



# THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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## HISTORIAN MARK NEELY NAMED WINNER OF FORUM'S RICHARD NELSON CURRENT AWARD OF ACHIEVEMENT

A true “historian’s historian,” Mark E. Neely, Jr.—who has occupied the very top rank of Lincoln scholarship for almost 40 years—will be named this year as the winner of the Forum’s 15<sup>th</sup> annual Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement, the organization’s highest professional tribute.

“We are honored to be honoring a distinguished scholar who has become one of the most influential of all the teachers and writers of our generation,” commented Frank J. Williams, chairman of the Forum. “Mark Neely has shed important light on such crucial historical issues as civil liberties, the Civil War and the Constitution, and the power of the presidency North, as well as South. His work has completely changed the way we think of wartime politics, human rights, and public memory. As a result, it is fair to say that Lincoln and Civil War history have undergone a complete rethinking thanks to Mark Neely’s work, and that because of his contributions we know far more about this period now than we ever have before.”

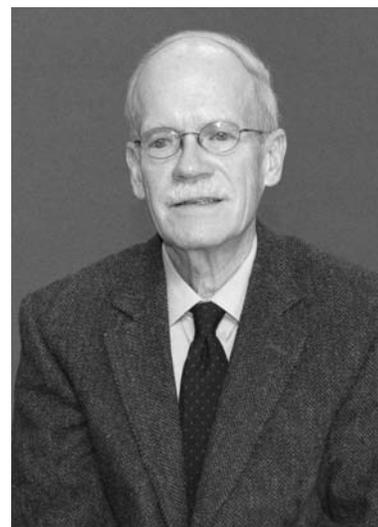
“It is altogether fitting and proper that we present him our 15<sup>th</sup> annual Richard Current award,” Judge Williams concluded. “In fact, the only reason he did not earn the honor sooner is that he is so much in demand that he has been nearly impossible to schedule. We are delighted that this great historian and longtime member of our Board of Advisors is returning to Gettysburg so we can pay to him the tribute he so much deserves.”

Neely, who won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1992 (as well as the Bell I. Wiley Prize) for his landmark book, *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties*, served for two decades from 1972 to 1992 as Director of the Lincoln National Life Foundation in Fort Wayne, Indiana—later renamed over the years as The Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum and, ultimately, The Lincoln Museum. From 1992 through 1996, he was the John Francis Bannon Professor of History and American Studies at St. Louis University, and since 1996 he has served as McCabe Greer Professor of Civil War History at the Pennsylvania State University.

Though best known for his books, Neely is also famous for writing two of the most influential scholarly journal articles of the late-20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. “The Lincoln Theme Since Randall’s Call: The Promises and Perils of Professionalism” (in the debut issue of the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* in 1979) sparkingly updated a watershed essay by revered historian James G. Randall, with many Lincoln scholars taking the Neely essay as a clarion call for further exploration of the field. And “Was the Civil War a Total War” for *Civil War History* (December 2004) reminded a generation scarred by all-encompassing global conflicts that the 1861-1865 rebellion ranked as a modern, but not a total, war.

Neely’s other books include the much-loved and indispensable reference work *The Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia* (1981); *The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America* (1993); *Southern Rights: Political Prisoners and the Myth of Southern Constitutionalism* (1999, which the late William E. Gienapp of Harvard called “one of the most original and important books on the Confederacy ever published”); *The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North* (2002); *The Boundaries of American Political Culture in the Civil War Era* (2009); and *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (2007). Dr. Neely’s much-anticipated next work is a major reanalysis of nationalism during the Civil War.

In addition to contributing monographs and pamphlets, as well as introductions and chapters to a number of other books—most recently “Colonization and the Myth that Lincoln Prepared the People for Emancipation” for *Lincoln’s Proclamation: Emancipation Reconsidered* (2009)—Neely has also collaborated with other scholars on a number of co-authored works, including *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (1984), *Changing*



Mark E. Neely, Jr. (Photo: Henry F. Ballone)

continued on page 12

## LET THE SESQUICENTENNIAL BEGIN



### MESSAGE from the CHAIRMAN

Abraham Lincoln's pre-Civil War relationship with the American people was much more complex than is often acknowledged. Many denied his claims upon the presidency even after his election victory on November 6, 1860. Between that election and the acts he took as commander-in-chief following the bombardment of Ft. Sumter on April 12, 1861, many citizens, including some of his cabinet members, wanted operational control of the presidency to be removed from his hands. Secretary of State William H. Seward wanted to be given the role of "prime minister."

While Lincoln was dismayed by the performance of the Union Army, even after victories began to come in 1862, much of the story of our Civil War seems to me that of the President often seeking more from his nation's warriors than they could deliver. The failure of the army, and its generals to match the President's aspirations is among the central themes we will explore at this year's Forum and at our future conclaves.

We should see 1860-65 as a period when men and women, not much different from ourselves, strove to grapple with stresses and responsibilities which stretched their powers to the limit. Lincoln was one of the few actors who proved worthy of the role in which destiny cast him. Those who worked for the President, indeed the American people at war, served as a supporting cast, seeking honorably, but sometimes inadequately, to play their own parts in the wake of a titan.

No other statesman could have conducted United States policy towards victory with such consummate skill, nor achieved such personal impact upon the American people.

In addition to the expert talks about politics and the military, speakers at this year's symposium will also demonstrate how fascinating it is to study public mood swings through wartime America from the papers and observations of ordinary citizens of the period. These often give a very different picture from that of historians, with their privileged knowledge of how the story began and ended.

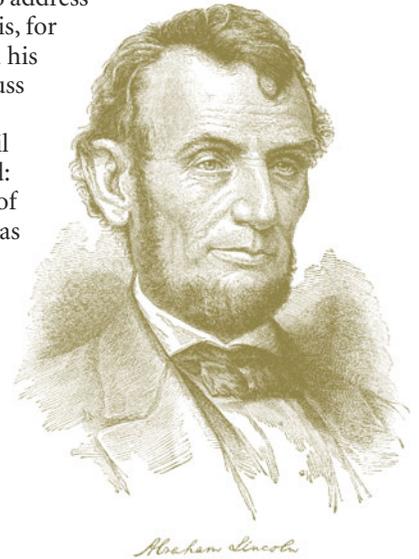
This Forum does not seek to retell the full story of Abraham Lincoln at war, as that will come at later Forums, but rather will present a portrait of his leadership from the day of his candidacy through the first year of the war. It is set in the context of America's national experience. As a result, it is necessary to address

some themes and episodes which are familiar, though specific aspects deserve reconsideration. There is, for instance, secession - its legality and what brought it about. Lincoln's role as commander-in-chief and his growth in that position was crucial to the war effort. Some of the presentations and panels will discuss Abraham Lincoln's misjudgments. But these will pale in comparison to his achievements.

It is sometimes said that we are still today, in the twenty-first century, obsessed with the Civil War - the greatest cataclysmic event ever to confront our republic. The reason can easily be determined: as of the Civil War, there is no end. The war is now considered to be as central an event in the history of the United States as the Revolutionary War - and Abraham Lincoln was at the epicenter of it all. He was the chief magistrate extraordinary.

Over the next five years our symposia will be lively, challenging, and stimulating. We promise the best scholarship and the most embracing fellowship. The Civil War may still provoke and even divide us, but our Lincoln Forum bridges divides and brings us together as a family. It is a pleasure to welcome you to Lincoln Forum XV. 📖

Frank J. Williams  
Chairman



### MORE ON THE LINCOLN FORUM COOKBOOK

Virginia Williams and Betty Anselmo continue to edit a Forum cookbook featuring members' favorite recipes. A request for recipes was sent with membership renewal forms. Please send your favorite *piece de resistance* to Virginia Williams, 300 Switch Road, Hope Valley, RI, 02832 with complete instructions and ingredients as well as your contact information. There is no limit to the number that may be submitted.

# BUDGE WEIDMAN DIES— LONGTIME, IRREPLACEABLE FRIEND OF THE FORUM

By Linda Wheeler

The woman who was always on the move at the Lincoln Forum—offering hugs and big smiles, introducing herself to newcomers, creating a “People’s Award” to honor the hard working but unnoticed volunteer—was Budge Weidman. Her arms extended as wide as the circle around her and beyond, taking care of all of us. We lost that swirl of energy and love to cancer in July.

She and her husband Russ attended their first Forum many years ago. In 2006, she was elected to the Board of Advisors and three years ago, he became the organization’s treasurer. For all the Forums, they played host and hostess to their friends and the various speakers by offering cocktails in their hotel room at the close of the day’s session.

We also lost a consummate researcher and historian who led the all-volunteer Civil War Conservation Corps at the National Archives from the time it was created in 1994, until she retired in December, 2009. Budge scheduled, supervised and befriended up to 55 other volunteers who engaged in the preservation of some of the priceless Civil War records by preparing them for digitization.

First, they worked on a portion of the Compiled Military Service Records, then the field records of the Freedmen’s Bureau and finally the Civil War Pension Files. Her number one assistant was Russ. They each logged nearly 25,000 hours on the job and last year the Archives announced the creation of the Weidman Outstanding Volunteer Service Award and they were the first recipients.

Budge often made an emotional connection with some long-dead soldier who had been denied his rightful pension or a widow turned down for the few dollars the government offered following the war. She would be indignant about their mistreatment.

True to her generous nature, Budge happily shared information from the records with all who asked, helping historians and researchers with their work. She would also help friends get special access to other Archive records. Forum founding Vice-Chairman Harold Holzer was among them.

“For *Lincoln President-Elect*, she pulled strings and got me a big room to sit in with Edith to examine the actual once-wax-sealed letters reporting and transmitting the electoral votes of the 1860 presidential election,” he said. “I don’t think anyone had opened them since. Here was history brought alive—the way Budge loved to make it happen.”

Forum Advisor and speaker, John Marszalek was another. He recalled how Budge and Russ came to Mississippi State University in Starkville to give a lecture at the Mitchell library about their work with the records of the Freeman’s Bureau.

“A week or so before they came, she called all excited, but refusing to tell us what it was she said she would be bringing to our library,” John said. “Well, it turned out to be a copy of a newspaper that someone applying for a black soldier pension had included in the application. It was a 19<sup>th</sup> century Starkville newspaper, and no one here had ever known that this particular paper had ever existed. Budge’s trip here was exciting for more than her presentation!”

Craig Symonds, another Board of Advisor member and frequent speaker, recalled how Budge did more than just help him with his research. “The great thing about Budge, is how excited she got about the personal stories that make up American history,” he said. “She not

only helped me find things I was looking for, she brought my attention to things I didn’t even know about. And she would make copies of little pieces of historical lives that had touched her and share them with me. She did this for a lot of people: scholars, yes, but anyone who evinced a love of history.”

Founding Chairman Frank William associated the loss of Budge with something Lincoln said about the sorrow he felt with a seemingly endless number of casualties and the hurt and pain caused by the war.

“He said, ‘Nothing ever reaches the tired spot,’ meaning the empty spot where we all carry our loss and sorrow,” Frank said. “Her loss has affected so many people.”

I interviewed Budge for a magazine story a couple of years ago and her response to a question about why she was so willing to put in such long hours on a volunteer job, seems appropriate here.

She said, “The big reason I love to work with the records is I love making them available. We are looking at files that no one has ever seen before and knowing there are letters in there from a soldier who was killed in the Civil War. In addition, I get two rewards. First I get to work with my husband Russ and I get to work with our volunteers who all work very, very hard.”

Budge’s enthusiasm for life and for Civil War history will remain with many of us forever.

*(Veteran Forum member Linda Wheeler has covered the Civil War for both The Washington Post and Civil War Times Magazine.)* 📖



The late, beloved Budge Weidman (right) with the author of this article, veteran journalist and longtime friend Linda Wheeler. (Photo: Henry Ballone.)

# REPAIRING THE FABRIC OF HISTORY: MORE ON THE ELIZABETH KECKLY PROJECT

By Laurie Verge

In the last issue of this publication, a brief mention was made of the project to mark the grave of Elizabeth Keckly, a remarkable woman who was born a slave in 1818, and used her exceptional skills as a seamstress to buy her freedom and that of her son in 1855. Mrs. Keckly's story is an inspirational one and deserves historical recognition.

Achieving freedom, she developed a thriving business in St. Louis as a modiste, designing and sewing her own creations for ladies of high society in that city. In 1860, she moved to Baltimore, where she opened a school to teach her skills to young black women. When the Civil War began, her son George entered the Union army by enlisting as a white man. He was soon killed, however, in August of 1861. With her school failing, Mrs. Keckly moved on to Washington City and established herself once again as a modiste to the wealthy and privileged – including such clients as Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas, Mrs. Robert E. Lee, and Mrs. Jefferson Davis. At a time when few women, much less a former slave, entered the business field, Elizabeth Keckly became a successful entrepreneur, employing as many as twenty young women in her dress shop.

On Inauguration Day in 1861, she was introduced to the new First Lady, Mary Todd Lincoln. Her skills and warm personality endeared her to Mrs. Lincoln, and she soon became a close friend and confidante. The President addressed her as Madame Keckly, and she arranged a meeting between Mr. Lincoln and Sojourner Truth. She helped care for Willie Lincoln in his final illness. Having also lost her son, Elizabeth was able to help Mary deal with her grief.

Elizabeth Keckly served the city's black community as well. In 1862, she founded and served as the first president of the Contraband Relief Association to assist the newly freed slaves who arrived in Washington, donating from her own funds and working with Frederick Douglass, who spoke on behalf of the organization.

On the fateful night of April 14, 1865, as her husband lay dying in the Petersen boarding house, Mary Lincoln called for Elizabeth Keckly. Unfortunately, messengers could not locate her residence, and it was not until the next morning that Elizabeth reached the First Lady. She provided strength for Mary Lincoln through those harsh days and for several years thereafter. When financial problems struck both of the women, Mrs. Keckly decided to write a book about her days in the White House in hopes of raising funds for both of them. Unfortunately, that book would end the friendship. *Behind The Scenes; Or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*, however, has given historians intimate looks into the Lincoln White House.

Financial difficulties continued to plague the lady. Her business failing, she accepted a faculty position at Wilberforce University in Ohio in 1892. Ill health followed, and she returned to Washington as a resident of the Home for Destitute Women and Children, a successor to the relief organization that she had founded earlier. On May 26, 1907, Elizabeth Keckly died quietly of a stroke.

And now comes the story of correcting a historical mistake: Upon her death, Elizabeth Keckly was laid to rest in Washington's Columbian Harmony Cemetery and a simple stone marked her grave. In the late-1950s, however, the cemetery was bankrupt and was sold to developers. Over 37,000 African American graves, including several Medal of Honor winners from the Civil War, were removed. Unfortunately, the move did not include gravestones. Since the 1960s, it was believed that Mrs. Keckly's remains were in a mass grave.

In 2009, Surratt House Museum presented a program on Elizabeth Keckly. Shortly thereafter, a member of the museum's volunteer affiliate, The Surratt Society, contacted the museum's director, Mrs. Laurie Verge. Richard Smyth of Milford,



Elizabeth Keckly—known as “Keckley” when this woodcut appeared as the frontispiece of her biography in 1866.

(Photo: Harold Holzer)



Pennsylvania, had located the records for Elizabeth Keckly in her new resting place, National Harmony Memorial Park Cemetery in Landover, Maryland, and was seeking help in marking the grave for future historians. National Harmony officials were willing to fund one-half of the \$6,000 project if other groups would assist. Laurie approached her volunteers, and they agreed to serve as a sponsor. She then sought the help of her research librarian at Surratt House, Mrs. Sandra Walia, and that of Dr. Edna Greene Medford of Howard University and The Lincoln Forum advisory board. Numerous other groups were contacted, but only The Lincoln Forum and Black Women United for Action of Fairfax, Virginia, agreed to serve as sponsors.

An appeal then went out through the Surratt Society's website and newsletter and through Abraham Lincoln Online. Individual donations came in from as far away as Hawaii, Seattle, the Midwest, and Canada. We soon had the funds needed to order our custom-designed bronze plaque and granite base. A dedication date of May 26, 2010, the 103<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Elizabeth Keckly's death, was set.

A bright sunny sky (and Washington humidity) appeared for the 10:30 am ceremony at National Harmony Memorial Park. Opening remarks were given by Mr. Smyth, followed by Sandra Walia giving a history of Mrs. Keckly. Dr. Medford and Sheila Coates, president of the Black Women United, gave brief remarks as did Cecelia Logan, the cemetery representative who had worked so diligently with the committee. Mr. Tom Buckingham, president of the Surratt Society, assisted with the unveiling of the plaque, and approximately thirty of those in attendance walked to the gravesite, where the plaque was installed on its granite base and Mr. Buckingham placed a floral wreath in remembrance of this remarkable lady and her contributions to American history. Elizabeth Keckly no longer lies in an unmarked grave.

(Laurie Verge, who has helped lead the Surratt Society for years, is a longtime member of The Lincoln Forum Board of Advisors. For this article, biographical information was based on the research of Sandra Walia.) 

# HOW NEW YORK WON THE 1860 ELECTION FOR LINCOLN

By John T. Elliff

In the eyes of history Abraham Lincoln's 1860 victory has seemed inevitable. His opponents were two Democrats – Stephen Douglas of Illinois and John Breckinridge of Kentucky — and new Constitutional Union Party candidate John Bell of Tennessee. Lincoln won 39.9 percent of the popular vote; his nearest rival (Douglas) received 29.5 percent; and his Electoral College majority was 180 to 123 for his combined opponents.

In fact, the margin was closer. Lincoln won Illinois by 50.7 percent to 47.2 percent for Douglas and 1.4 percent for Bell; and he won New York by 53.7 percent to 46.3 percent for a “fusion” slate of Douglas, Breckinridge, and Bell electors. Losing Illinois' 11 electoral votes would have been a blow, but losing New York's 35 electoral votes would have given Lincoln's opponents a majority of 158 to 145 in the Electoral College.

The Constitution requires the election to go to the House if no presidential candidate receives an Electoral College majority. The top three candidates are eligible, and each state has one vote. Breckinridge backers saw this scenario as their best opportunity. A probable House deadlock could throw the decision to the Senate where the likely choice for Vice President (and acting President) would be Breckinridge's running mate Joseph Lane. Some campaign banners read “Lincoln or Lane.”

On Election Day Lincoln was most worried about New York. Early local returns showed a close victory in Illinois, but it was late into the night before the message came that New York would go for Lincoln.

Why was New York in doubt? Four years earlier Republican candidate John Fremont had won New York with 46.3 percent of the vote over Democrat James Buchanan with 32.8 percent and anti-immigrant American (or “Know Nothing”) Party candidate Millard Fillmore with 20.9 percent. Of all the states carried by Fremont, his lowest winning percentage was in New York.

Republicans had a strong New York organization managed by Thurlow Weed who was suspected of corrupting the state legislature. At a meeting in Springfield, Weed assured Lincoln that “New York is safe, without condition.” New York Senator William Seward, whom Lincoln had defeated for the nomination, campaigned actively. In August Lincoln told a friend, “We have no reason to doubt any of the states which voted for Fremont.” But circumstances changed by Election Day, and Lincoln was unsure of New York.

New York City Democrats had strong organizations for Douglas. Most Irish immigrants supported Douglas who had championed immigrant rights. But Democrats statewide were deeply divided. Patronage beneficiaries and other followers of President Buchanan backed Breckinridge who represented Southern interests in protecting slavery. Douglas, in opposition to Buchanan since 1857, championed “popular sovereignty” that would let voters in new territories allow or prohibit slavery – a position aimed at bridging the North-South divide. Douglas rejected an appeal to unite the party by stepping aside in favor of former New York Governor Horatio Seymour, who was closer to Buchanan.

Republicans stood firmly against expansion of slavery. Because many Lincoln opponents feared his victory would lead to Southern secession, attempts were made to form fusion slates of electors representing Douglas, Breckinridge, and Bell. These efforts generally failed to overcome bitter antagonisms between the Douglas and Breckinridge camps. Douglas urged at a September public meeting in New York City, “Make no bargain, no combination, no fusion, no compromise with the friends of any candidate who will not first publicly pledge himself to the maintenance of the Union....”

A turning point came in October when Republicans won state elections in Pennsylvania and Indiana, foreshadowing Lincoln victories in states the Republicans had lost in 1856. Together with the states carried by Fremont, Pennsylvania and Indiana would put Lincoln over the top.

Upon learning the October results, Douglas is reported to have said, “Mr. Lincoln is the next President. We must try to save the Union. I will go South.”

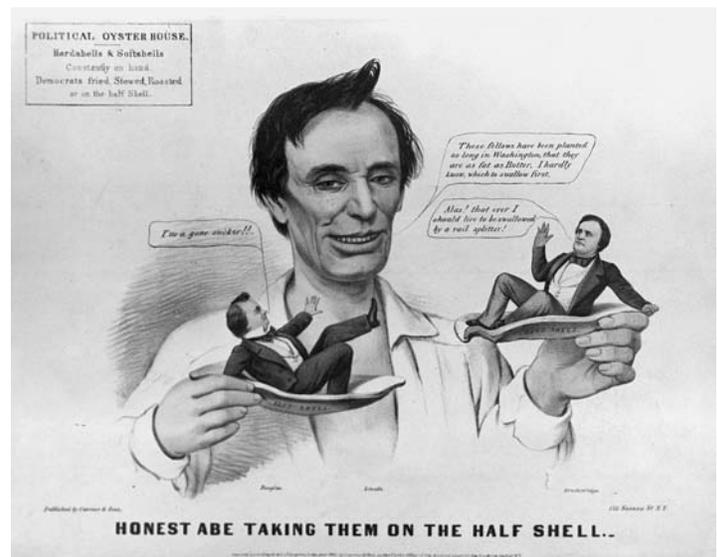
While Douglas toured the South speaking against secession, anti-Lincoln leaders in New York decided to unite. The Republicans' October victories triggered a panic on the New York stock exchange, led by declines in railroad shares and southern state bonds. Wealthy cotton and dry-goods merchants and other New York commercial interests with Southern ties pressed for the fusion ticket and offered substantial campaign contributions. New York Democratic factions finally agreed on a Douglas-Breckinridge-Bell fusion electoral slate. One Douglas leader said “we will save the Union and keep the rail-splitter out of the White House.”

Republicans mounted a vigorous effort in New York. Enthusiastic “Wide-Awakes” paraded for Lincoln, and his image as the honest rail-splitter appealed beyond his antislavery and “free labor” base. Democrats carried the baggage of an administration widely accused of improprieties. Victory depended on former American Party voters. Although Fillmore supported Bell, prominent former “Know-Nothings” saw Bell could not carry northern states against Douglas. Lincoln opposed anti-foreign measures, but did not have the pro-immigrant record of Douglas. A leading American Party newspaper praised Lincoln's honesty as contrasted with corrupt Republican legislators in Albany.

Shortly before the election, Weed advised Lincoln that New York fusion leaders were “using money lavishly” and “some of our friends are nervous.” Would the fusion ticket have carried New York if Douglas had returned to the state for the last weeks of the campaign? Douglas, in effect if not intent, sabotaged hopes for a fusion victory that would give the choice to congressional power brokers. According to one report, Douglas told an ally that if the election could go to the House, he would throw it to Lincoln first. He declared publicly that the national crisis required a president with a stronger base of support than an election in the House.

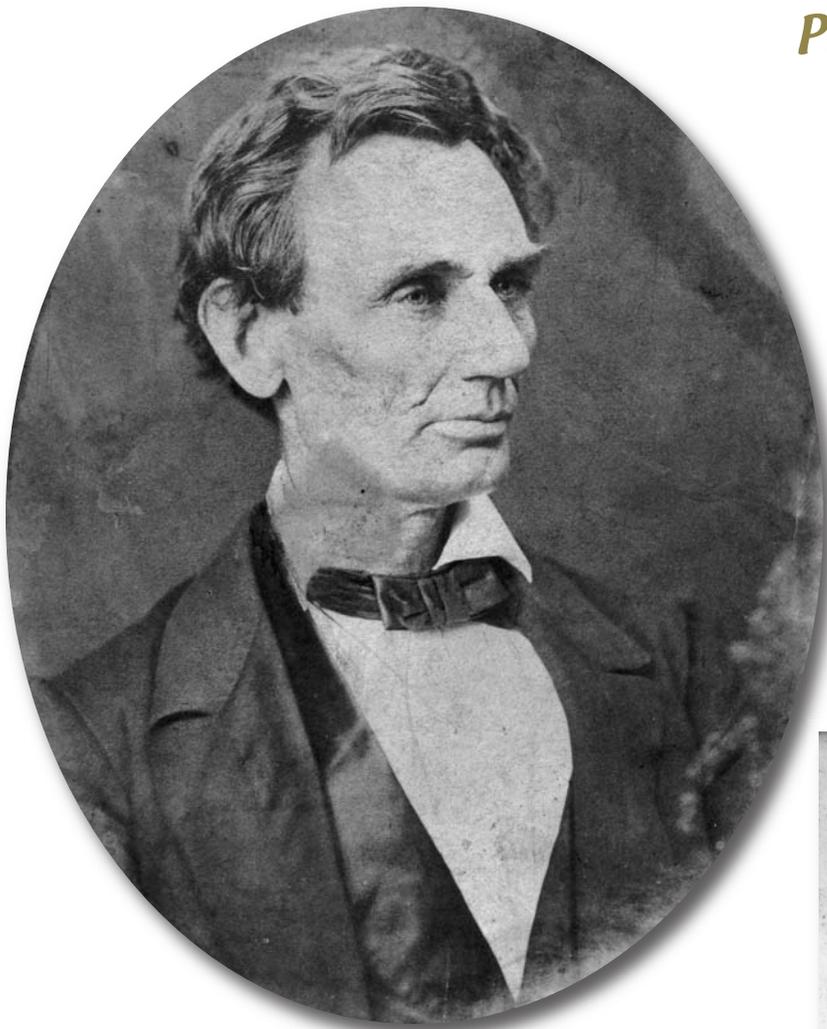
Of the factors that contributed to Lincoln's victory in New York and guaranteed his election, not the least was the failure of Stephen Douglas to spend the final days of the campaign in the state most likely to prevent Lincoln's election. The champion of “popular sovereignty” had acted so as to enable the election of the candidate with the most popular votes, “Honest Old Abe.”

(Forum member John T. Elliff holds a Ph.D. in political science from Harvard and is a member of the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia.)



An 1860 pro-Republican campaign cartoon by Currier & Ives suggests that Lincoln is the giant of the four-way presidential race. (Library of Congress)

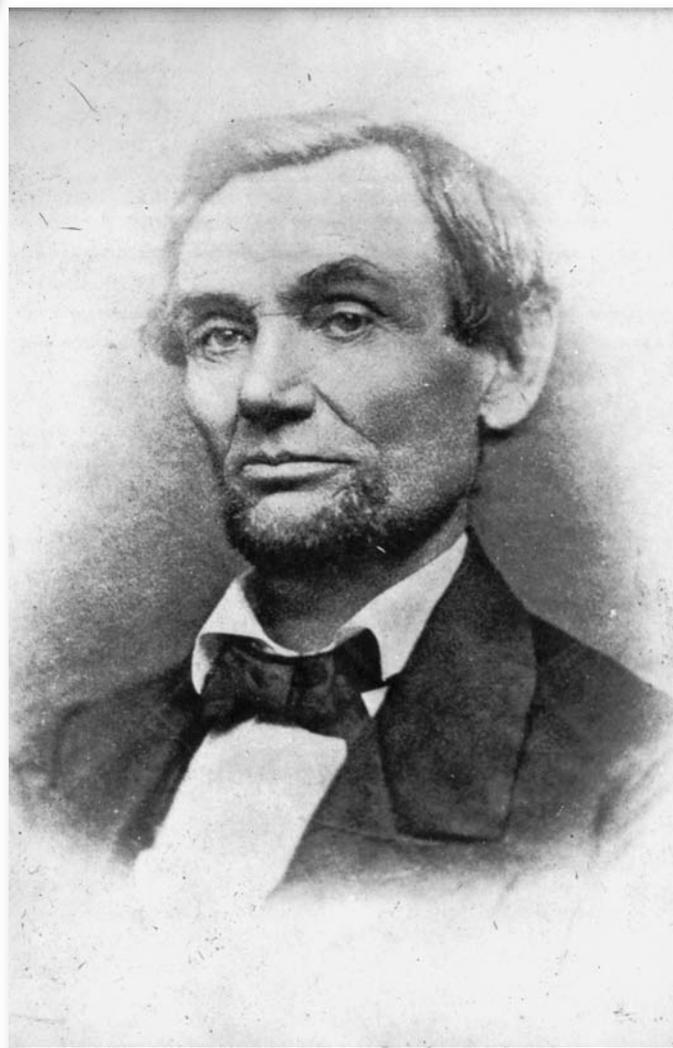
## PHOTO ESSAY: 150 YEARS AGO:



June 1860: Photo by Hesler

As all Lincoln students know, the future 16<sup>th</sup> President dramatically changed his image between 1860 and 1861—becoming the first chief executive to wear a beard, and the first to alter his physical appearance so radically between his election and his inauguration. As these images show, print publishers of the day were not always quick to represent Lincoln’s tonsorial surprises—and when they did so, they let their imaginations run wild more often than they faithfully copied reliable originals. Even as photographs showed him evolving slowly from clean-shaven-candidate to bewhiskered President-elect, engravers and lithographers, hastening to profit from this new opportunity to portray him, either guessed wildly at what he would finally look like with a beard, or mocked him for the decision to stop shaving (he was “putting on (h)airs,” joked one journalist). Lincoln even became a poster boy for hair ointments—with the most audacious hucksters asserting that he had relied on their products to stimulate reluctant whisker growth. Though some observers found the hair-splitting offensive, most Americans enjoyed the diversion. Speculation about the incoming President’s physical appearance was far less nerve-racking than worrying about secession and war. 📖

(Photos courtesy Library of Congress; Harold Holzer)



November 1860: Photo by Alschuler

# LINCOLN IN TRANSITION



Top & Bottom  
Early 1861: Lithographic  
Guesswork by Kipps



(MARCH 2, 1861.)

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# LINCOLN'S SON LOVED THE LINKS: ROBERT

By Jason Emerson

A journalist once reported that Robert Todd Lincoln, oldest son of Abraham Lincoln, refused to run for president of the United States in 1912 because he feared it would interfere with his golf game. While the story is exaggerated, what is true is that Robert Lincoln was an avid golfer. He picked up the game in the late nineteenth century before it rose to a general popularity; he was friends with the greatest golfers and golf course architects of his day; and he was a founding member of the first 18-hole course in America. Robert Lincoln not only loved the game of golf, but also believed it improved his health and elongated his life.

Lincoln was introduced to golf in 1893 by Charles Blair Macdonald, one of the founders of American golf and golf course architecture, and the first U.S. Amateur golf champion. Macdonald at the time was organizing the Chicago Golf Club, a nine-hole course in Belmont, Illinois. The course became so popular that it was moved to Wheaton, Illinois, in 1894 and extended to eighteen holes. It was the first 18-hole golf course in the United States. Its membership was limited to 250 men, and was familiarly known as “the millionaire’s club.” Robert Lincoln became one of the founding members and took lessons from Macdonald and professional golfer Jim Foulis, Jr., to learn and improve his game.

Lincoln, age fifty at this time, was a successful, wealthy, and highly respected man. He had only recently returned to America after serving four years in London as President Benjamin Harrison’s minister to Great Britain. He was one of the leading attorneys in Chicago and formerly had served as Secretary of War under Presidents Garfield and Arthur in the 1880s. On his return to Chicago in 1893 Lincoln left the law and turned instead to business, where he came to head various utility companies and eventually the multi-million dollar Pullman Palace Car Company. And he was the oldest and only surviving son of Abraham Lincoln.

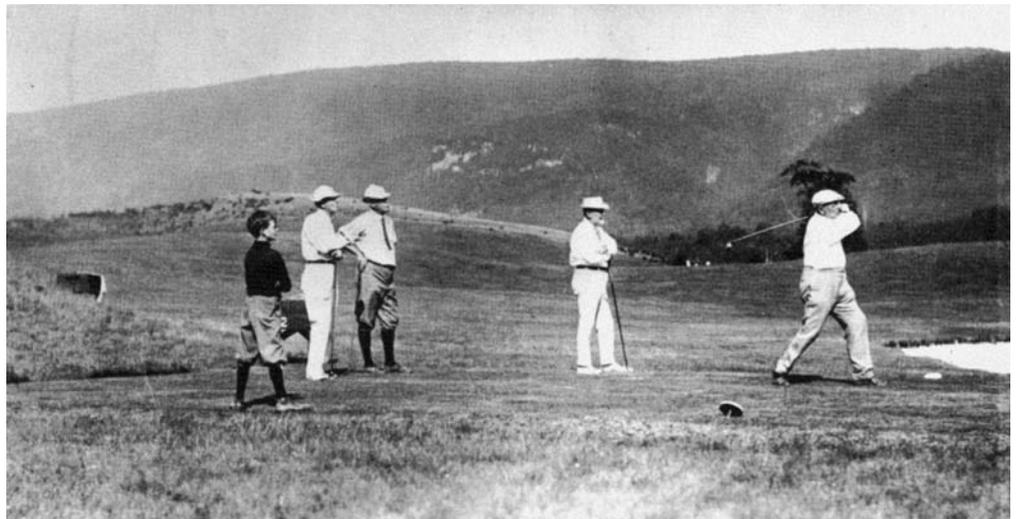
Once Lincoln picked up golf, he became a dedicated and passionate player. He played at the Chicago Golf Club as often as he could all year round, usually with his close friend, millionaire businessman Marshall Field, whom Lincoln himself introduced to the game. In May 1900, Lincoln said he and Field were playing golf three times a week at Wheaton, the two of them playing even in winter. (In fact, when Field died of pneumonia in January 1906, the cause of his illness was golfing with Lincoln in the snow.) Field’s nephew Stanley sometimes accompanied the pair to the club, and once related how around this time the three of them “matched coins” to see who would pay for the bus and train fair between Chicago and Wheaton. Stanley lost, and was obliged to pay the cost out of the \$15 or so per week he earned as an employee at Marshall Field & Company. “Both Robert Lincoln and Marshall Field seemed to get amusement out of Stanley’s poor luck,” the story went.

As a golfer, Lincoln “was popular, became enthusiastic about the game and was frequently invited to play with top golfers and professionals,” according to one history. In 1900, Lincoln played a pairs match in Deal, N.J., with Macdonald as his partner, opposed by British Open champion J.H. Taylor and

his partner Judge Morgan J. O’Brien. Macdonald later described the end of the match in which, coming down the final hole, it was Lincoln’s turn to drive the ball. “I cautioned my partner to take an iron, with which he was extremely good, and not his driver, with which he had been playing erratically. Nothing daunted, he exclaimed, ‘I shall take my driver,’ with the determination, so far as I could see, of reaching the green off the tee. Taking a mighty swipe at the ball, he sliced badly to the right onto a tennis court. . . . Robert Lincoln was most depressed.” They were playing alternate shots, and Macdonald then miraculously drove the ball onto the green and Lincoln made the putt to tie the match. “That did not pacify Robert Lincoln,” Macdonald recalled. “He turned to his caddy and said, ‘Caddy, take these clubs and throw them into the lake, and if you don’t do that I will make you a present of them.’”

As the story shows, Robert Lincoln loved golf, but he was not terribly good at it. In 1901 he entered the Ekwanok Country Club [Manchester, Vt.] President’s Cup tournament, where he finished second to last. But at least Lincoln knew he was not a great golfer, and, true to his excellent sense of humor, just like his father, he liked to joke about it. When he was notified of his nomination for president of the Chicago Golf Club in 1905, Robert responded, “I duly appreciate this compliment which I understand generally to mean that I am supposed to be the worst player in the club. I am president of another club in Vermont on that basis.” The other club, only two miles from Lincoln’s summer home, Hildene, was the Ekwanok Golf Club, of which Robert was elected president in 1904. He held the Ekwanok presidency, as well as the position of chairman of the club’s Finance Committee, for the next twenty-two years.

Lincoln tried hard to improve his game. He was a subscriber to *American Golfer* magazine from the publication’s inception in 1908, and he read numerous books on golf instruction. His personal library at Hildene—now a historic site—still contains eight of his golf-related books including, H.J. Whigham, *How to Play Golf* (1898); Walter J. Travis, *Practical Golf* (1901); J.H. Taylor, *Taylor on Golf* (1902); James Braid, *Advanced Golf, or Hints and Instructions for Progressive Players* (1908); and James M. Barnes, *Picture Analysis of Golf Strokes* (1919). Lincoln was friends and had golfed with all of these expert authors, but the book he found most useful was *Taylor on Golf*, which Lincoln heavily annotated in the margins of the sections on perfecting your swing and stabilizing your putts.



Robert Lincoln hits the links at the Ekwanok Country Club in Manchester, Vermont around 1910. In a letter written at the time, he commented that the picture showed him swinging with better form than he usually did.

(All photos from the book, *The Lincoln Family Album*)

# TODD LINCOLN AND THE GAME OF GOLF

Lincoln's friendship with Charles B. Macdonald led him to support Macdonald's founding of another world-class golf course at Shinnecock Hills (Southampton), Long Island, in 1908. Lincoln wrote a \$1,000 check as a founder and incorporator of the National Golf Links of America, and also sat on the board of directors. "Of course I'll give you \$1,000," Lincoln wrote to Macdonald at the time. "The golf that you have taught me has saved me that much a year in doctors' bills, and I am perfectly confident it will add years to my life."

Due to his well-known love of golf, and the upcoming centennial of his father's birth, in 1908 Robert Lincoln was offered the presidency of the United States Golf Association for the year 1909. He declined due to his poor health and his lack of time to devote to the duties of such a position. His refusal was characteristically humorous: "I am, as you know, a very enthusiastic golfer, although unhappily not a very good one; but I believe the Presidents of the Association and Presidents of Golf Clubs are not expected to be good golfers. At one time I held the presidency of two golf clubs, I think my selection being made on the ground of my duffer status."

In addition to his home courses in Chicago and Manchester, Lincoln joined the Chevy Chase Club outside Washington D.C. after he bought a house in Georgetown in 1911. After picking up the game, Lincoln played golf anywhere and everywhere he could. During his summer vacations in Little Boar's Head, N.H., Long Branch, N.J., and eventually Manchester, Vt., Lincoln tried to play golf every day, weather permitting. He regularly traveled every winter to warm destinations, usually Coronado Beach, Calif. or Augusta, Ga., and occasionally to Hot Springs, Va., specifically to indulge his love of golf.

At Augusta, Lincoln was a member of an informal group of important men known as the "Little Mothers," a name given in jest by a woman who insisted that when the group came together, "it was for the purpose of rocking the cradle of the universe." The Little Mothers met every March at the Hotel Bon Air, where they would play golf during the day and sit and talk—mostly politics—at night. In addition to Lincoln, members of this group included Warren G. Harding (first as a senator and then as president), Robert's good friend Sen. Eugene Hale of Maine, Sen. Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska, Sen. Frank B. Brandegee of Connecticut, Sen. Willard Saulsbury of Delaware, Speaker of the House Frederick H. Gillett of Massachusetts, and Gov. James M. Cox of Ohio. Robert Lincoln was "very much at home" in this group, according to one of his friends, and he often told interesting and amusing stories to the group of his experiences as secretary of war and minister to Great Britain.

Lincoln's favorite home course was the Ekwanok in Manchester, and he was a regular player whenever he was in residence at his summer home. It was said that his daily eighteen-hole game was "as much a part of his day as was his dinner." He even spearheaded a successful campaign to get the club to allow play on Sundays, which previously was prohibited. Lincoln's regular companions on the links were his friends and fellow Ekwanok Board members Robert Janney of Philadelphia, and George Thacher and Horace Young of Albany. They were known as the "Lincoln Foursome," and they played together for multiple years until Janney's death in 1920. Lincoln was always the scorekeeper.

As president of the Ekwanok, Lincoln did not play in the club's annual tournaments, but he tried always to be present to watch the notable golfers who came to compete and to award the cup to the winner. It was said that he enjoyed setting up his telescope (he also was an avid amateur astronomer) on the clubhouse porch so he could follow the golfers as they played, reporting on the



**Robert poses with his friend—and frequent occasional golfing partner—President William Howard Taft, in a photo made on the back terrace of Lincoln's Manchester mansion, "Hildene," probably in October 1912.**

progress of the matches to his friends sitting nearby. One of the numerous champion golfers Robert Lincoln met and entertained at the Ekwanok was sixteen-year-old Bobby Jones, who played in a three-day wartime benefit for the Manchester Red Cross in August 1918.

Probably the most famous golfing partner Lincoln ever had was President William Howard Taft, the first president to play the game. Taft was a golf enthusiast who maintained that it was excellent exercise, especially for "a man of my build" (he weighed more than 300 pounds). After being elected president in 1908, he declared he would do his part to make golf a more popular outdoor exercise. One contribution he made to the sport's general popularity was his insistence that golf was not "a rich man's game," as many believed.

Lincoln and Taft, both former secretaries of war, previously had golfed together at Augusta, Ga., in March 1911. Two years later Taft visited Lincoln in Manchester, Vt., for a weekend during which he declared to Lincoln it would give him an opportunity to, "golf with you on Saturday, to worship on Sunday, and then to take a stirrup cup with you on Monday." Actually, the two men golfed four times in the three days of the visit. The Tafts arrived in Manchester the afternoon of Friday Sept. 5, and within an hour Taft and Lincoln were out on the Ekwanok links. They then played twice on Saturday and once on Monday morning, accompanied by three of the four members of the Lincoln Foursome.

*continued on page 12*

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN THE COLLECTIONS

By John F. Marszalek and Ryan P. Semmes

In December 2008, when the Ulysses S. Grant Association moved its 15,000 linear feet of material to the Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, the inevitable question resulted: “How is it possible that the Papers of a Union general are in Mississippi, the heart of the Old Confederacy?” There are many answers to this question, but a copy of a Lincoln letter in the Grant collection provides an insight into the validity of Grant joining the Mississippi State University Bulldogs.

Grant had begun his Wilderness Campaign in May of 1864, and he and Lee were suffering enormous casualties that spring and summer. When Grant insisted that he would not turn back, Lincoln responded: “I have seen your dispatch expressing your

unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog grip, and chew & choke, as much as possible.”

That same year, a Courier and Ives print, a copy of which is in the Grant collection, showed Lincoln and General McClellan discussing a dog, clearly a caricature of Grant, while Jefferson Davis and his generals are seen cowering in a doghouse (the city of Richmond). The caption states: “The Old Bull Dog on the Right Track.”

Lincoln called it right, as usual—even in a cartoon. These several examples and others within the Grant holdings demonstrate not only the close relationship between Grant and Lincoln, but they also tie Grant to his new home in Mississippi.

Most original Lincoln material is, of course, not located in the Ulysses S. Grant Collection. In the published thirty-one volumes and in the file cabinets full of manuscript copies, there are numerous examples of Lincoln letters. The richness of the Lincoln material in this collection, however, primarily consists of secondary material.

When John Y. Simon and his assistant editors were creating the published volumes of Grant papers, they preserved all of their research. As a result, there are three large, legal-size, five drawer cabinets full of files on a variety of topics. The largest section in this “subject or vertical file” material deals with Abraham Lincoln. There are, for example, numerous files concerning Ann Rutledge and the available information on her relationship with Lincoln and the later controversy regarding exactly what transpired between them. There are also folders on Lincoln and emancipation, Lincoln and Grant, Lincoln and the “Homosexual” issue, Lincoln’s appointments to Oregon, Catholic Chaplains and Lincoln, newspaper clippings on modern books about Lincoln, and on and on.

A particularly wonderful swath of material consists of the copies of many of the lectures John Y. Simon gave on Lincoln during his long and illustrious career. Simon is best known for editing *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, but he also had a reputation as a lecturer. With his wonderful sense of humor and his ability to do accurate research, he enthralled both professional historians and interested buffs. These unpublished lectures are preserved in the Grant collection, and many of them concern some aspect of Lincoln’s presidency. Of these, numerous lectures concern the relationship between Lincoln and Grant including “Lincoln, Grant, and McClellan: War and Politics in 1864,” “Lincoln and Grant: The Rough Road to Victory,” “Commander in Chief Lincoln

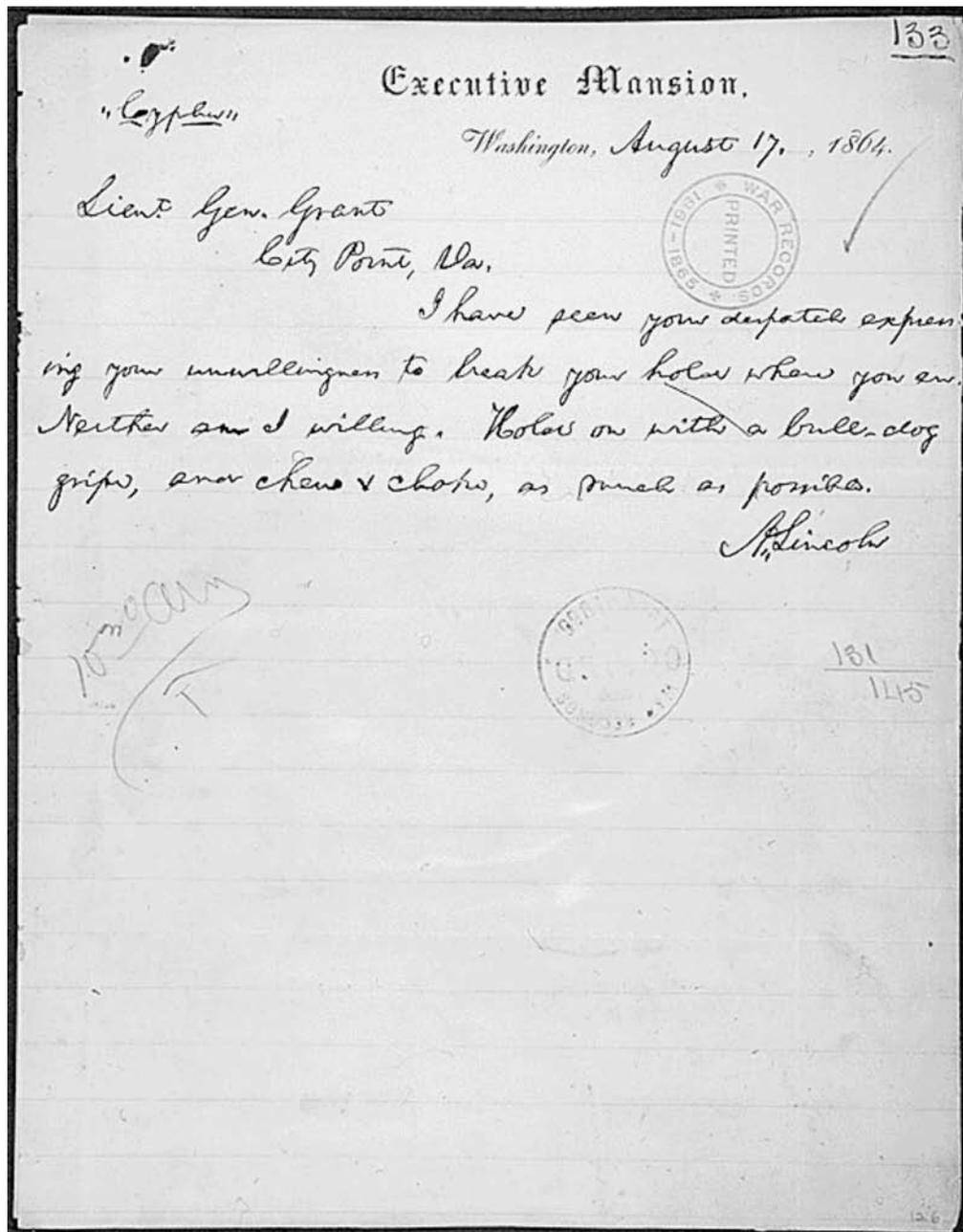
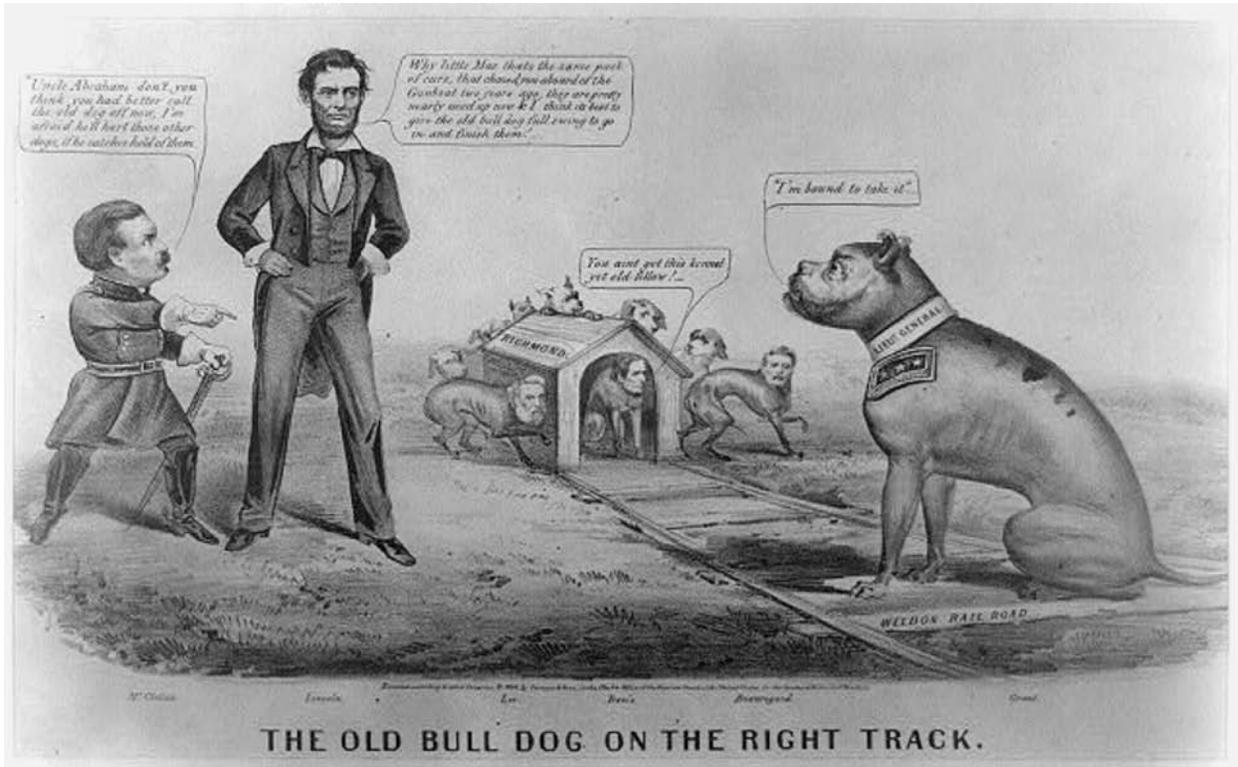


Figure 1: In an 1864, President Lincoln labels General Grant “a bull-dog.”  
(Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration)

# OF THE ULYSSES S. GRANT ASSOCIATION



**Figure 2: A war-time cartoon depicts U.S. Grant as a bulldog, about to drive Confederate “curs” out of the doghouse that is Richmond.**  
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

and General Grant,” to cite only several. Other lectures about Lincoln cover such subjects as “Lincoln and Dred Scott,” “Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, and Fort Sumter,” “Lincoln’s Decision to Issue the Emancipation Proclamation,” “Lincoln the Hero,” “In Search of Abraham Lincoln,” and “Lincoln and His Critics.”

Several historians’ notes are also included in the Grant Collection. These individuals used these typed, handwritten, and photocopied notes to write their books. In Lloyd Lewis and Bruce Catton’s notes compiled for their books on Grant, valuable information about Lincoln is found within four folders. Since this Lincoln material was collected by master historians in the late 1940s and early 1950s, these folders include important mid-20<sup>th</sup> century secondary accounts about the Union president. Also in the collection are the notes that John F. Marszalek used in the writing of his biographies of William T. Sherman (1993) and Henry W. Halleck (2004), containing copies of letters to and from Abraham Lincoln and secondary accounts of the president’s relationship with these two generals. These notes also include standard photographs and, in the Halleck papers, drawings of Grant receiving his commission from Lincoln and the later sad scene around Lincoln’s death bed.

The Grant collection at Mississippi State also contains engravings. In one of Grant, he is surrounded by Washington and Lincoln and scenes of war. A photocopy of a carte-de-visite shows angels carrying Grant to heaven with Lincoln and the recently assassinated James A. Garfield in attendance. Another shows Grant and Lincoln together, while still another is a copy of a Kurz and Allison engraving of Washington, Lincoln, Grant and Garfield, with the words “Pro Patria” at the top and “America’s Greatest Patriots” on the bottom.

While the Grant Papers are hardly a major repository of Lincoln material, the many copies of Lincoln writings, engravings, John Y. Simon’s lectures, and historians’ notes make the collection a valuable resource. Lincoln does not have the presence in

Mississippi that Grant has, but even he feels comfortable in his limited role in the Magnolia State. After all, when the war was over, Lincoln claimed “Dixie” as a prize of war.

*(John F. Marszalek, longtime member of The Lincoln Forum Board of Advisors and frequent speaker at its symposia, is Giles Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at Mississippi State University and the executive director and managing editor of the Ulysses S. Grant Association. Ryan P. Semmes is the Assistant Archivist in the Congressional and Political Research Center, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University.)* 📖



**Figure 3: President Abraham Lincoln and George Washington are here linked with U.S. Grant and the assassinated James A. Garfield.**  
(Courtesy of The Ulysses S. Grant Association.)

## HISTORIAN MARK NEELY • *continued from page 1*

the *Lincoln Image* (1985); and *The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause* (1987), with Harold Holzer and Gabor Boritt; and with Holzer, *The Lincoln Family Album* (1990, revised edition 2008), *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: The Civil War in Art* (1993), and *The Union Image: Popular Prints of the Civil War North* (2000). Utilizing access to hitherto unknown Lincoln family legal records, he also co-authored with R. Gerald McMurtry, *The Insanity File: The Case of Mary Todd Lincoln* (1986).

“It is a privilege and a pleasure to convey this award to Mark Neely,” added Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer, who by tradition will make the official presentation at the Forum’s annual banquet November 18. “Having known Mark for more than three decades—first as a generous and wise museum professional, later as an inspiring collaborator who brought out the best in others, myself included, and finally for many years as a treasured friend, I have waited a long time to hand the Richard Nelson Current statuette to this inspiring scholar, teacher, and colleague. And what better moment to honor him than at the dawn of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, a subject he has worked so brilliantly to bring into sharp focus for the new century.” 📌

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## LINCOLN’S SON LOVED THE LINKS • *continued from page 9*



Robert’s Vermont mansion, Hildene, built on 400 acres in 1905, as it appeared during a typical winter. When he began living here year-round, the President’s son used red golf balls to practice his driving in the snow drifts.

After that weekend, Lincoln jokingly informed Taft he was an honorary member of the Foursome, and would thereafter be required to attend the groups “meetings.”

As Lincoln aged and his health diminished, he played less golf. One of his caddies, Noble C. Shaw, later recalled that the Lincoln Foursome began stopping at the 16th hole because it was only a few steps from the clubhouse. As the years passed the Foursome would play twelve, then ten, then only eight holes. “He was always allowed the courtesy of cutting in wherever he wished,” Shaw wrote. Every August 1 for his birthday, Lincoln played a few holes of golf at the Ekwanok with his Foursome. He was forced to give up his beloved pastime in 1924, at age 81, on the advice of his physician who thought there was a danger of his patient falling on the golf course and breaking a limb.

After Robert Lincoln died in July 1926, his widow, Mary Harlan Lincoln, honored her husband’s memory by donating his golf bag and clubs, as well as a glass display case, to the Ekwanok Country Club. She also established the annual Robert T. Lincoln Memorial golf tournament, which still is held today.

(Jason Emerson is at work on a new full-length biography of Robert Todd Lincoln. He has lectured an acclaimed lecture on Mary Lincoln at the Forum.) 📌

The Lincoln Forum Bulletin welcomes contributions from members and historians—articles and photos alike. Send to editor Harold Holzer at [harold.holzer@metmuseum.org](mailto:harold.holzer@metmuseum.org). The editor particularly thanks the contributors to the current issue.

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