The Spoken Word and Group Activities


The Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia made a bus tour of Lincoln Land on September 27, beginning at the Conference Center, Lincoln Home National Historic Site. Dr. Wayne C. Temple and Dr. Richard Hart spoke.

On September 27 Wayne C. Temple spoke at a meeting of the Illinois Veterans’ History Project (“Preserving Their Memories”) at the Illinois State Library, Springfield. In November, he spoke at Pittsfield Illinois American Legion Post and on September 9, Dr. Temple presented a talk on “Abraham Jones and Lincoln” at Temple B’rith Shalom in Springfield. He celebrated his 91st birthday on February 5 (a birthday he shares with Nancy Hanks Lincoln and Harold Holzer).

Dale Jirik delivered “The Lincoln-Lane Relationship” at the October 4 meeting of the Lincoln Club of Topeka.

Martha Hodes presented “Mourning Lincoln” at the Civil War Round Table of New York on October 5.
On October 16, Jane Gastineau delivered a narrated exhibit “When Lincoln Ran for President” at the Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, IN.

Burrus M. Carnahan presented the 33rd annual Frank & Virginia Williams Lecture on Abraham Lincoln at Louisiana State University—Shreveport on October 21, “Lincoln’s Long Shadow: The President and International Law.”

Frank J. Williams presented “Keeping the Promise: Abraham Lincoln’s Leadership and the 13th Amendment” to the reunion of his fellow officers and their spouses of the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry reunion in Orlando, FL on October 22.

Daniel Farber presented the R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture at the Duncan School of Law, Lincoln Memorial University, Knoxville, TN, on October 27.

On October 27, William Pederson presented a talk at the Robinson Film Center on “The Top Four Political Scandals in U.S. History.” The talk covered Credit Mobilier and Teapot Dome, as well as two events which could have ended in huge scandals but instead, characters who had “character,” prevented national discord: the election of 1800 between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, who after 35 ballots, made a deal which put Jefferson in the presidency rather than demagogue Aaron Burr. Abraham Lincoln held a democratic election in 1864 for the first time during a major civil war.

The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives presented Lincoln, The German Immigrants and other Outliers at the Center in Cincinnati, OH, on November 6. Harold Holzer presented “Lincoln and the Uncivil War on Immigration,” Frank Williams presented “Lincoln’s German Generals,” and Gary P. Zola
presented “Mixed Emotions: German-Jewish Opinions on Abraham Lincoln.” Roger Billings moderated.


“The Emergence of Lincoln: Because of or in Spite of His Hoosier Roots?” was presented by the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana on November 17 with William Bartelt, Brian Dirck, and Nicole Etcheson.
Martha Hodes presented the 55th Annual Robert Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture at Gettysburg College on November 19.

Frank J. Williams presented “Adding Story to Story, Upon the Monuments of Fame: Abraham Lincoln Memorialized by the National Park Service” at the annual meeting of the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania in Gettysburg on November 19.

William D. Pederson presented “Mary Todd Lincoln: Misunderstood Leadership Model” at the Association of Global South Studies conference in Louisville, KY on November 22.

On December 6, Louis Fisher presented “Did President Lincoln Violate the Constitution?” at the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia meeting commemorating the 150th anniversary of the ex parte Milligan case. On February 15, 2017, the group heard from Noah Andre Trudeau, who spoke about City Point from his new book, Lincoln’s Greatest Journey: Sixteen Days that Changed the Presidency, March 24-April 8, 1865.

Bill Stumpff presented “Civil War Medal of Honor Recipients” at the December 6 meeting of The Lincoln Club of Topeka.

Michael Schein discussed his John Surratt: The Lincoln Assassin Who Got Away at the December 8 meeting of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table.

Harold Holzer moderated a panel on The Battle of Chattanooga, with John Marszalek and Craig Symonds, at the New-York Historical Society, December 13.

John H. Marszalek spoke about “Sherman’s March Through Georgia and Carolina” at the December 14 meeting of the Civil War Round Table of New York.

The Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association at the Lincoln Shrine, Redlands, CA, featured Catherine Clinton at the Lincoln dinner held on February 12, 2017 (“The Loss of Lincoln”).


**International Legacy**


William D. Pederson (LSU Shreveport) presented “The International Aspect of Mary Todd Lincoln” at the Forum on Contemporary Theory, Doon University, Dehradun, India, December 18-21.

Chaitali Chatterjee (New Delhi, India) has completed three more paintings in a series for the International Lincoln Center (LSU

Alvaro Rodriquez (Madrid, Spain), the author of a recent biography on Lincoln, has written a play, “The Lincoln Ransom.” Nearly 40 percent of the dialogue is taken from actual lines by Lincoln, Lee, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Ulysses Grant, and others.

Jason Silverman (Winthrop University) has won The Annual Immigrants’ Civil War Award from the Long Island Wins, a non-profit communications organization. In 2015, he authored the first scholarly book on Lincoln and immigrants (Southern Illinois University Press). He also has been named the co-editor of Abraham Lincoln Abroad, the annual publication of the International Lincoln Association.

Paul Quigley (Virginia Center for Civil War Studies) and James I. Robertson (Virginia Tech) led a tour, “The American Civil War and the World” for the Smithsonian on April 4.

Gabor S. Boritt’s (Gettysburg College), “Tearing Down Tyranny in Budapest,” appeared in the October 5 issue of the Wall Street Journal, in response to then-candidate Donald Trump’s appearance at Gettysburg.

The 34th mini “Washington, D.C. Semester” will be held on May 10-26 by the International Lincoln Center at Louisiana State University in Shreveport on May 10-26. It consists of a daily series of walking lecture tours of the Washington area (neighborhoods, the
National Mall, etc.) with special emphasis on Lincoln-related sites, and led by William D. Pederson. It is open to all students who earn six credit hours in political science and the humanities.

Arts & Entertainment

The Young Lawyer by sculptor George Lundeen was dedicated on May 10 at the University of Illinois, Springfield.

The Abraham Lincoln Statue Committee of the Logan County Genealogical & Historical Society is seeking funds for a bronze statue, Lincoln Rally’s the People, to commemorate his Logan County Court House speech of October 16, 1858.

On November 12, the South Shore Symphony of Long Island celebrated the holiday season with the Leggz, Ltd. ballet at the Madison Theatre of Molloy College in Rockville Centre, Long Island, with Ms. Wen Quain performing Barber’s Concerto for violin, actor Steve Guttenberg narrating Aaron Copland’s “A Lincoln Portrait,” and the orchestra performing Copland’s “Billy the Kid Suite.”

Cartoonist Matt Davies’s cartoon, drawn after the November 8 election, features Lincoln in his chair at the Lincoln Memorial falling over backwards.

The Library of Congress’s online Civil War photographs, like the one of President Abraham Lincoln and General McClellan on the Antietam battlefield, were used to create the sets for filmmaker Salvador Litvak’s 2013 film, Saving Lincoln.

In anticipation of the inauguration of Donald Trump, the Presidents’ Gallery of the National Portrait Gallery is featured in Holland Cotter’s “Staring History in the Face” in the December 30 New York Times. As a sidebar, co-chief art critic Holland Cotter singled out
some of the major paintings featuring presidents past. One of the five best is the 1865 cracked glass negative photograph of Abraham Lincoln by Alexander Gardner. To Cotter, “it’s one of the most searching and sympathetic American portraits—presidential or otherwise—ever.”

Exhibits

The University of Delaware’s Center for Political Communication and the University of Delaware Library presented the exhibition *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates and the Campaign of 1860: The Road to the Lincoln Presidency* from September 23 through December 16.

Awards and Prizes

James I. (“Bud”) Robertson, Jr. received the Richard Nelson Current Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement on November 18. The Wendy Allen Award of Achievement for organizational excellence went to the Gettysburg Foundation.

Auctions

Heritage Auctions, in a joint endeavor with The Rail Splitter, conducted a special auction of memorabilia relating to Abraham Lincoln on September 17. A signed carte-de-visite of a contemplative Lincoln set a world record with a selling price of $175,000. The 1862 card carried an inscription on the back by presidential secretary John Hay certifying its authenticity. A love letter from Lincoln to his first fiancée, Mary Owens, sold for $137,500. Mary Todd Lincoln’s black silk mourning dress ensemble opened at $5,000 and ended at an astounding $100,000. Campaign memorabilia included a portrait flag for Lincoln’s political rival, Stephen A. Douglas, which sold for $93,750; an 1860 portrait campaign flag depicting a beardless Lincoln ended at $75,000; and a unique 1864 silk parade flag for “Lincoln and Johnson,” which
brought $52,500. A blood-stained piece of the collar of the coat worn by Lincoln the night of the assassination sold for $18,750. A Leonard Volk life mask of a beardless Lincoln sold for $16,250, and a single nine-inch china dinner plate created for the Lincoln White House by De Havilland in France sold for $16,250. The total amount realized at the auction was $2.4 million.

Collections

The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection at the Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, containing the books and other printed material of the former Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum, is accessible for research. To learn more about the items, visit the website at www.LincolnCollection.org. To access digitized collection materials, visit www.acpl.lib.in.us/LincolnCollection/index.htm.

A unique, three-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln containing 100 original manuscripts was donated to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum on August 10. The Life of Abraham Lincoln includes handwriting from Lincoln and nine other U.S. presidents.

A project to repaint the Lincoln Home in Springfield, IL helped the National Park Service mark its 100th anniversary. Attendance at the site in 2015 was 233,299.

The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area has published a new brochure on its mission for 42 Illinois counties, including its Looking for Lincoln book series, signature events, and support of Lincoln-related communities.

Books and Pamphlets

Robert O’Harrow, Jr. wrote *The Quartermaster: Montgomery C. Meigs: Lincoln’s General, Master Builder of the Union Army* (Simon & Schuster).

D. Leigh Henson printed and bound the first three webpage chapters from his website, *Mr. Lincoln, Route 66, & Other Highlights of Lincoln, Illinois* under the title *Abraham Lincoln’s Legal, Business, and Political Activities in Lincoln, Illinois: His First Namesake Town (1839-1860)* ([http://findinglincolnillinois.com/townabewarned.html](http://findinglincolnillinois.com/townabewarned.html)).

James I. (‘Bud’) Robertson, Jr. is the author of *After the Civil War: The Heroes, Villains, Soldiers, and Civilians who Changed America* (National Geographic).

James M. Cornelius and Carla Knorowski have authored *Under Lincoln’s Hat: 100 Objects that tell the Story of his Life and Legacy* found in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

David Hirsch and Dan Van Haften have written *The Ultimate Guide to the Gettysburg Address* (Savas Beatie).

Oxford University Press has published the second volume of the *New York Times, Disunion*, edited by Ted Widmer with Clay Risen and George Kalogerakis. This represents contributions on the *New York Times* website during the sesquicentennial of the Civil War.

The singer and artist, Tony Bennett, with Scott Simon, has authored *Tony Bennett: Just Getting Started* which contains a chapter on Abraham Lincoln along with many other leaders and entertainers (HarperCollins).
Southern Illinois University Press has reissued *When Lincoln Came to Egypt* by George W. Smith.

Collateral Books

David Alan Johnson is the author of *Battle of Wills: Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, and the Last Year of the Civil War* (Prometheus Books).

Doug Egerton’s *Thunder at the Gates* about the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantry and the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry – black regiments that broke the color line in the Union army – has been published by Basic Books.

Abraham Lincoln is featured in Seymour Morris, Jr.’s *Fit for the Presidency? Winners, Losers, What-ifs, and Also-Rans* (Potomac Books).

Periodicals

Robert Young and Christopher J. Young wrote “Lincoln Returns to New Hampshire” for the fall issue of *For the People: A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association*.


Samuel Wheeler, newly appointed Illinois State Historian, wrote his first column for *Four Score and Seven* (publication of the Presidential Library Foundation, Issue Two, 2016). Ian Hunt, Chief of Acquisitions and Research at the Presidential Library wrote “Iconic Political Symbols Stand the Test of Time” for the same issue, and Lincoln Curator James Cornelius contributed “Who Gets Invited to an Inaugural Ball?”

The fall issue of *Lincoln Lore*, edited by Sara Gabbard, included Allen C. Guelzo’s “The Star-Crossed Case of Clement Laird Vallandingham,” “Lincoln the Peddler” by Jeffrey R. Kerr-Ritchie, and an interview with Frank J. Williams. This issue also included Nicole Etcheson’s “Lincoln as a Hoosier: Race, Politics, and the Sixteenth President.”

The December issue of *The Surratt Courier* included William Binzel’s “New Court Ruling of the use of Military Trials” about the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in *Al Bahlul vs. United States* and the issue of whether an enemy combatant could be tried for conspiracy by a military tribunal. In a 6 to 3 decision, the court ruled that the use of a military tribunal was constitutional. Three of the judges looked back to the trial by military court of the Lincoln assassination conspirators.

John Elliff wrote “The Lincoln’s Move to Indiana in 1816” for the fall *Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia Newsletter*.

“Lincoln in Beloit” by Maurice J. Montgomery appeared in *The Lincoln Ledger* (October 2016), the newsletter of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin.

Mark Grimsley wrote “Lincoln Meets his General [Ulysses S. Grant]” for the winter *Civil War Monitor*.

Reviews


People

Award-winning actor Hal Holbrook while best known for his performances as Mark Twain, has also portrayed Abraham Lincoln, most notably in the TV miniseries Sandburg’s Lincoln, for which he received an Emmy Award. In addition to being the speaker on May 7, he also received an honorary degree from Lincoln College, IL. His remarks to the Class of 2016:

Lincoln is a symbol for times like the ones we’re facing now. Confused. Angry, sometimes. Times when people don’t listen to each other. They’re afraid to listen to each other. And they’re making America into a kind of a mess. And it’s going to be your mess. Good luck to you, Charlie! This is what you’re inheriting. It’s a golden opportunity, really, when you look at it, because you might be able to fix it.

Democracy in our country, which Abraham Lincoln held so precious to his breast and fought so hard for, is threatened by other … foolishness. Stupidity. People not listening to each other. That is an important element of democracy, listening to each other. Whether you agree with the other person or not, listen to each other.

It’s a big thing to take on a character like [Lincoln]. It’s not something you just ‘do’ or dismiss. It’s something you’ve got to really believe in. I don’t think I’ve ever done anything
in my life that has made a deeper impression on me than the opportunity to portray this great man. Your university’s named after him. We sure could use him now.

You young people, if I may call you that, are going to go out of this university, and you’re going to grab ahold of this world and you’re going to make it better. You’re not going to allow it to get worse. You’re going to try to stop people from shouting at each other. You’re going to use your brain, your intelligence, to build this country back to where it should be. Because it needs your help, it needs your help very badly. Too many people shouting. Too much media. Too many newspaper people. Too much nonsense. Not enough simple, simple, simple truth. Simple truth. So, having said all this, I hope, if I haven’t inspired you, at least I’ve tickled your fancy.

Samuel Wheeler has been named the state historian for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Dr. E. Clayton Hess has been appointed the 21st President of Lincoln Memorial University succeeding Dr. B. James Dawson. LMU is the home of the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum.

Dr. Matthew C. Moen was elected President of the Gettysburg Foundation. He served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Lohre Distinguished Professor at the University of South Dakota. He succeeds Joanne Hanley.

Lincoln and Political Culture

The September 24-25 Wall Street Journal featured Bryan Garsten’s “Talk Show” in anticipation of the first presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The much-anticipated
face-off between them, according to the author, would just be a TV spectacle. “Real debate takes place in the course of governing (or at least it used to).” Starting with the first televised presidential debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon (57 years ago) someone will always write an essay comparing the disappointing current debates to the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. Whereas modern televised debates require an answer from the candidate in 90 seconds, the Lincoln-Douglas debates gave each speaker 90 minutes on a single issue. But even the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 brought out vices in both candidates, with Lincoln spinning an elaborate conspiracy theory about the spread of slavery and Stephen A. Douglas moralizing self-righteously, and both candidates pandering to the crowds.

On May 11, 2012, Andy Borowitz wrote, tongue-in-cheek, for The New Yorker: “Fox: New Evidence Hillary Killed Lincoln.” In the parody, Sean Hannity, from Fox News Channel, reports that there is “evidence of her role in the Lincoln assassination…mainly in the form of e-mails.” “Responding to the allegation, Mrs. Clinton issued a terse statement indicating that she could not have participated in Lincoln’s assassination because she was born in 1947.”

In the heated presidential canvas of 2016, both Hilary Clinton and Donald Trump invoked Abraham Lincoln. Amy B. Wang wrote “Being Truthful isn’t what made Abraham Lincoln a great politician” for the Washington Post Wonkblog on October 10. She reported that both candidates defend “public and private stance.” Lincoln was called “two-faced” for doing the same thing, Clinton believes. Citing Steven Spielberg’s Lincoln, “…President Lincoln was trying to convince some people – he used some arguments. Convincing other people, he used other arguments.” Actually, Lincoln was disingenuous when members of the House of Representatives accused him of treachery for seeking peace with Confederate commissioners while still pressing for passage of the 13th Amendment in early 1865. Before the Confederate peace
commissioners could reach Washington, the President directed them to stay at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Lincoln then denied that they were on the way to Washington ignoring the fact that they were present in federal lines to negotiate peace terms with him and other members of his administration. Donald Trump accused Hillary Clinton of lying and blaming a lie on “…the late, great Abraham Lincoln. Honest Abe. Honest Abe never lied,” Trump said. “That’s the big difference between Abraham Lincoln and you. That’s a big, big difference. That’s some difference.”

On October 6, Harold Holzer’s video of “What if Abraham Lincoln had lived?” appeared on CNN Politics Files for Counterfactual History. Holzer stated that “…had Lincoln lived to continue the second American Revolution that ended slavery by the 1860s, the third revolution – the civil rights movement of the 1960s – might not have been necessary. He was that gifted.”

Harold Holzer was the guest columnist for the October 12 New York Daily News. Holzer points out that Lincoln was practically the third candidate at the last debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Lincoln, “a fierce debater” might have been pleased that the 2016 presidential candidates mentioned him. But in his critique, Holzer points out that only one of them understood Lincoln and it was not his “fellow” Republican, Donald Trump. “Lincoln’s notion of ‘unfinished work’ has animated Clinton’s campaign. …She called him the President ‘who understood profoundly…the importance of government playing its role in providing opportunities.’ In contrast, Trump’s comments about Lincoln to date have been…uninformed.”

Doris Kearns Goodwin, in the November Vanity Fair, wrote “Barack Obama and Doris Kearns Goodwin: The Ultimate Exit Interview.” Obama tells the author of Team of Rivals… that his “…passion for Lincoln …dates back from my earliest memories of
Melanie Kirkpatrick wrote “After the Election, a Thanksgiving to Unite Us” in the November 18 Wall Street Journal. The author describes the efforts of Sarah Josepha Hale to institutionalize the Thanksgiving holiday as a way to unite a nation divided over slavery. Lincoln concurred, having already issued several Thanksgiving proclamations. As a result of her efforts, President Lincoln fixed the fourth Thursday in November as a national day of Thanksgiving.

Wesley Morris wrote about the Smithsonian’s new National Museum of African-American History and Culture in the December 26 New York Times. Many refer to this museum as “The Blacksonian,” which is reverse of what is intended there. While every culture has its own view of history, and African-Americans are clearly entitled to the view of what hundreds of years of bondage have wrought. But it is paradoxical to see how Lincoln is portrayed here vis a vis his interrelations with the great Frederick Douglass. Here, he is no hero, but has, “…a nagging mandate from Douglass to do the right thing.” Actually, and at best, Douglass and Lincoln collaborated and it was Lincoln who invited Douglass, the first black man ever, to visit him in the Executive Mansion to discuss African-Americans and the recruitment of US Colored Troops and freedom. In the end, it was the chief magistrate who made the decisions about policy. As author Morris put it: “Abraham Lincoln, too, is morally conjoined here, on the abolition of slavery. He is as bound to Frederick Douglass, as Tony Curtis is chained to Sydney Poitier in ‘The Defiant Ones.’ Lincoln’s not a hero at the Blacksonian. He’s a man with a nagging mandate from Douglass to do the right thing. He’s another brick in the wall.” Fortunately, Lincoln is not only the brick but the mortar that holds the whole idea of freedom and Union together.
Jay Winik, author of *1865 and 1944: FDR and the Year That Changed History*, wrote “A Lincoln Lesson for Donald Trump” for the January 3 *Wall Street Journal*. Citing Lincoln, FDR, and other presidents, the author opines that the then-president-elect, Donald Trump, will soon learn how little control he has over his agenda. The firing on Fort Sumter caused Lincoln to initiate civil war, the economic downturn in 1937 during the depression, followed by menace of Nazism, challenged FDR and how Harry Truman had to learn of his challenges within hours after taking the oath when he was faced with questions on using the atomic bomb.

*The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead is a courageous novel that imagines a slave fleeing north on a literal underground railroad – complete with locomotives and conductors. The novel, winner of the *National Book Award* in fiction, actually has something refreshing to say about America’s original sins and the way in which Black history is often stolen by white narrators.

Harold Holzer’s op-ed piece for the October 20 *Wall Street Journal*, “A Lincoln Lesson for Donald Trump,” addresses Trump’s threat not to accept the outcome of the presidential election of 2016 if he were not the victor. Holzer points out that Abraham Lincoln fully expected to lose his re-election in November 1864. But to his credit, he agreed to accept a loss, especially with his “blind memorandum” that he had his cabinet members sign without reading as to what the administration would do if the Democratic opponent, General George B. McClellan, prevailed. Yet, he insisted that the elections be held even though the country was in a civil war.

Works in Progress

Wayne C. Temple’s *Abraham Lincoln’s Springfield-Pittsfield Connection: “A Tale of Two Cities”* is in the final stages of publication.

Necrology

Betty J. Hickey, widow of the late, longtime Illinois State historian James T. Hickey, died on August 25. She managed the Abraham Lincoln Museum Gift Shop, now on the site of the Abraham Lincoln Home Historic Site, in Springfield, IL.

Frederick Bayard Hoffmann, a long-time member of the Board of Directors of the Abraham Lincoln Association, died on August 21. He was profiled with a heart rending letter from his fellow attorney Richard E. Hart in the fall For the People: A Newsletter of the Abraham Lincoln Association.

Actor Fritz Weaver who portrayed Abraham Lincoln in Saul Levitt’s one-man play about Lincoln in 1976, and appeared on stage three times with Stephen Lang in Harold Holzer’s “Lincoln’s Shakespeare” from 2013 through February 2016, died on November 26, 2016.

Author’s Note

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