveowners more than to northern farmers, thus creating a trend that puts us where we are today - in a land of fabrication and fantasy and dishonesty and racism that has driven the conservative movement through Newt Gingrich and Ronald Reagan to Donald Trump. Both parties claim the mantle of Lincoln; neither fully embraces Lincoln's vision.

This is a critically important book, well documented and easily readable. It is scholarly robust while accessible to all readers. And everyone should read it. (*Editor's note: Our Study Forum has chosen this book as its next selection for discussion.*)

Classic Literature



Lincoln and the South

by James G. Randall

(Louisiana State University Press, 1946, 161 pp.)

When James Garfield Randall died in 1953, he was considered one of the leading scholars on Abraham Lincoln. Students and mentees of his included David Herbert Donald, Richard Current, and Wayne Temple. He is best known for his promotion of scientific history studies, that is, the methodological evaluation of primary materials such as letters and speeches. He was also known for his somewhat contrarian views of the causes of the Civil War, which he believed was less about economic disparities and more about fanatics on both sides (abolitionists and fire-eaters) racing each other to war. He also painted an unusually favorable portrait of General George B. McClellan in his writings.

With this background one can understand the views offered in this collection of four of his essays on Lincoln as presented in the Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History, given at Louisiana State University in the early 1940s. As the book's title suggests, Randall

explored Lincoln's views as they relate to interactions with the southern states, both before and after secession and the beginnings of the war.

In the first essay, "When Lincoln Looked South," Randall suggests that the Kentucky-born Lincoln remained more southern than most people give him credit. He spoke in the language of the South, lived in the areas of southern Indiana and Illinois greatly populated and influenced by the South, and defended river interests important to the South (internal improvements such as navigation, flatboat trips to New Orleans), and visited his intimate friend Speed's and wife Mary's southern homes in Kentucky. Lincoln was a "Clay Whig," which Randall defines as having southern roots. He also was a "slavery moderate," supporting southern rights to slavery and the idea that compensation and colonization was warranted should southern slaveowners or states give up their enslaved peoples. Randall also suggests Lincoln was not for equality of the races.

In "Lincoln and the Southern Border," Randall discusses Lincoln's "antagonistic dualism," that is his attempt to keep the border states in the Union, a goal that required complicated statesmanship and the critical role Kentucky played in trying to keep the peace. Starting his third essay, "Design for Freedom," with a racist story (delivered in Louisiana in the 1940s), Randall argues that Lincoln believed gradual compensated emancipation was both practical and obligatory given how much the North benefited economically from the slave labor system of the South. Randall slights Lincoln for his views on colonization and reiterates his own minority view that McClellan was a great general thwarted by politicians like Lincoln and the Radical Republicans in Congress. He does give credit to Lincoln for framing the Emancipation Proclamation as a necessary war measure, but also spends significant time discussing the insufficiencies of the proclamation and sordid conduct by Union and Confederate soldiers alike (e.g., selling freed slaves back to their previous owners).

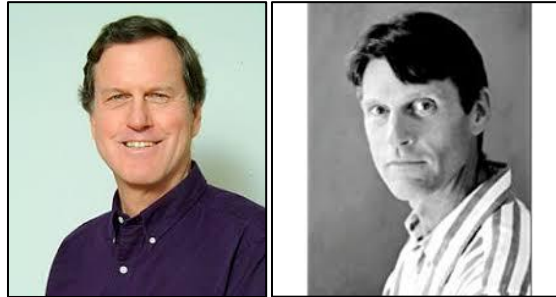
In his final essay, "Design for Peace," Randall paints Lincoln as a reconciler who tried to make it easy on the South to rejoin the Union. Essentially, his only requirement was to accept the end of slavery and the 13th amendment. He argues that Andrew Johnson simply tried to apply what Lincoln wanted, while hardliner radicals in Congress wanted to punish the South (thus the real reason for impeaching Johnson). In fact, Randall suggests that radical Republicans had turned on Lincoln during and after the war, and as such were the real villains of the post-war reconstruction period.

There is a reason that Randall is considered "Dean of the Lincoln Scholars." His adherence to a systematic, scientific methodology focused on primary sources has become the mainstay of historical research. Some of the views expressed in these essays and his other writings have been challenged by other Lincoln scholars, both during his lifetime and since. This is good scholarship. Despite disagreements, Randall is considered one of the premier Lincoln scholars in history. This volume provides excellent insights into Lincoln's presidency, in particular how his views reflected on the South. Ironically, given his emphasis on primary sources, the volume came out within weeks of the official opening of the Lincoln Papers to the public, 21 years after the death of Robert Lincoln, at his insistence. Ah, but Randall would go on to write his magnum opus, a four volume Lincoln as President series using all those new primary sources. The Lincoln world is much more knowledgeable because of the efforts of J.G. Randall, even if we don't always agree with him.

Abraham Lincoln Institute Symposium

This year, as in 2020, the Abraham Lincoln Institute (ALI) will be holding its annual symposium in a virtual format, presenting a total of eight speakers and running on alternate Mondays at 4 p.m. starting March 22 through continuing May 3. Each of the symposium evenings will feature two speakers, with each given 20 minutes to present. After the evening's presentations have been completed, the program will allow approximately 30 minutes of Q & A, open to both speakers. Michelle Krowl, the incoming ALI President, will introduce each evening's speakers. Jonathan White will moderate the Q&A sessions. The schedule of speakers and their topics is as follows:

MARCH 22:



David Reynolds

H.W. Brands

David S. Reynolds, PhD.: *Lincoln and Popular Culture*

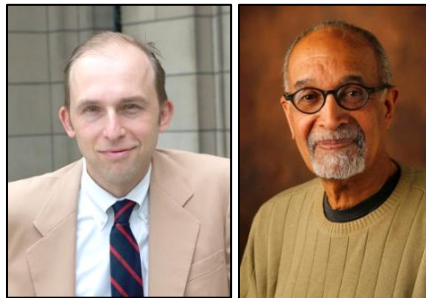
H. W. Brands: *The Zealot and the Emancipator: John Brown and Abraham Lincoln*

David S. Reynolds, author of *Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times* (Penguin Press, September 2020) is a Distinguished Professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. *Abe* is described as “the product of full-body immersion into the riotous tumult of American life in the decades before the Civil War.” Reynolds identifies “an enduring theme of Lincoln’s life as his genius for striking a balance between opposing forces.” The author sees him as a man “who at each stage of his life managed to arrive at a broader view of things than all but his most enlightened peers – he always pushed toward justice while keeping the whole nation in mind.” He describes Lincoln as one who “was shaped by his times but one who managed at his life’s fateful hour to shape them to an extent few could have foreseen.” Reynolds’ *Walt Whitman’s America: A Cultural Biography*, was winner of the Bancroft Prize and the Ambassador Book Award. His other books include *Beneath the American Renaissance* (winner of the Christian Gauss Award); *John Brown, Abolitionist*; *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson*; *Mightier than the Sword: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Battle for America*; and *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*. He is a regular book reviewer for *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

H. W. Brands is the author of *The Zealot and the Emancipator: John Brown, Abraham Lincoln and the Struggle for American Freedom* (Doubleday, October 2020). He taught at Texas A&M University for sixteen years before joining the faculty at the University of Texas at Austin, where he is the Dickson Allen Anderson Centennial Professor of History. His books include *The Age of Gold*; *The First American*; *Traitor to His Class, Andrew Jackson*; and *TR*. The latter two books

were finalists for the Pulitzer Prize. His new book introduces readers to John Brown, a charismatic and deeply religious man who heard the God of the Old Testament speaking to him, telling him to destroy slavery by any means. To accomplish this, Brown waged war in the Kansas territory and then later, in 1859, he and his men assaulted the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, hoping to arm slaves with weapons for a race war that would cleanse the nation of slavery. Brands opines that the violence of Brown pointed Abraham Lincoln, lawyer and former officeholder, “toward a different solution to slavery: politics.” Brown had set “a vortex of violence into motion.” many in the North saw him as a martyr while Southerners grew angry at the notion of “a terrorist being made into a saint.” Brands describes Lincoln as “shrewdly threading the needle between the opposing voices of the fractured nation to win election as president.” However, he notes that “the time for moderation had passed, and Lincoln’s fervent belief that democracy could resolve its moral crises peacefully faced its ultimate test.”

APRIL 5:



Ted Widmer Richard Blackett

Ted Widmer: *Lincoln on the Verge*

Richard Blackett: *The Issue of Fugitive Slaves and the Coming of the Civil War*

Ted Widmer will speak on his recent publication, *Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington* (Simon & Schuster, April 2020). Widmer is an American historian, writer, librarian and musician who served as a speechwriter in the Clinton White House. He earned multiple degrees as well as his doctorate in the history of American civilization from Harvard University. At Harvard, he was an editor at the *Harvard Lampoon*. *Lincoln on the Verge* recounts the president-elect’s travel by train from Springfield to Washington. During this thirteen-day journey, one filled with uncertainty and physical danger, Lincoln discovered his own inner strength and saw his country up close. Ted Widmer is a Distinguished Lecturer at Macaulay Honor College of the City University of New York. He writes actively for about American history in *The Washington Post*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New York Times*, where he helped create the Disunion feature about the Civil War. He has taught for or directed research centers at Harvard and Brown University, Washington College, and the Library of Congress. His books include *Young America: The Flowering of Democracy in New York City*; *Campaigns: A Century of Presidential Races* (co-author with Alan Brinkley); *Martin Van Buren*; *Ark of the Liberties: America and the World* (a history of U.S. foreign policy); *Listening In: The Secret White House Recordings of John F. Kennedy* (co-author with Caroline Kennedy); *Brown: The History of an Idea*; and *New York Times: Disunion: A History of the Civil War* (co-editor with Clay Risen and George Kalogerakis.)

Richard Blackett is the Andrew Jackson Professor of History at Vanderbilt College where his focus is on the abolitionist movement in the US and particularly its transatlantic connections and the roles African Americans played in the movement to abolish slavery. With this field of expertise, he is eminently qualified to discuss his chosen topic. Blackett is the author of [*Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement, 1830-1860*](#); [*Beating Against the Barriers. Biographical Essays in Nineteenth-Century Afro-American History*](#); [*Thomas Morris Chester: Black Civil War Correspondent*](#); [*Divided Hearts. Britain and the American Civil War*](#) [*Making Freedom: The Underground Railroad and the Politics of Slavery*](#) editor, [*Running A Thousand Miles for Freedom: The Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*](#). Blackett was the Harold Vyvyan Harmsworth Professor of American History at Oxford University for the 2013-14 academic year. His talk on the African American struggle in the age of emancipation highlighted the Library Company's 277th annual dinner. He taught at the University of Pittsburgh, Indiana University; University of Houston where he was the John & Rebecca Moores professor of history and African American Studies. He has served as Associate Editor of the *Journal of American History*, acting editor (1989-1990); editor of the *Indiana Magazine of History* (1993-1996) and past president of the Association of Caribbean Historians.

APRIL 19:



Lucas Morel



Mark E. Steiner

Lucas Morel: *Lincoln, the Founding, and the Challenge of Self-Government*

Mark E. Steiner: *Abraham Lincoln, Colonization, and Black Citizenship*

Lucas Morel will be speaking on his book, *Lincoln and the American Founding*, at the Lincoln Group on June 15. Please see the write-up on page 7 on that program and for background on Mr. Morel and his publication.

Mark E. Steiner, PhD: author of *Lincoln and Citizenship* (Concise Lincoln Library Series, Southern Illinois University Press, forthcoming in March 2021), is a former associate editor of the Lincoln Legal Papers and author of *An Honest Calling: The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln*. In his forthcoming book, Steiner analyzes and contextualizes Lincoln's evolving views about citizenship over the course of his political career including his embrace as President of a broader vision of citizenship for African Americans. Professor Steiner teaches American legal history, consumer transactions, internet legal research, and Texas pretrial procedure at the South Texas College of Law Houston. Twice a Fulbright Scholar, he has taught at the University of Latvia and the College of Law at National Taiwan University. He also has taught at the University of Houston Law Center and William Mitchell College of Law. *An Honest Calling:*

The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln was named among the “Best of the Best” for 2007 by the Association of American University Presses and given a superior achievement award by the Illinois Historical Society. His articles about legal education and American legal history have appeared in such journals as the *Marquette Law Review*, *Missouri Law Review*, *Journal of Legal Education*, *Wisconsin International Law Journal*, and the *Illinois Historical Journal*. He frequently presents talks about Lincoln’s legal career before bar, civic, and academic groups. Steiner is actively involved in efforts to assist immigrants on the path toward citizenship. He regularly participates in Citizenship and Immigration forums and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival workshops organized by NALEO Education Fund and Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

MAY 3:



Thavolia Glymph

C.R. Gibbs

Thavolia Glymph: *Writing Women into the Civil War*
Carroll Robert (C.R.) Gibbs: *The Underground Railroad in Washington, D.C.*

Thavolia Glymph, professor of history and law at Duke University, focuses on the 19th century U.S. South. Glymph’s *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) received the Philip Taft Prize in Labor and Working-Class History and was a finalist for the Frederick Douglass Prize. Her most recent book is *The Women’s Fight: The Civil War’s Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation* (Littlefield History of the Civil War Era, University of North Carolina Press, 2020). She is co-editor of Series 1, Volume 1 and Series 1, Volume 3 of the award-winning documentary series *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*. She is currently completing two book projects: *African American Women and Children Refugees in the Civil War: A History the Making of Freedom*, supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, and “Playing ‘Dixie’ in Egypt: Civil War Veterans in the Egyptian Army and Transnational Transcripts of Race, Nation, Empire and Citizenship, 1869-1878,” a study of former Civil War officers who served in the Egyptian army during the Reconstruction era. In 2015 and 2018, Glymph was the John Hope Franklin Visiting Professor of American Legal History at Duke Law School and, in 2017, a Thomas Langford Lecturer at Duke University. She is an Organization of American Historians Distinguished Lecturer, a fellow of the Society of American Historians, a member of the American Antiquarian Society, and is on the Board of Directors of The Gettysburg Foundation and the Scholarly Advisory Board of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. She is a past president of the Southern Historical Association.

Carroll Robert (C.R.) Gibbs is the author/co-author of six books, including *Black, Copper, & Bright: The District of Columbia's Black Civil War Regiment*, and *Black Inventors: From Africa to America: Two Million Years of Invention and Innovation*. He frequently lectures on an array of historical topics on both the national and international level and has appeared on the History Channel as well as on French and Belgian television. He wrote, researched, and narrated "Sketches in Color," a 13-part companion series to the acclaimed PBS series, "The Civil War." for WHUT-TV, the Howard University television station. A D.C. Humanities Council scholar, he is seen on the Online Academy website of the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum. In 1989, he founded the African History & Culture Lecture Series whose scholars provide free presentations at libraries, churches, and other locations in the Washington-Baltimore area. He won the 2008 Mayor's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation in Public Education. In 2009, the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans Braintrust honored Gibbs for his more than three decades of work on the military heritage of Africans and African Americans. In 2011, he provided historical commentary for WUSA-TV, Channel 9's coverage of the dedication of the King Memorial and spoke at the annual observance of International Emancipation Day in Toronto, Canada. In 2014, the National Civil War Project featured Gibbs as a speaker at an event sponsored by Arena Stage and George Washington University and the Washington *Informer* newspaper chose Gibbs as one of the 50 most influential people in Washington, D.C. Mr. Gibbs will speak on the Underground Railroad in Washington, D.C.

Inauguration (*continued from page 2*) Echoes of Lincoln were evident in Joe Biden's November 7, 2020 speech, given after he was declared the presidential victor. Biden identified Lincoln as "an inflection point in our nation's history, coming in 1860 to save the Union." This speech quoted one of Lincoln's most frequently repeated phrases from the First Inaugural. Biden's version: "Our nation is shaped by the constant battle between our *better angels* and our darkest impulses. It is time for our *better angels* to prevail." Finally, additional Lincoln words received an updating: "We have to stop treating our opponents as our enemies. They are not our enemies. They are Americans." Biden since has continued to reference Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln, at the moment he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, also was on the mind of Joe Biden as the 46th president delivered his inaugural address on Jan. 20. Biden said:

"In another January, on New Year's Day in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. When he put pen to paper, the president said, and I quote, 'If my name ever goes down into history, it will be for this act and my whole soul is in it.' My whole soul was in it today. Today on this January day, my whole soul is in this. Bringing America together. Uniting our people. Uniting our nation. And I ask every American to join me in this cause."

And in his inaugural day coverage that day, commentator Chuck Todd dubbed Biden "a better angels" president. Our leaders quote Lincoln frequently but no more so than in troubled times. Lincoln has become a national speechwriter of sorts, not only for today's politicians and leaders, in all parties, but also for the media.

(*Editor's note: Be sure to read how Lincoln's words played a major role in the Jan. 13 House of Representative debate over impeaching President Donald Trump on Page 14. That author Ed Epstein also contributed to this piece.*)

Study Forum completes discussion of *All the Powers of Earth* by Sidney Blumenthal.



Here are the Forum members who attended the final discussion meeting on Sidney Blumenthal's *All the Powers of Earth*. All the smiles reflect the delight of having read this beautifully written book.

The creation of the Republican Party and Lincoln's rise to the presidency were the themes for the Study Forum for the past five meetings. *All the Powers of Earth* describes the cultural environment and political life of early 19th century America. In this, Blumenthal tells how Lincoln had to contend to successfully push his campaign to stop the growth of slavery. Blumenthal has written a beautiful narrative that draws on infrequently cited sources to shed new light on Lincoln's motivations and sources of support. Blumenthal has established himself as among the great Lincoln biographers. This is the third of his planned five-volume political biography of Abraham Lincoln.

The Study Forum discussed the passages that described Lincoln's career-long conflict with fellow Illini, Stephen Douglas. The Little Giant helped Lincoln to hone his arguments to raise his own stature and prepare him to present his position powerfully for a national audience. To the extent that Lincoln is quoted on racial animosity, it was only to counter Douglas' race-baiting in front of eagerly racist audiences in Illinois. Lincoln needed to parry Douglas' charges of racial preference and miscegenation. While his language is offensive to modern ears, never once did Lincoln stray from his insistence on the Declaration's promise that all men are created equal.

Even more profoundly, Blumenthal develops the moral basis of Lincoln's life-long objection to slavery. It was never just a political position. If he could not openly side with the abolitionists, it was because a successful political move against slavery had to be conservative. Strong steps were required to merely begin to limit the slavery to be able to put it on the course of extinction. The Kansas Nebraska Act had raised the specter of slavery being extended indefinitely. Lincoln had devised a conservative political argument that for the first time, could win a majority of northern voters. Once in office, Lincoln was able to take the first action against slavery in US history.

Our Forum agreed that this book was a very enjoyable read that opened new insights to moral courage and political sophistication that characterized the political life of Abraham Lincoln. *All the Powers of Earth: the Political Life of Abraham Lincoln, 1856-1860*; Sidney Blumenthal (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2019) pp 745.