

THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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www.thelincolnforum.org

Spring 2020

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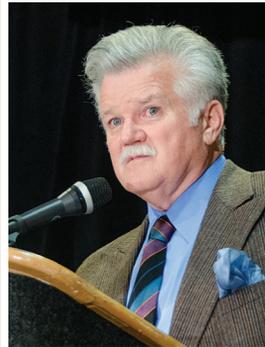
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STEPHEN LANG, LEADING HISTORIANS, TO APPEAR AT 25TH ANNUAL LINCOLN FORUM SYMPOSIUM

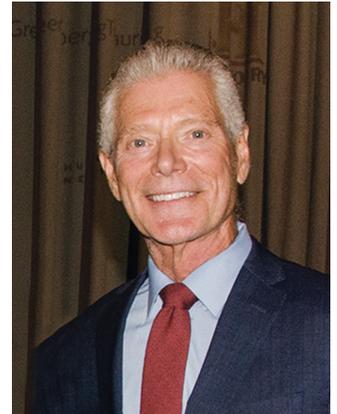
Silver Anniversary Event to Commence with First-Ever Weekend Prequel

As all of our members know from Chairman Harold Holzer's recent communication, the health and safety of the Forum family is the top priority of The Lincoln Forum's leadership team. At present, we are planning for a very special event in Gettysburg this November, but we are monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will make adjustments, if necessary. As Chairman Holzer stated in his message, we will send out a **nonbinding survey** to all Forum members in a few weeks to gauge your interest in attending the symposium. We will then be in contact with you as decisions are made.

Lincoln Forum XXV, November 16-18, 2020, promises to be a very special occasion. For our silver anniversary celebration, we plan a first: host a series of prequel events beginning the afternoon of Sunday, November 15, before the symposium formally begins. The prequel will open with a film screening and two panel discussions, one before the film featuring **William C. "Jack" Davis, Michelle Krowl, Jonathan White, Matthew Pinsker and Frank J. Williams**, and one after, featuring **Peter Carmichael, Harold Holzer, and Rabbi Meir Y. Soloveichik**.



William C. Davis



Stephen Lang

Rounding out the prequel will be a special evening performance featuring **Kathryn Harris** portraying Harriet Tubman, and, if possible, a Monday morning walking tour of Lincoln sites in downtown Gettysburg led by **Scott Schroeder** called "Lincoln's Visit to Gettysburg." Lincoln Forum members will be encouraged to enjoy the weekend in Gettysburg by coming to the prequel. Special rates and hotel bookings will be made available and announced later with official symposium invitations.

As this Bulletin goes to press, we recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing unexpected disruptions to everyday life. In making travel arrangements, attendees may wish to take precautions, such as purchasing trip insurance, to protect themselves against unexpected reasons for canceling flights.



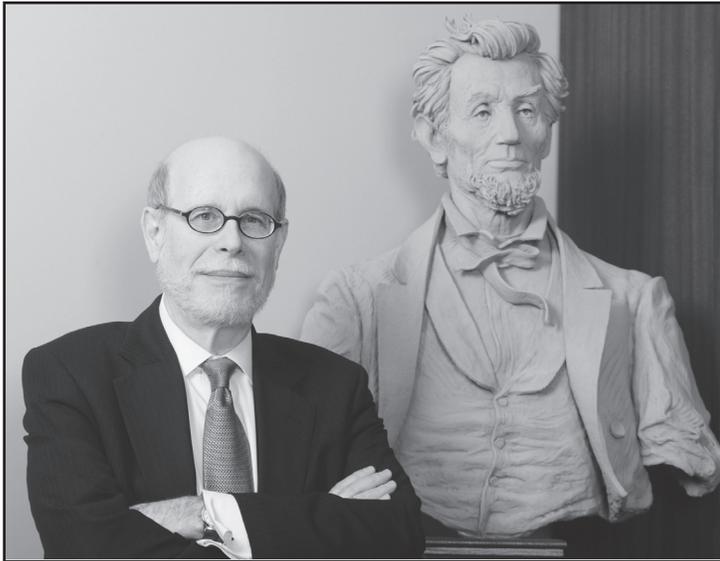
Kathryn Harris



Lucas Morel

The Forum itself will bring together one of the most stellar rosters of historians ever to gather in Gettysburg for the annual symposium. The beloved actor **Stephen Lang**, whose screen credits include *Gettysburg*, *Gods and Generals*, and *Tombstone*, not to mention the blockbuster sci-fi classic *Avatar*, will make his second appearance at the Forum to help attendees celebrate its silver anniversary milestone. In addition to first-time presenters H. W. Brands, David Reynolds, and Ted Widmer, the silver anniversary will also mark the return of historians Lucas Morel, Richard Striner, Craig Symonds, and John Marszalek.

The 25th Forum will officially begin on Monday, November 16, with the noted biographer **H. W. Brands** speaking on his newest book, *The Zealot and the Emancipator: John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, and the Struggle for American Freedom*, which will be published in the fall. **continued on page 12**



MESSAGE from the CHAIR

By the time you receive this issue of the *Bulletin*, we will hopefully be winning the battle to keep ourselves and our families safe and sound. As of this writing, unfortunately, there is no way to know for sure what the future holds.

But as always, we can find comfort from the words Abraham Lincoln wrote and spoke during the deadliest American crisis of all—the Civil War. Lincoln retained hope and optimism for our people and our future—and kept faith even when his own family was devastated by then-incurable illness.

Leaving Springfield for his inauguration in February 1861, President-elect Lincoln said: “Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain with you and be every where for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well.” Reiterating this message a few days later in a speech to the New York State legislature when he passed through Albany en route to Washington: “I still have confidence that the Almighty, Maker of the universe, will, through the instrumentality of this great and intelligent people, bring us through this as He has through other difficulties of our country.” Even the least religious among us must marvel at the combination of devotion and skill that Lincoln so adroitly and tirelessly applied to the task of saving the Union. We can only hope that his example will inspire the federal, state, and local officials on whom we now depend to help bring us through this latest challenge.

As I write, we are of course planning to host our 25th anniversary symposium as scheduled—featuring, I’m sure you will agree, one of the most stellar rosters of speakers and scholars ever to gather in Gettysburg for our annual event. Assuming the best, I think we all cherish the opportunity to gather together safely to renew our friendships and rekindle our interest in history.

In the meantime, I want all our members to know that during the COVID-19 epidemic, your Forum leadership and administrative staff have been working without interruption to make sure that our symposium will take place as flawlessly and professionally as ever. I want particularly to thank our vice-chairman Jonathan White for his help and advice—and for producing this *Bulletin*. Our Treasurer, Henry Ballone, continues to maintain our financial records, solicit memberships and donations, and keep our roster intact. Our annual student essay competition has been posted online, and our teacher and student scholarship applications are open. Administrators Elaine Henderson and Pat Dougal have been working with the Wyndham Hotel on the necessary arrangements for the November anniversary reunion—and making preparations (along with Wendy Allen) to create our first-ever prequel. As a result of these efforts, we will not be caught flat-footed when this pandemic eases and social distancing hopefully ends. This has been no small feat. Our sincere thanks go to all these friends and colleagues for their continued hard work.

Let us confidently hope... 📌

Harold Holzer, Chairman

FORUM PRESENTS 2019 CURRENT AWARD TO MICHAEL BESCHLOSS

Presidential scholar, author, and CNN commentator Michael Beschloss was the 2019 Forum keynote speaker, addressing the audience on November 18 on “President Lincoln and Other Wartime Presidents,” drawn from his recent bestseller *Presidents of War*. Before beginning his talk, Forum Chairman Harold Holzer presented Beschloss with the 24th annual Richard Nelson Current Award, named for the late “Dean of Lincoln Scholars.”

In presenting the award, Holzer called Beschloss “history’s fact-checker-in-chief” and hailed him “for providing evolving drafts of the American story that expose both common threads and fault lines, and doing so with uncommon wisdom, felicity, and conviction.”

Added Holzer: “Where he has focused the most intensely on Abraham Lincoln, slavery, and rebellion—in *Presidential Courage* and *Presidents of War*, Michael Beschloss has revealed our 16th president to be politically deft, morally balanced, militarily ingenious, and a master of self-restraint—one of the virtues he believes most important to sustained and inspiring leadership.” 📌



Michael Beschloss, Harold Holzer, & Jonathan W. White

“GREEN ALIKE”

By Walter Stahr

Most members of The Lincoln Forum know that Lincoln told General Irvin McDowell in the summer of 1861, not long before the first battle of Bull Run, “you are green, it is true, but they are green also; you are all green alike.” The quote appears in many books, including James M. McPherson’s *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988).

It appears that the original source of the quote is testimony that McDowell gave on December 26, 1861, before the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. McDowell’s testimony is a long, confused, confusing account of the preparation for the advance on Manassas. Although McDowell mentions a meeting with the cabinet, at which his plan was approved without dissent, he mainly talks about his difficulties with other generals, including Winfield Scott (overall commander of the Union armies), Montgomery Meigs (quartermaster general) and Joseph Mansfield (commander of the Department of Washington). Here is the passage that includes “green alike” in context:

“I had no opportunity to test my machinery; to move it around and see whether it would work smoothly or not. In fact, such was the feeling, that when I had one body of eight regiments of troops reviewed together, the general censured me for it, as if I was trying to make some show. I did not think so. There was not a man there who had ever maneuvered troops in large bodies. There was not one in the army; I did not believe there was one in the whole country; at least, I knew there was no one there who had ever handled 30,000 troops. I had seen them handled abroad in reviews and marches, but I had never handled that number, and no one here had. I wanted very much a little time; all of us wanted it. We did not have a bit of it. The answer was: ‘You are green, it is true; but they are green, also; you are all green alike.’” (*Joint Committee Report*, 1863, vol. 2, page 38)

Careful readers will note that Lincoln does not appear in this paragraph. Indeed, nowhere in his testimony does McDowell mention Lincoln, although one assumes that Lincoln presided over the cabinet meeting. If one had to guess who said “green alike” one would guess Scott. But that would be a guess; more likely *nobody* said this at the



General Irvin McDowell

time; McDowell was simply expressing in December his frustration with the way people had pushed him in July.

In my view, therefore, it is an error to say that Lincoln told McDowell, “you are all green alike.” This is not an isolated example; there are dozens of Lincoln quotes that are equally questionable and equally common. More than two decades ago, in an effort to address the problem, Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher published *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (1996), in which they graded Lincoln quotes, from reliable to questionable or spurious. The problem persists, however. If we really want to know Abraham Lincoln, in my view, we need to become more skeptical; to ask ourselves, when we see a great Lincoln quote, *is that what he really said?*

(Walter Stahr, author of biographies of Edwin M. Stanton and William Henry Seward, is at work on a biography of Salmon P. Chase, to be published in late 2021 or early 2022.) 📖

SPECIAL EVENT AT FORUM XXV: BRING YOUR LINCOLN COLLECTIBLE FOR FREE APPRAISAL

Move over, PBS. Call it an “antiques roadshow” geared to the Gettysburg gathering—for the exclusive enjoyment of attendees at the November Lincoln Forum symposium.

The Forum is pleased to announce that this year’s exhibit room will feature “Artifact Whisperers” Daniel E. Weinberg and Stuart L. Schneider, who will be on-site to inspect, appraise, and evaluate any Lincoln relic, image, artifact, book, document, or collectible that you bring to the annual gathering for their expert inspection.

Weinberg, the longtime proprietor of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago and one of the country’s leading experts on Lincoln and Civil War art and documents, is a longtime member of the Forum advisory board. Schneider, also an advisory board member, is the author of a number of books

on collectibles, including the lavishly illustrated and authoritative *Collecting Lincoln* (1997). Weinberg and Schneider teamed for a breakout session at last year’s Forum, and offered this year to take the event to a new level by hosting a site for daily evaluations and appraisals.

Details are still being formulated—but the event may include online and Facebook discussions with collectors nationwide, as well as the broadcast of in-person “Artifact Whisperer” appraisals (with the permission of each participant).

Do plan now to bring Lincoln with you to Gettysburg this November—any “Lincoln” in your collection, from treasure to memento to knickknack to tchotchke—that you would like to share with your fellow members, and invite our resident experts to examine and assess. 📖

THEY SAW LINCOLN: AN EYEWITNESS TO THE ASSASSINATION

Dr. William Child (1834-1918) wrote a remarkable set of letters to his wife, Carrie, during the Civil War. A graduate of Dartmouth Medical School (class of 1857), Child worked as a country doctor in Bath, N.H., before joining the Union Army in August 1862. As a surgeon with the 5th New Hampshire Infantry, he participated in some of the war's most important battles and campaigns, including Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. His letters touch on all aspects of his wartime experiences—even his dreams.¹

On the night of April 14, 1865, Dr. Child happened to be at Ford's Theatre to see *Our American Cousin*. He wrote three letters on April 14-15 describing his experiences in the national capital.



Ford's Theatre

Washington D.C., Apr. 14th 1865

My Dear Wife:

I arrived here at 8 P.M. yesterday. I am well – and had a pleasant journey.

The City celebrated the surrender of Gen. Lee last evening by illumination, fire-works – and one grand drunk.

There were some amusing incidents in my journey which I will relate at another time. I was a particular mark for all the Hackmen – sometimes much to the amusement of the crowd – and to my own discomfort.

To-day I have seen Genl. Grant. His pictures do not do him justice. You see the man only when he is in *earnest* conversation.

The prospect is that many of us will be at home within a few months. I do not care how soon.

I shall leave my valise in Washington to be sent on by Express.

Love to all. Kisses for you and our little ones. May God bless and protect us all. Will write again soon.

William

I have seen all the Bath people here.



Dr. William Child

Washington D.C., Apr. 14th 1865

My Dear Wife:

Wild dreams and real facts are but brothers. This night I have seen the murder of the President of the United States.

Early in the evening I went to Fords Theater. After a little time the President entered – was greeted with cheers. The play went on for about an hour. Just at the close of an interesting scene a sharp quick report of a pistol was heard and instantly a man jumped from the box in which was the President, to the stage – and rushing across the stage made his escape. This I saw and heard. I was in the theater – and sat opposite the president's box. The ~~murderer~~-assassin exclaimed as he leaped “Sic Semper Tyrannis” – “Thus always to tyrants.”

I never saw such a wild scene as followed! I have no words to describe it.

Sect. Seward was also wounded by a knife about the same minute. The city is now wild with excitement. The affair occurred only an hour since.

Are we living in the days of the French Revolution? Will peace ever come again to our dear land? Are we to rush on to wild ruin?

It seems all a dream – a wild dream. I cannot realize it though I know I saw it only an hour since.

W.C.

Apr. 15

Dear Wife:

The President is dead. I send you a paper giving a correct [account] of the whole affair. It is supposed that an actor by the name Booth was the assassin.

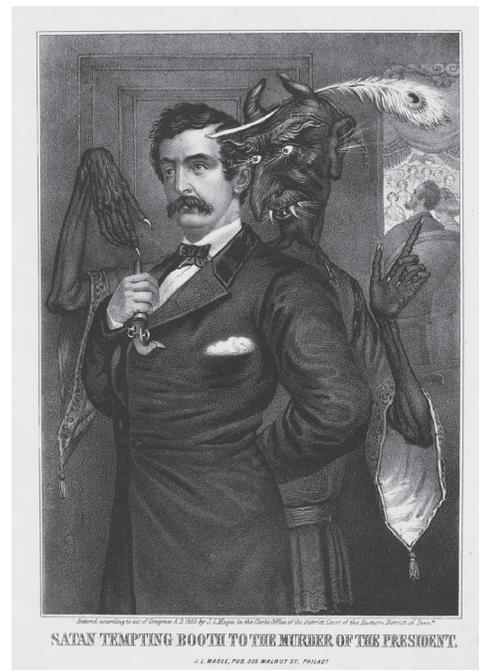
I could not sleep last night. The wild scene of last night will never be forgotten by me. I shall remember the fiend like expression of the assassin's face while I live.

I shall leave for the front to-day. I am well. Write to me at once.

Kiss my little ones.

W.

continued on page 5



Satan Tempting Booth . . .

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

To celebrate The Lincoln Forum's 25th anniversary, we plan to publish an expanded edition of the *Bulletin* in November, featuring longer articles, photographs, primary sources about Lincoln, and the memories of previous Forum symposia. To help cover the costs of this special edition, we will include advertisements related to Abraham Lincoln and

American history. Organizations and individuals interested in placing advertisements should contact me at jonathan.white@cnu.edu for more information. Forum members are also encouraged to email me short "memories," photographs, and letters to the editor, some of which will be included in the special issue. 📌

THEY SAW LINCOLN: AN EYEWITNESS TO THE ASSASSINATION

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[In old age, Dr. Child added more details to his account.]

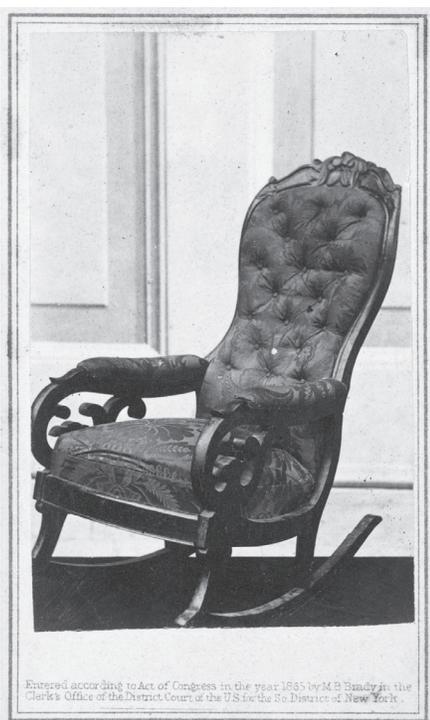
At the earnest request of my daughter, I dictate to her the following account of the most awful event I ever witnessed – the assassination of President Lincoln, thinking it may be of interest to my children and my children's children, when I shall be no more, as well as to the public generally.

At first it seems like a half-forgotten fantastic dream, but, as I allow my mind to dwell upon the past, the mists of fifty years gradually roll away and the tragical deeds of that most terrible night in all our nation's history, stand forth as plainly as if they had happened but yesterday. . . . [Here Dr. Child recounted how he happened to be in Washington in April 1865.]

Some further facts came to my mind later to which I was too agitated to notice or write about at the time.

As Booth crossed the stage he held in his clenched fist a dagger, pointed downward. He did not "brandish" it as has been sometimes stated but held it in a position ready to strike, should he be intercepted. I distinctly heard him say – "That's revenge for the South."

As soon as I could make my way through the confused, excited and almost frantic crowd, I went around to the President's box,



Chair Occupied by Lincoln

asked if I could be of any assistance. The reply was – "No, as his own physician and others are already with him." The curtains at the entrance of the box were partly drawn and I could see the bleeding, lifeless form of our beloved President, stretched out in an easy chair, while his wife sobbing and fainting knelt on the floor by his side. One glance was enough. God grant I may never see such a sight again.

[In 1919, Dr. Child's granddaughter, Dorothy Meader, recounted a conversation with her grandfather.]

"Did you really see the man shoot him," asked Dorothy.

"Probably no one saw the actual shooting," said Grandpa, "but I sat in a box directly opposite that of the President so I could see very plainly all that happened afterward. I heard the report of the pistol and saw Booth jump down from the box and cross the stage with his dagger in his hand. When half way across he paused for an instant and exclaimed 'There's revenge for the South.' The President has been shot.' Everything was in the utmost uproar and confusion. I made my way as soon as I could through the frightened, excited crowd around to the President's box and asked if I could be of any assistance. The reply was that his family physician was already with him. As I turned away I looked through the curtains and caught a glimpse of Mr. Lincoln lying back insensible in one of the easy chairs, pale as death and covered with blood while Mrs. Lincoln almost fainting knelt in agony beside him.

"I am getting to be an old man now and have forgotten many things but among all the terrible sights I saw while I was wearing that sword, that sight I shall never forget. Pres. Lincoln was certainly one of God's good men."

(Dr. Child's entire Civil War correspondence can be found in Letters from a Civil War Surgeon: Dr. William Child of the Fifth New Hampshire Volunteers (Solon, Maine: Polar Bear, 2001), edited by Merrill C. Sawyer, Betty Sawyer, and Timothy C. Sawyer. We thank the Sawyers for granting permission to reproduce Dr. Child's photograph and accounts of the Lincoln assassination.) 📌

¹ Lincoln Forum vice-chairman Jonathan W. White spoke about Dr. Child's dreams in his lecture at the Forum in 2017, and used them extensively in *Midnight in America: Darkness, Sleep, and Dreams during the Civil War* (2017).

The Lincoln Forum Bulletin welcomes contributions from members and historians—articles and photos alike.

Send to editor Jonathan W. White at jonathan.white@cnu.edu. The editor particularly thanks the contributors to the current issue.

LINCOLN FORUM



Lt Gen (Ret) Chris Burne



Fred Priebe, David Walker & Robert Brugler



Michelle A. Krowl & Scott A. Love



Debbie & Danielle Russell & Malcolm Garber



Jeanne & John Marszalek



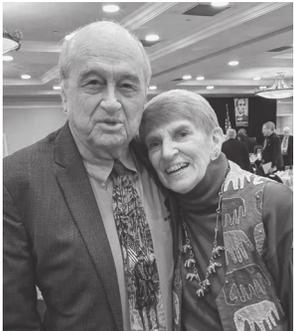
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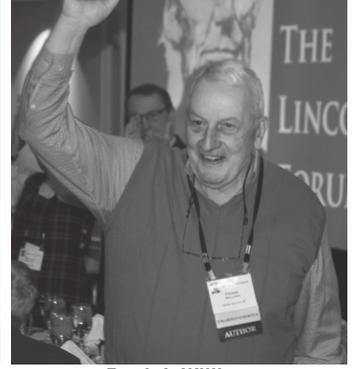
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Frank J. Williams, Harold Holzer & Lt Gen (Ret) Chris Burne



Mia & Hiroko Kawamitsu



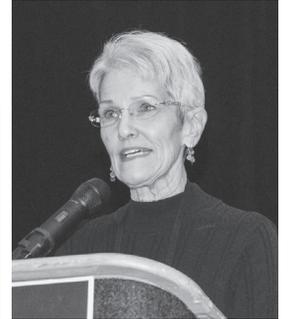
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VIRGINIA WILLIAMS 2019 TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS REFLECT ON LINCOLN FORUM XXIV

By Ruth Squillace

Although Abraham Lincoln was predominantly self-taught, our 16th president had a deep and abiding respect for education, noting in his first run for public office in 1832 that education is “the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in.” In keeping with Lincoln’s wishes, it is “altogether fitting and proper” that The Lincoln Forum has developed and continues to cultivate a highly-engaging teacher scholarship program—one whose recipients have been as dynamic as the Forum membership itself. This past year the Forum scholarship committee received applications from 18 states and honored the four distinguished 2019 recipients of the Virginia Williams Teacher Scholarship at its annual symposium this past November.



Lindsay Bowman, Jonathan W. White, Jamie Hickman Wilson, Patrick Danley, Virginia Williams, David Marshall, Ruth Squillace, & Harold Holzer

Acknowledging the warm welcome she and others received at the Forum, **Lindsay Bowman**, a middle school history teacher at Harrisburg Academy in Wormleysburg, Pennsylvania, remarked, “The opening reception for first-time attendees set the stage for what became a wonderful three days of engaging lectures and lively discussions that exceeded my expectations.” A coordinating director for the Centers for Experiential Learning and Innovation, Ms. Bowman oversees the Center for Global and Local Citizenship at the Academy. Her extensive scholarly experiences, as well as her efforts on the Board of the World Affairs Council of Harrisburg, and the Teacher Advisory Board of Gettysburg National Park, have provided her with a depth of knowledge and broad array of experiences in academia. “Being among Lincoln scholars from all walks of life was fun and added to the family-like atmosphere. The support of the teacher scholarship recipients knew no bounds, and we were treated like VIPs.” Commenting on connections to her own pedagogical practices, she said, “Jonathan W. White and Anna Holloway presented information in a fun, relatable way, including offering multiple perspectives from different primary sources, which I try to do in my own lessons.” Another moment that resonated with Ms. Bowman was when Matthew Pinsker, a professor from her alma mater, Dickinson College, participated in the panel discussion. As he is one who supports her classroom efforts and has hosted her students at his institution, she found the panel exchange to be “a lively gathering of great minds.”

Patrick Danley, a 2019-20 winner of the Fulbright Teachers for a Global Classroom Award, teaches history at Polson High School on Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana. The

Lincoln Forum, or as he otherwise described it as “Worldcon for Lincoln nerds and enthusiasts,” accelerated several important shifts in Danley’s thinking as an educator. In particular, Sidney Blumenthal’s lecture on Lincoln’s political views prior to 1860 helped him contextualize Lincoln’s perspectives on race and slavery. “Obviously, Lincoln is a complex and multi-faceted individual. I used to emphasize the conservative elements of his nature; from now on, I will emphasize the radical elements of his nature.” Additionally, the session concerning Confederate monuments helped him to “solidify a shift that was already beginning to happen in my mindset about the relationship between race, slavery, and the Civil War.”

David Marshall, an educator in the Miami-Dade School District, writes book reviews for the *Civil War Times* and *Civil War News*. As president of the Miami Civil War Round Table, he has given talks on Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Joshua Chamberlain, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the common soldier. As a teacher-scholar who has also participated in a variety of conferences, he reported, “The Lincoln Forum is either the best symposium, or at least tied for first as the best, bar none, that I have ever attended.” Most notably, he enjoyed the Confederate monument discussion and found it “thought provoking and relevant today, regardless of where one lives or one’s position of the issue which confronts many communities throughout the United States.” Marshall, who is currently developing an elective class on Lincoln and the Civil War, indicated that his attendance at the Forum would enable him to “pass the torch to future students and scholars of Abraham Lincoln.”

North Carolina Teaching Fellow **Jamie Hickman Wilson** is from Blowing Rock, where she teaches at Watauga High School. Another educator who found inspiration from the Confederate monument discussion, she noted, “It was a breath of fresh air to hear such knowledgeable people disagree respectfully, and I learned so much from all of their perspectives.” As a graduate of the University of North Carolina, she has followed the monuments debate, particularly as it pertains to the Silent Sam statue. She aims to facilitate student understanding of this ongoing controversial topic by providing the necessary historical context required to foster productive student understanding. Upon her return from Gettysburg, she was able to immediately incorporate much of what she learned from her experiences at the Forum in the teaching of her Civil War unit.

The Forum takes great pride in welcoming classroom teachers into the “Forum Family.” Through fellowship at meals and in the lobby, teacher-scholars often learn as much from conversations with other attendees as they do from the speakers, and they return to their classrooms ready to apply what they’ve learned to their curriculum. Many also become Forum members and donors for future scholarship awards.

This fall, the Forum will offer three teacher scholarships. We encourage all members to support our scholarship initiatives. Applications for the Virginia Williams Teacher Scholarship may be found on our website. The teacher scholarship selection committee is comprised of Lincoln Forum advisory board members Ken Childs, Esq., of Columbia, SC; Clark Zimmerman, Hamburg Area High School Social Studies Department Chair and teacher; and Ruth Squillace, Lincoln Forum Teacher Scholarship Initiative Coordinator and high school social studies teacher in Long Island, NY.

If you are interested in making a donation, please direct your checks to The Lincoln Forum c/o Henry F. Ballone, Treasurer, 23 Rochelle Pkwy., Saddle Brook, NJ 07663. 📧

PLATT FAMILY ESSAY CONTEST

Every year *The Lincoln Forum* recognizes excellent scholarship by undergraduates at American universities through the Platt Family Essay Contest. The first-place winner receives \$1500 and is invited to attend the Forum symposium. Second prize wins \$750, and third prize wins \$500.

The following two paragraphs are excerpted from last year's Platt Family Essay Contest winner, Hannah So. Hannah is a



Hannah So

sophomore studying Government at Georgetown University. She aspires to become a social studies teacher and hopes to share her love of history and politics with future students. Outside the classroom, she works at her university library and is involved with her school's Hong Kong Students Association and foreign language tutoring program. Her essay is entitled, "Abraham Lincoln: Great Emancipator, Man of the People, and America's Greatest President."

From the shimmering Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C, to the majestic sculpture of his face in the Black Hills of South Dakota, to the five-dollar bills in our wallets, it is undeniable that President Abraham Lincoln has been immortalized in American history. A rail-splitter turned statesman, a moderate turned emancipator, Lincoln reflects how freedom and opportunity have the power to change not only individuals, but an entire nation. Devoted to the Union, Lincoln made the pivotal decision to enter a sectional conflict that became

known as the Civil War, and through his victory brought about a reunified nation and newfound freedom for millions of African Americans. Lincoln's exceptional decision-making ability and personal character have allowed him to earn, and respectively retain, his status as America's greatest president. This position is well-deserved, as his presidency reflects his deep commitment to the founding American values of liberty and equality. Through adherence to these values, Lincoln left his legacy of elevating the advance of human rights to the forefront of American politics. . . .

Although many have served in the White House since Abraham Lincoln, both historians and the public continue to rank him as America's greatest president. Lincoln's brilliant and sorely-needed decisiveness, demonstrated through his decisions to engage in war and issue the Emancipation Proclamation, prove him to be a confident, competent leader. Along with his decisiveness, Lincoln's character of humility, compassion, and empathy allowed him to win the hearts and minds of millions of Americans. While criticism of Lincoln ranges from questioning his commitment to abolition to proclaiming him as a tyrannical usurper of state's rights, his record of both praising America's foundation of liberty and equality and moving his country in a direction to better fulfill these values proves him to be a true patriot, committed to upholding the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. This devotion to liberty and equality propelled Lincoln to become the forefather of a newfound regard for the plight of the oppressed. Through inspiring the passage of the Civil War Amendments, the reforms of progressive presidents, and even the Civil Rights Movement, Lincoln's unique legacy has created a more inclusive, equal country that more closely embodies its own founding values and makes him most deserving of his status as America's greatest president. 📌

WHITE VOTED HIGHEST-RATED SPEAKER AT FORUM XXIV

Attendees at the 2019 Lincoln Forum ranked our own vice-chairman, Jonathan W. White of Christopher Newport University, first among the speakers at the 24th annual symposium. White's lecture, "There's Something in It: Lincoln and the *Monitor*," was based on his book, *Our Little Monitor: The Greatest Invention of the Civil War* (2018), which he co-authored with Anna Gibson Holloway. White scored a 9.48 out of 10.

Following him closely were Richard Nelson Current Prize-winner Michael Beschloss (9.25), Lincoln Forum Book Prize-winner Sidney Blumenthal (9.14), White's co-author Anna Gibson Holloway, who led the audience in a rousing sing-a-long of a ballad about the Battle of Hampton Roads (9.13), and the duo of Gary W. Gallagher and Joan Waugh (9.11).

The 2019 symposium drew a record crowd of 349 attendees. Once again, attendees ranked the entire Forum highly (9.34), giving the hotel and meals very high marks (9.38 and 9.29, respectively). "As a C-SPAN viewer who watches the Lincoln Forum yearly, being here in person was much better than I expected," wrote one first-time attendee on the post-symposium survey. Another said the Forum is "one of the most fun and educational events I have ever attended. . . . I'm hooked." A third



Jonathan W. White

wrote, "Always find the speakers to be experts; very respectful to each other and the audience. I appreciate the collegial atmosphere."

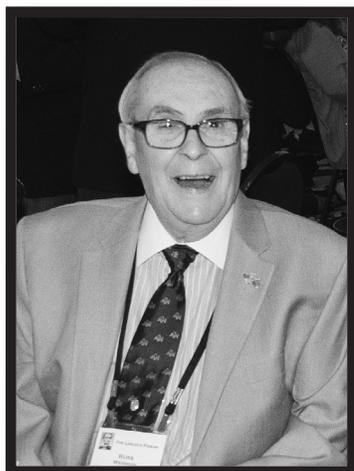
The breakout sessions in 2019 were a big hit. Lincoln Forum advisory board member and proprietor of the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop, Dan Weinberg, received all "tens," as did the Naval history duo of Craig Symonds and Anna Gibson Holloway. The other breakout sessions received all "nines" and "tens." One attendee wrote of the Lincoln and the Constitution session, "I'd give them a 20 if I could."

The Forum raised an astounding \$3,415 from the book sale, silent auction, and donations. These funds will be put toward teacher and student scholarships.

Suggestions from Forum attendees included having "more Lincoln-focused speakers" and more topics related to African American history during the Civil War, not allowing questioners to give speeches during the Q&A, and adding oatmeal to breakfast. 📌

FORUM MOURNS LOSS OF FORMER TREASURER RUSS WEIDMAN

Russell Weidman, a beloved, longtime life member who served as a trusted and innovative Lincoln Forum Treasurer, has left us at age 86. He passed away suddenly at his Arlington, Virginia, home on March 16.



Russ Weidman

For years, Russ, his family, and his closest friends and admirers graced the “Weidman” front table at the Forum’s annual symposium—first at the Holiday Inn Gettysburg and more recently at the Wyndham. His beloved late wife Budge, a respected volunteer researcher at the National Archives, presented her work during a panel discussion at Lincoln Forum III in 1998, and the Weidmans together lectured on “New Discoveries at the Archives” at Lincoln Forum VIII in 2003. After 53 years of marriage, Budge died in 2010—

but Russ continued in his leadership role in the organization, first as Treasurer, and most recently as a member of the Board of Advisors.

“This is an almost unbearable loss for the Forum,” commented Chairman Harold Holzer. “Though Russ enjoyed a long, productive, and meaningful life, he remained a truly vital presence in our lives and a valued advisor to our leadership—right to the end. We just assumed—and hoped—that he would be with us forever. He will be mourned and missed by all of us. Edith and I feel an especially deep sense of loss, for Russ was for us a close friend and mentor. We will miss his sly wit, his unbridled honesty, and his great spirit—at the Forum, on his once-frequent visits to New York, and at unforgettable dinners at the Army & Navy Club in Washington.

“Russ never boasted—and hardly even discussed—his many accomplishments,” Holzer continued, “but he was much more than a Forum regular. He was an American success story and an

American hero, too. A brilliant innovator and successful businessman, he was also a veteran Vietnam War fighter pilot, a man of few words but countless triumphs as well as a sophisticated judge of character with a superb taste, an unwavering eye for sham, and a terrific sense of humor. All of us feel blessed to have known and learned from Russ. We will probably never see his like again.”

Born in Wilkensburg, Pennsylvania, in 1933, Russ Weidman spent a year attending the University of Pittsburgh before entering the U.S. Naval Academy (he remained a passionately loyal fan of Navy football). Commissioned an ensign in the U.S. Navy in 1956 (the same year he married his adored wife Budge), he earned his pilot wings and went on to serve with distinction in the Vietnam War. Later, he became Aeronautical Engineering Duty Officer, earned a 1965 MA degree in Nuclear Physics from the Naval Postgraduate School, and spent the remainder of his military career developing and testing missiles, focusing primarily on the Tomahawk and Cruise missile programs.

After retiring from the military in 1978, Russ served as a senior scientist for Science Applications International Corporation, retiring as a vice president in 1996.

Russ pursued countless lifelong hobbies, manifesting a decades-long love of history with a particular interest in Civil War and Lincoln studies. He read widely, built beautiful wooden model warships that he shared with friends and family, and attended symposia all over the country, becoming a familiar presence at the annual Civil War Education Association meetings in Sarasota, Florida, and of course, at The Lincoln Forum. At the Forum, his service as Treasurer was highlighted by the creation of new, computerized systems for tracking revenue, enrolling members, and conducting business with vendors like the Wyndham. Also a discriminating wine connoisseur, Russ became well-known for generously sharing top-vintage port with his close friends. In his private life, he was a devoted member of the Messiah United Methodist Church in Springfield, Virginia.

The entire Forum family extends its deepest sympathies and warmest wishes to the entire Weidman family—particularly to daughter Jane Waligorski and her husband, Marty, who have attended so many symposia with their father over the years. 📌

WENDY ALLEN AWARD TO ‘LOOKING FOR LINCOLN’

The Wendy Allen Award for institutional excellence went to the Illinois-based coalition dedicated to enhancing the communities and landscapes of central Illinois through recognition and support of their significant natural, cultural, and historical legacies.

The 2019 presentation was made by Forum Vice-Chairman Jonathan W. White, who said: “Looking for Lincoln’s work with local historic sites brings Abraham Lincoln to life for visitors of all ages. The coalition is a wonderful model of how historical organizations can work together to preserve the legacy of our nation’s greatest president. We honor them tonight for their work engaging the public with the story of Lincoln’s three decades in Illinois.”

The award was accepted by Sarah Watson, executive director of Looking for

Lincoln and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. “We are honored to receive this award for our efforts in preserving and telling the story of Abraham Lincoln in Illinois to visitors and



Harold Holzer, Sarah Watson, Wendy Allen, & Jonathan W. White

residents alike,” she said at the November 17 presentation ceremony. “We would like to thank The Lincoln Forum for its support of our efforts.”

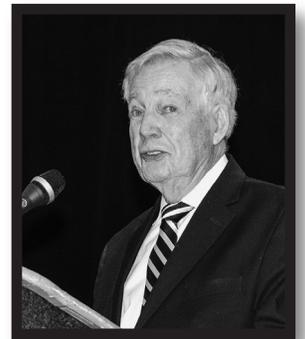
Lincoln Forum Chairman Harold Holzer added: “Looking for Lincoln has taken hallowed ground and made it accessible to more and more visitors, as one who has often enjoyed the thrill of walking alongside Lincoln’s Illinois pathways, I cannot overemphasize the importance of ‘place’ to history, and the importance of Looking for Lincoln in leading the way to these places for all Americans.” 📌

IN MEMORIAM: BUD ROBERTSON

The Lincoln Forum lost a dear friend on November 2, 2019, when James I. “Bud” Robertson passed away at the age of 89, after a long illness. Robertson taught at Virginia Tech for 44 years, beginning in 1967. During that time, he taught more than 25,000 students, captivating them with his lectures. He was the author or editor of more than 40 books, and, at the request of President John F. Kennedy, he served as executive director of the United States Civil War Centennial Commission. “For fully six decades Bud Robertson was a dominant figure in his field, and a great encouragement to all who

would study our turbulent past during the middle of the 19th century,” said William C. “Jack” Davis to the *Virginia Tech News*. “Moreover, amid a conversation that can still become bitter and confrontational, his was a voice for reason, patience, and understanding. . . . His voice is now sorely missed — and irreplaceable.”

Robertson spoke at the Forum in 2012 on “The Centennial vs. the Sesquicentennial: The March of Civil War Memory.” In the Forum’s 25-year history, he is one of only three or four speakers to receive a standing ovation. 📌



James I. (Bud) Robertson

FORUM MEMBERS: PLEASE RENEW NOW

If you have not renewed your Lincoln Forum Membership for 2019-20, please do so soon. Members at all levels receive access to the annual symposium, the twice-yearly *Bulletin*, and other benefits. We need your annual support and urge you to make sure your membership is up-to-date.

BLUMENTHAL WINS INAUGURAL BOOK PRIZE

The inaugural Lincoln Forum book prize—a juried award that brings a \$1,000 check and a certificate—was won by Sidney Blumenthal for the third volume in his acclaimed multi-volume Lincoln biography: *All the Powers of Earth: 1856-1860* (Simon & Schuster). Following the presentation, Blumenthal addressed the Forum on “A House Divided’: How Lincoln Emerged Out of the Whirlwind to Become President.”

Blumenthal has enjoyed a diverse career as a political advisor, journalist, and historian, most recently as the author of the projected 5-volume biography series *The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Over the years, he has also worked as a magazine writer, an editor, White House aide to President Bill Clinton, and senior advisor to Hillary Clinton. His other books include *The Permanent Campaign* (1980) and *The Clinton Wars* (2003).

“The Forum is absolutely delighted to recognize Sidney Blumenthal’s extraordinary achievement in crafting a masterful



Sidney Blumenthal

series of new books about the life and times of Lincoln—even in mid-series,” commented Chairman Harold Holzer. “Although he still has two volumes to go to complete *The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln*, his first three entries shed such light on his subject and the environment in which he rose that the jury clearly felt the author deserved our inaugural prize. Sidney brings the insight of a political veteran and the craftsmanship of an artist to his work—and provides an eloquent and affirmative response to the eternal question: is there anything new to say about Lincoln?”

The newly established prize honors books published from February to February and considers biographies, monographs, works of synthesis and interpretation, edited collections of original papers, and documentary editing projects published in the English language.

Judges for the Forum’s first book prize were Thomas A. Horrocks (chairman of the committee), Michelle Krowl, and Daniel R. Weinberg. Horrocks made the official presentation to Blumenthal in Gettysburg on November 17. 📌

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STEPHEN LANG, LEADING HISTORIANS, TO APPEAR AT 25TH ANNUAL LINCOLN FORUM SYMPOSIUM

continued from page 1 Brands, a two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, is the Jack S. Blanton Sr. Chair in History at the University of Texas at Austin and is the author or editor of more than thirty books.

On the first full day of the Forum, Tuesday, November 17, as the schedule now stands, **Lucas Morel** will speak about his new



Ted Widmer

book, *Lincoln and the American Founding*, which will be published by Southern Illinois University Press this summer. Morel, a professor of politics at Washington and Lee University, is the author or editor of four previous books, including *Lincoln and Liberty: Wisdom for the Ages* (2015). Next, the writer **Ted Widmer** will speak on his new book, *Lincoln on the Verge: Thirteen Days to Washington* (April 2020). Widmer is a professor in the Macaulay Honors College at the City

University of New York. From 1997 to 2001, he worked in the White House as a special assistant to President Bill Clinton. He has also served as director of the C.V. Starr Center at Washington College, director of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, and director of the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress. Rounding out the morning, **Richard Striner**, professor of history at Washington College, will return to the Forum to speak on his new book, *Summoned to Glory: The Audacious Life of Abraham Lincoln*, which will be published in June. Striner is the author of several books on Lincoln, including *Father Abraham: Lincoln's Relentless Struggle to End Slavery* (2006).



Richard Striner



David Reynolds

In the afternoon, Lincoln Forum Chairman **Harold Holzer** will speak on his latest book, *The Presidents vs. the Press: The Endless Battle between the White House and the Media—from the Founding Fathers to Fake News*, which will be published by Dutton in September. Holzer will then participate in a panel discussion with Chairman Emeritus **Frank Williams**, **Jack Davis**, **John Marszalek**, and **Edna Greene Medford**, reflecting on “Union and

Freedom: The Meaning of the Civil War in 2020.” **David S. Reynolds**, Distinguished Professor of English and American Studies at the City University of New York, will make his Forum debut to discuss his 16th book, *Abe: Abraham Lincoln in His Times*, which will be published in September. Reynolds previously published an acclaimed collection of Lincoln’s speeches and writings, and has published books about *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and Walt Whitman.



Edward Achorn

Among the speakers on Wednesday, November 18, will be **Edward Achorn**, a Pulitzer Prize finalist for distinguished commentary for his work as an editor at the *Providence Journal*, who will speak on his new book, *Every Drop of Blood: The Momentous Second Inauguration of Abraham Lincoln*. Lincoln Forum Executive Committee members **Craig L. Symonds** of the U.S. Naval War College and **John F. Marszalek** of Mississippi State University will conduct another of their popular conversations, this one on the decisive 1863 Vicksburg Campaign. **Erica Gienapp**, co-editor of the magisterial new edition of *The Civil War Diary of Gideon Welles*, will then discuss how she took up and completed the project following the untimely death of her husband, Lincoln and Civil War historian William Gienapp (1944-2003).

Award-winning actor **Stephen Lang** will appear at the silver anniversary Forum at the concluding session to discuss his longtime interest in Lincoln and the Civil War, and reprise his performance piece about Battle of Gettysburg Medal of Honor recipient Jacob Purman.

Breakout sessions on November 18 promise to be a particular treat. **Lucas Morel** and **Jonathan White** will discuss Abraham Lincoln’s political thought. **Stuart Schneider** and **Dan Weinberg** will host an Antiques Roadshow-like event (see page 3). **Michelle Krowl** and **Ruth Squillace** will lead a session with this year’s teacher scholarship winners on how Lincoln is being taught in American schools. Other breakout sessions may be added. And, as always, we will offer the enduringly popular “Cooking with the Chief and the Chef” featuring Frank Williams and Wyndham Chef **Andrew Ernst**.

Attendees can also expect to hear musical performances along with presentations by premier Lincoln enactor George Buss. Once again, the Forum will be presenting its three coveted annual awards: the Richard Nelson Current Lifetime Achievement Award, the Wendy Allen Award for organizational excellence, and the Lincoln Forum Book Prize. 

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