

THE WIDE AWAKE BULLETIN

THE LINCOLN GROUP OF NEW YORK

DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



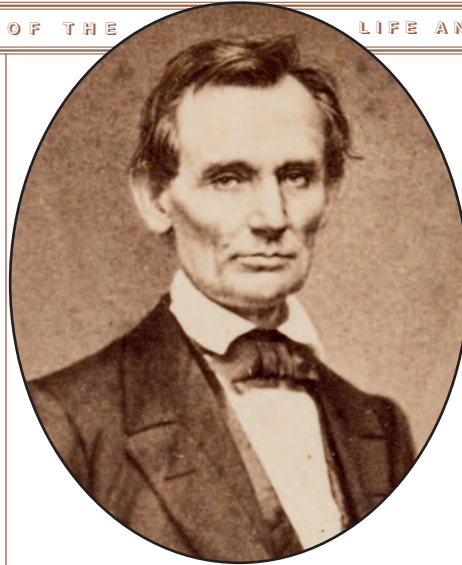
Paul Ellis-Graham

Dear Members,
Over the holidays I was watching Turner Classic Movies on television (a common occurrence in our home) and came across the film "Pocketful of Miracles" starring Glenn Ford and Bette Davis. At one point in the

movie, when one of the characters wants to assure others that yet another character is held in high regard, he says, "Why Carlos [Peter Mann] thinks the Dude [Glenn Ford] is a young Abraham Lincoln!"

In other words, even in an unrelated, Runyonesque film, in providing an example of an admirable man, Abraham Lincoln is cited as the gold standard. But then, isn't that why we are members of the Lincoln Group of New York? Isn't he the leader as well as the president we admire most? He was, is, and will be my favorite for all time. It was the major reason that I joined the LGNY those many years ago and offered to serve as a member of the executive committee, vice president, and finally president.

In recent times, especially over the last few years, the group has had to adapt and change under trying circumstances: finding a venue with good food at an affordable price for our meetings, dealing with the implications of Covid and the resulting Zoom meetings, and rebuilding our organization's website. To my satisfaction, we have addressed all these issues successfully while providing quality programs that motivate and inspire us to learn even more about our beloved sixteenth president. I give credit to all of you for your counsel, understanding, and support. I also particularly wish to thank the executive committee and the officers for their work.



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FEBRUARY 2024

Now, however, due to the difficulties of air travel during the winter, the fact that I currently spend it in Savannah, Georgia, and as a result often miss the April meeting, I will be stepping down as president of the Lincoln Group of New York effective February 27, 2024. However, because I wish to continue my involvement with the LGNY, I am open to remaining in some other leadership position as the officers, executive committee, and membership see fit.

I am recommending that Rob Kaplan be elected as the new president of the LGNY. As my vice president, Rob has worked closely with me on the aforementioned issues and continues to supervise the award committee, edit and send out this annual newsletter, and maintain our new website. Over the last several years Rob and I have developed a very meaningful and positive working relationship, and there is no one I trust more with the leadership of our organization than him. In fact, the very best part of my second stint as president has been my friendship and collaboration with Rob.

We live in truly challenging times, and we need the lessons that Lincoln's life has to offer us and future generations, especially at this moment in our history. I sincerely hope you will continue your active participation in our organization and encourage your friends and family to do likewise.

Best always,
Paul Ellis-Graham

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The editor would like to express his appreciation to Paul Ellis-Graham, Steven R. Koppelman, and Fritz Metsch for their assistance in preparing this issue of *The Wide Awake Bulletin*.



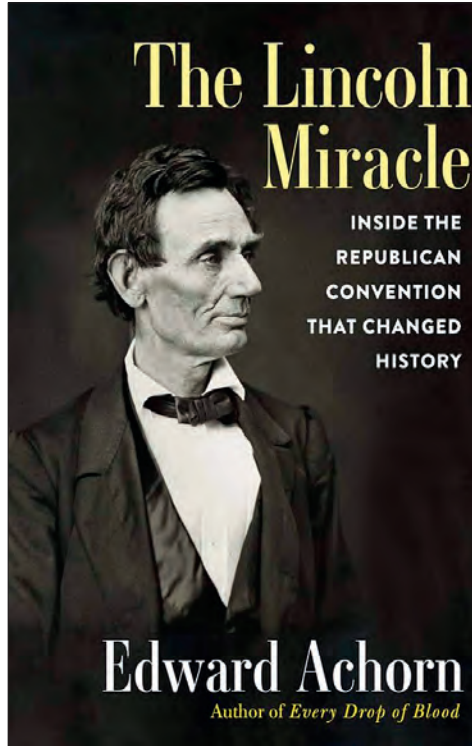
Edward Achorn

Edward Achorn, author of *The Lincoln Miracle: Inside the Republican Convention That Changed History*, has been chosen as the recipient of the Lincoln Group of New York's 2023 Award of Achievement. The award, presented to the individual or

organization that has done the most to encourage the study and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln during the year, has been conferred annually since 1988.

Focusing on an aspect of Lincoln's life about which relatively little has been written, the book tells the exciting, behind-the-scenes story of how, despite Lincoln's being considered the least likely among the Republican contenders to win the party's nomination for president in 1860, his campaign team managed to derail the anticipated victory of front-runner William Henry Seward and have Lincoln chosen to carry the party's banner at what was arguably the most important nominating convention in American history.

As such, it covers everything from the contentious political climate of the country at the time; the backstories of the potential nominees and their political supporters; the organization of the convention itself; the action on the floor and in the stands of the convention hall; the discussions held and decisions made in smoke-filled rooms in various Chicago



hotels; and—not least of all—the strategy used by David Davis, Lincoln's campaign manager, to make his candidate a serious contender and ultimately the nominee. Perhaps most important, although readers will obviously know the outcome, the story is told in such a way that it enables them to feel—and share—the drama surrounding the Republicans' momentous decision.

Both reviewers and Mr. Achorn's fellow historians have been extremely enthusiastic about the book. *Publishers Weekly* calls it "Comprehensive and often riveting... A dramatic and well-informed study of political sausage-making." Ted Widmer, LGNY Award of Achievement winner for *Lincoln on the Verge*, says "The *Lincoln Miracle* tells the inside story with precision and panache." And Pulitzer Prize-winner Gordon S. Wood describes it as "A wonderful story," adding that "Anyone interested in the intricacies and ironies of deal-making and horse-trading in American politics will love this book."

In addition to *The Lincoln Miracle*, Mr. Achorn is the author of an earlier book on Lincoln—*Every Drop of Blood: The Momentous Second Inauguration of Abraham Lincoln* (2020), which was named one of the best books of the year by *The Economist* magazine. He is also the author of two books on 19th century baseball, *Fifty-Nine in '84: Old Hoss Radbourn, Bare-handed Baseball, and the Greatest Season a Pitcher Ever Had* (2010), and *The Summer of Beer and Whiskey: How Brewers, Barkeeps, Rowdies, Immigrants, and a Wild Pennant Fight Made Baseball America's Game* (2013).

The award committee members for 2023 were Rob Kaplan, Tony Czarnecki, and Paula Hopewell. The award will be presented to Mr. Achorn at our February 2024 meeting, where he will speak about the book.

MEETING REVIEW - FEBRUARY 15, 2023

As is our custom, the first meeting of the year was prefaced by a meeting of the executive committee. Unfortunately, due to a flight delay, President Paul Ellis-Graham, who was coming to New York from his winter home in Savannah, Georgia, arrived too late to chair the meeting, which was consequently conducted by Vice President Rob Kaplan. Mr. Kaplan had three items to discuss with the committee's members. The first was that Steve Aronson had completed his three-year stint as a member of the Award Committee, for which Mr. Kaplan offered his thanks, and that Paula Hopewell had offered to rejoin it, which was heartily approved by the executive committee. Second, the new LGNY website, which had been in process for some months,

was nearing completion, and the members of the committee would have an opportunity to review it within the next several days. And, finally, the total cost of the website was going to be \$2,520. Mr. Kaplan said that several committee members had already volunteered to make donations to the expense, and expressed the hope that some of the others would similarly offer contributions to help pay off the remainder.

Our February meeting is also traditionally reserved for the presentation of our annual Award of Achievement and a talk by the winner. This year's winner was Jon Meacham for his book *And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle*. As it happens, Professor Meacham was also named the winner of

the Civil War Round Table of New York's annual Baroness Lincoln Award. Because Professor Meacham had a particularly busy schedule in February, Lincoln Group of New York executive committee member Harold Holzer, who is also the Jonathan F. Fanton Director of the Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College, offered the use of the Institute's meeting facilities so the two groups could hold a joint meeting. Mr. Holzer accordingly opened the meeting by introducing LGNY President Paul Ellis-Graham, who would serve as the chair.

Mr. Ellis-Graham welcomed the two groups' members and expressed his thanks to both Mr. Holzer and Ms. Joan McDonough, vice president of operations for the

CWRTNY, for her assistance in sponsoring the event. Professor Meacham, he then told the group, is a former editor-in-chief of *Newsweek* magazine, a nationally renowned presidential historian, and currently holds the Carolyn T. and Robert M. Rogers Chair in the American Presidency at Vanderbilt University. He is also the author of numerous *New York Times* bestsellers, including both his latest book and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*. Among his other recent works are *His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope* and *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels*. Lauding *Then There Was Light*, Mr. Ellis-Graham said that as a one-volume biography it “joins or surpasses those that have come before,” notably those by Lord Charnwood, Benjamin P. Thomas, Stephen B. Oates, David Herbert Donald, and Ronald C. White. He also noted that the book reminds us that democracy, with all its twists and turns, is still, in Lincoln’s words, “the last best hope of earth.” He then invited Carolyn Roxon, chair of the CWRTNY Award Committee, to join him on the stage.

Ms. Roxon explained that the Baroness Lincoln Award is given every year in memory of Dr. Benjamin Baroness, a distinguished charter member and vice president of the CWRTNY. The award, she said, is presented to any person or institution for any contribution to the greater appreciation of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln as determined by the award committee. In her remarks, Ms. Roxon noted that in his own time Lincoln “governed a divided country and the issues which he confronted, such as political polarization and the future of democracy, are still with us today, and that he was, as Professor Meacham asserts, ‘an imperfect man seeking to bring a more perfect union into being.’”

Ms. Roxon then presented the award to Professor Meacham, after which Mr. Ellis-Graham introduced Rob Kaplan, LGNY vice president and chair of the award committee. Mr. Kaplan opened by noting that the award, like that of the CWRTNY, is presented annually to the individual or organization that has done the most to encourage the study and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln. Acknowledging that there have been many Lincoln biographies, he said that Professor Meacham’s is different in that it not only covers the major events of Lincoln’s life, it also shows who he was and the people, experiences, and ideas that influenced him. In addition, it demonstrates how two aspects of his

personality were fused together—a practical politician and a man of enormous faith who acted, as Mr. Meacham said, “according to motives higher than the merely political.”

Accepting the award, Professor Meacham warmly thanked both groups, Mr. Ellis-Graham for bringing the groups together, and Mr. Holzer, or more appropriately, as he said, Eleanor and Sara Delano Roosevelt, for their hospitality. Then, turning to the subject at hand, he said that he was “struck again and again by the universality of the challenges Lincoln faced” and their similarity to the challenges we face today. “An implacable, hopefully minority force in the country,” he continued, “has a differing view of power, identity, and the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, and are willing to fight for it.” But there are also “people who have the broader and, I would argue, more accurate view of the Constitution and the Declaration who want to defend that, but also understand that democracy is about letting people disagree with you. Democracy doesn’t work if we insist that everyone agrees all the time, and you can’t say that something is undemocratic just because you disagree with it. It’s the most complicated of questions.”

In regard to moving ahead, he noted, “The future is unknowable, but the past should give us hope. And the hope I think Lincoln gives us is that an imperfect person, a sinful, fallen, frail, fallible man leading a sinful, fallen, frail, fallible people managed to get things right just enough of the time to push us forward.... There are certain symp-



Jon Meacham

toms that recur that suggest an underlying condition that has proven vulnerable to certain treatments. And when division and selfishness and greed become the ambient reality in the life of the republic, we have Lincoln’s treatment, which is to insist without self-righteousness. Was there ever a less self-righteous figure at the pinnacle of American power? Someone who was humble, who understood that he would, as he put it, wander through the twilight like poor doubting Thomas, but at the end of that twilight would find that more perfect union, and he would bend that arc of a moral universe toward justice just a little bit.

“What Lincoln shows us is the centrality, and the significance, and the moral imperative to do that right thing.... Without that principle, and without the willingness to give up a little bit of our own capital to make that principle operative, the American experiment doesn’t work. And the good news is, it is a moral undertaking, but it doesn’t really require us to be pure of heart. What it does require us to do is understand the utility of bending that architecture of a moral universe. If I extend a hand to you in the morning, you are more likely to extend a hand to me in the afternoon.... What Lincoln’s life tells us is that doing the right thing is in our self-interest. And that’s a good thing because if it weren’t, we would never do it. And without Lincoln’s example of following a morally informed self-interest, then the experiment would have failed.

“We are the story of our successes and our failures. Our failures tend to outweigh those successes, which is what makes those victories so marvelous, which is what makes these conversations so important, because it can be done....” Referring to his book, Professor Meacham said, “I focused on the moral element of Lincoln’s character partly because if you are entirely a political creature there is always a reason to do something that you didn’t want to do.” As one example of Lincoln doing the right thing, he cited the situation the president faced in August 1864 when the war wasn’t going well, and it appeared that he was unlikely to win reelection. He drafted a memorandum that read, “This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so co-operate with the President elect, as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election on such ground that he cannot possibly

save it afterwards,” and asked the members of his cabinet to sign it without seeing it.

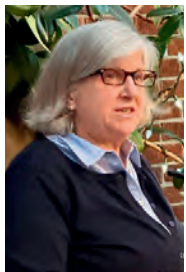
There were, Professor Meacham said, two things that were significant about this. “One—the 1864 presidential election—it happened. That’s striking right there. And, two, the commander-in-chief of a nation at war with itself holds an election and is willing to accept the transfer of power if he’s defeated at the polls. And to try to do everything he can out of a moral duty to the Union, to the enslaved and the emancipated who have been emancipated on his order and through their own bravery. Their fate was in his hands. Remarkable, isn’t it, for a political man to be willing to lose? I’ve known a lot of

politicians, and they all say they’d be happy to lose, but they don’t, they aren’t. So there had to be some other reason, and I believe it was this importuning of conscience. It was the decision that, in fact, there was a right, and we had to tend toward it as best we could.”

In conclusion, Professor Meacham said, “In many ways, Abraham Lincoln was a kind of archbishop of the American civic religion. He was not a Christian in the conventional sense. He believed that we had a sacred scripture, written by Thomas Jefferson. We had a group of apostles and martyrs, the men of iron who were the founders, as he called them in his earliest speech. We had a code that had

come to us, which was to live into political equality as best we could. And like the Hebrew Bible, history had a beginning, a middle, and an end. And what we did in the middle would determine whether we were rewarded or punished at the end. That’s a religious understanding of the universe. And thankfully, thankfully, he lived up to that scripture.”

Professor Meacham then took a number of questions from the audience, after which Mr. Ellis-Graham rose, said he thought we had been treated to a very special event, thanked the members of the LGNY and the CWRTNY for coming, and bid everyone good night.



Reignette Chilton

The April meeting was opened by Vice President Rob Kaplan, who welcomed everyone on behalf of himself and President Paul Ellis-Graham, who was at his winter home in Savannah, Georgia, and unable to attend. He noted that, because of the pandemic, this was the first

time in several years in which the group had been able to meet in-person in both February and April, and expressed the hope that we were returning to our regular pre-COVID schedule. Reminding everyone that at our February meeting we had presented our annual Award of Achievement to Jon Meacham for his book *And There Was Light*, he noted that in the interim Mr. Meacham had also been awarded the Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize, along with Jonathan White for his book *A House Built by Slaves*, and that we are hoping to have Mr. White speak to the group at some point in the future.

Mr. Kaplan also offered congratulations, in absentia, to LGNY founding member and current executive committee member Harold Holzer, who earlier in the year received the Saint-Gaudens Medal for his contributions as an authority on Lincoln and the Civil War. Mr. Holzer is of course the author of *Monument Man*, about Daniel Chester French, who designed the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC that houses Saint-Gaudens’s famous statue. Mr. Kaplan then reminded the audience that since the previous meeting a new

LGNY website had been launched, and expressed the hope that all the members were pleased with it, at which point dinner was served.

Once dinner was completed, Mr. Kaplan introduce the evening’s speaker, long-time LGNY member Reignette Chilton, author of *Lincoln’s Greatcoat: The Unlikely Odyssey of a Presidential Relic*, the story of the disappearance and reappearance of the coat Brooks Brothers made for Abraham Lincoln for his second inauguration and which he wore the night of his assassination. Ms. Chilton, who holds a BA in English from Eastern University and is currently pursuing a graduate degree from George Washington University, is a former schoolteacher who, after several years of teaching, joined the staff of Brooks Brothers, where she spent twenty-five years as a corporate trainer. It was during her tenure with the clothier that she developed an interest in the story of the coat, which in turn led her to conduct research in the company’s records as well as in several local libraries and at government and academic institutions around the country. The book was published in 2019.

The clothing firm of Brooks Brothers, Ms. Chilton told the group, was founded in 1818, and by the 1860s had grown into a major retailer with many distinguished clients. But, as the company noted in a 1965 advertisement, “none was more illustrious than Abraham Lincoln.” Mary Todd Lincoln had visited the store while on a shopping trip to New York in 1861, and although Lincoln was not known to be a stylish dresser, the com-

pany subsequently made several suits for him. It also produced, as a gift in honor of his second inauguration, a black wool overcoat, or greatcoat, that had a quilted lining with an embroidered design of an eagle holding in its beak a pennant inscribed “One Country, One Destiny.” It is not known whether Lincoln wore the coat for the inauguration, but there were several witnesses who noted that he was wearing it at Ford’s Theatre on the night of April 14, 1865.

Following Lincoln’s death, and shortly after Mrs. Lincoln left the capital, she gave a black suit and the Brooks Brothers greatcoat to a former DC police officer and doorkeeper at the Executive Mansion named Alphonso Donn, later writing him that “For your devoted attention to President Lincoln, I gave you those clothes. Retain them always, in memory of the best and noblest man who ever lived.” But before Donn received the clothing, Mrs. Lincoln lent them first to a painter who was doing a portrait of Lincoln and then to a young sculptor named Lavinia “Vinnie” Reams who was working on a statue of Lincoln, so Donn didn’t take possession of the gift until sometime in the early 1870s.

Following Mrs. Lincoln’s wishes, Ms. Chilton explained, Donn retained the clothing, despite an offer from P.T. Barnum of \$20,000, keeping them in a chest in his Washington home until his death in 1886, when they passed to his son and daughter-in-law, Frank and Catherine Donn. Over the next thirty-five years Frank Donn tried to interest a variety of museums and similar institutions in taking possession of the clothing but was

unable to do so by the time he died in 1915. Subsequently, Frank's widow, Catherine, tried to get the federal government to purchase the clothing for \$7,500 and have it installed in the then-under-construction Lincoln Memorial in Washington, but was equally unsuccessful.

In 1921 Mrs. Donn suggested a plan by which a sponsor would pay her for the clothing, which would then be donated to the Smithsonian Institute, but the idea fell through when Robert Lincoln expressed his wish that the relics not be displayed. She subsequently offered to sell the clothing to Brooks Brothers for \$20,000, but the clothier turned

down her offer as well. In 1924, the clothing was sold at auction for \$6,500, but the purchaser, who identified himself only as "Mr. Douglas," never picked up his purchase, even though he had paid for it. Mrs. Donn did, however, receive her money for the sale, and had the clothing returned to her. Over the next four decades additional efforts were made by Alphonso Donn's descendants to sell the clothing, including weathering a controversy over its authenticity, until at last, in 1968, the American Trucking Association Foundation purchased the clothing for \$25,000 and donated it to the nation.

Presented to the Department of the Inte-

rior and put on display at Ford's Theatre, the clothing continued to be exhibited there until 1990, when Brooks Brothers paid for the coat to be preserved and created a replica that was given to the Department to celebrate the reopening of the newly renamed Ford's Theatre Museum. Since 2007, however, the original has been in storage and the one displayed in the museum is a copy. As Ms. Chilton wrote in her book, although the greatcoat is associated with the assassination, "It is not a bloody trophy." Instead, she says, it is "a witness to, and symbol of compassion, courage, and tenacity."

NOVEMBER 8, 2023

President Paul Ellis-Graham began our final meeting of the year by welcoming all the attendees and thanking them for coming. He said he particularly wanted to welcome the speaker for the evening, Julian Sher, as well as first-time attendees Jan Kasoff and Bill Halstead. Then, as we do every year at our November meeting, one of our members—this year it was Paula Hopewell, a native Kentuckian like Abraham Lincoln, as the president noted—recited the Gettysburg Address, after which dinner was served.

Once dinner was concluded, Mr. Ellis-Graham introduced Mr. Sher, author of *The North Star: Canada and the Civil War Plots Against Lincoln*, which was published earlier this year. Based in Montreal, Mr. Sher has been an investigative journalist for Canada's two leading newspapers, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*; a filmmaker who has filmed, written, and produced major documentaries around the world; and the author of seven books including, in addition to *The North Star*, *Until You Are Dead: The Wrongful Conviction of Steven Truscott* and *Somebody's Daughter: The Hidden Story of America's Prostituted Children and the Battle to Save Them*.

Opening his presentation, Mr. Sher explained that during the Civil War, British North America—as Canada was known at the time—was, as it had been before the war, a safe haven for enslaved people escaping to the north. Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the Underground Railroad, he estimated, as many as 30,000 people crossed the border to freedom. At the same time, although most Canadians favored the Union due to their opposition to slavery, a majority of the



Julian Sher

Canadian elite, including most of their political leaders, favored the South. There were several reasons for this, he said, but the most significant were their economic ties to the Confederacy and the fact that they could relate better to the Southern elite because, like their Southern counterparts, they considered themselves wealthy, sophisticated aristocrats. The Canadian newspapers were also mostly anti-Lincoln, so much so that they cheered when Lincoln was assassinated, arguing that it was justified by Lincoln's behavior toward the South. Because of this, and because Canada was neutral during the war, it was also a safe haven for Confederates who were involved in efforts to undermine the Union.

In fact, in February 1864, Confederate President Jefferson Davis provided Secretary of State Judah Benjamin with a million dollars to set up a secret service that included a group in Canada led by Jacob Thompson, who was given a slush fund of \$640,000 for his use. Confederate agents were subsequently able to fund a number of operations from their bases in Toronto, Montreal, and Niagara, the best known of which was the

raid on St. Albans, Vermont in October 1864. Led by Bennett Young, a band of Confederates robbed three banks of \$260,000, killed one person, and tried to burn the town. They escaped across the border but were caught and put on trial in Montreal. The court, however, ruled that because they were soldiers under military orders, Canada's neutrality made it impossible to extradite them to the United States. Officials did manage to retrieve \$90,000 of the money they had stolen, but no one ever learned what happened to the rest.

Another operation, as Mr. Sher explained, was an unsuccessful raid on New York City in November 1864. Under the direction of John Headley, ten Confederates came to the city intending to launch a terrorist attack using "Greek Fire" on nine hotels along Broadway. (As it happened, at the time the three Booth brothers—Junius, Edwin, and John Wilkes—were performing in a theater on Broadway, the only time the three brothers ever acted together on the stage, the purpose of which was to raise money to build the Shakespeare statue that is now in Central Park. When smoke started to come into the theater, Edwin calmed the crowd and the show went on.) No one was killed, but there was a considerable amount of damage done. Even though it quickly became known that Southern operatives were to blame, all but one, Robert Cobb Kennedy, who had tried to burn Barnum's Museum, escaped. Kennedy was tried by a military court, convicted, and hanged in Brooklyn the following year.

Some members of the conspiracy plotting to kidnap, and later assassinate, Abraham

Lincoln were also connected to Confederate operations in Canada. John Surratt was well-known as a courier for the Confederacy, carrying messages back and forth between Richmond and Montreal. Also, in October 1864, John Wilkes Booth was in Montreal, where he got the names of some Southerners who might help him in the developing plot, including Dr. Samuel Mudd. During the trial of the Lincoln conspirators it was argued that the Confederate government in Richmond, along with its operatives in Canada, had been involved in the plot, but no evidence was ever found to confirm it.

As Mr. Sher explained, however, there were also a good number of Canadians who crossed the border to support the Union

cause. Among them were two doctors: Anderson Abbott, Canada's first Black doctor to work in Union hospitals; and Alexander Augusta, a graduate of the University of Toronto who became the highest-ranking Black doctor in the Union army. Another was Emma Edmonds, a woman from New Brunswick who not only disguised herself as a man and joined the Union army as a nurse but also wrote a book about it after the war. When she was wounded, being concerned that her gender would be discovered, she deserted, which resulted in her being unable to receive an army pension after the war. However, when she at last revealed her true identity, a congressman helped her restore her reputation and managed to get a bill passed to reinstate

her on the army rolls and receive a pension. Finally, yet another Canadian, Edward Doherty, a native of Quebec, was in charge of the army unit that captured and killed John Wilkes Booth.

There was a particularly lively question-and-answer period after Mr. Sher finished his presentation—a good number of the attendees knew relatively little about what he had discussed, and there were a great many questions which he clearly took pleasure in answering. At last, returning to the lectern, Mr. Ellis-Graham closed the meeting by wishing everyone a good holiday season, and expressing his hope that he would see everyone again at our next meeting in February.

C A R L S A N D B U R G A D D R E S S E S C O N G R E S S O N A B R A H A M L I N C O L N

As part of the celebration of the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, author and poet Carl Sandburg was invited to address a joint session of Congress on February 12, 1959. At the time, Sandburg was an obvious choice. His six-volume biography—the two-volume *The Prairie Years* (1926) and the four-volume *The War Years* (1939)—is, as one critic put it, “for better or worse, the best-selling, most widely read, and most influential” biography of our sixteenth president.” By 1959 the books had already been published in several editions, including a one-volume version prepared by Sandburg in 1954. In addition, the first two volumes had provided the basis for Robert Sherwood's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, in 1938, and *The War Years* had been the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for History in 1940 as well as a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Sandburg's work, in other words, exposed a great many Americans to Abraham Lincoln's story, and continued to do so for many years afterward.

Despite its popularity, though, the biography had its detractors. In a review in the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* in 1926, William Barton, author of numerous books on Lincoln, wrote that *The Prairie Years* “is not history, is not even biography” because it lacked original research and relied on questionable evidence. He did, however, also say that the book was “real literature and a delightful and important contribution to the ever-lengthening shelf of really good books about Lincoln.” Barton had a point, as did

others who have had similar complaints in the years since. So it is not surprising that, like Sandburg's books, although his address to Congress is imbued with a simple eloquence, it does have its faults. It contains some misquotes, incorrect dates, wrong party affiliations, and other errors. Even so, in it the author brilliantly found a way to share his love and understanding of the man who was Abraham Lincoln not only with the members of Congress but with all those who would have the opportunity to hear his words. In fact, listening to Sandburg while reading the address can add another dimension to the experience, and an audio recording of the address is available at:

<https://pastdaily.com/2014/02/05/words-lincoln-carl-sandburg-1959-past-daily-reference-room/>.

Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is as hard as rock and soft as drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect. Here and there across centuries come reports of men alleged to have these contrasts. And the incomparable Abraham Lincoln, born 150 years ago this day, is an approach if not a perfect realization of this character.

In the time of the April lilacs in the year 1865, on his death, on the casket with his body was carried north and west a thousand miles; and the American people wept as never

before; bells sobbed, cities wore crepe; people stood in tears and with hats off as the railroad burial car paused in the leading cities of seven states ending its journey at Springfield, Illinois, the hometown.

During the four years he was President, he at times, especially in the first three months, took to himself the powers of a dictator: he commanded the most powerful army still then assembled in modern warfare; he enforced conscription of soldiers for the first time in American history; under imperative necessity he abolished the right of habeas corpus; he directed politically and spiritually the wild, massive, turbulent forces let loose in Civil War, a war truly, as time has shown, of brothers.

He argued and pleaded for compensated emancipation of the slaves. The slaves were property, they were on the tax books along with horses and cattle, the valuation of each slave written next to his name on the tax assessor's books. And failing to get action on compensated emancipation, as a Chief Executive having war powers, he issued the paper by which he declared the slaves to be free under “military necessity.” In the end, nearly \$4,000,000 worth of property was taken away from those who were legal owners of it, property confiscated, wiped out as by fire and turned to ashes, at his instigation and executive direction. Chattel property recognized and lawful for 300 years was expropriated, seized without payment.

In the month the war began, he told his secretary John Hay, “My policy is to have no policy.” Three years later in a letter to a Ken-

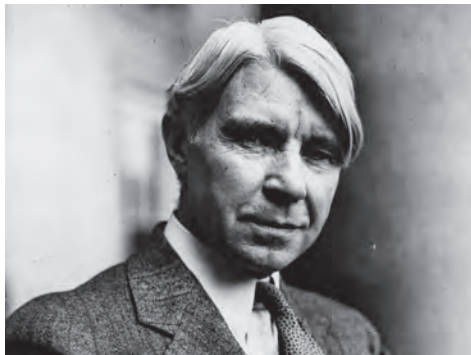
tucky friend made public, he confessed plainly, “I have been controlled by events.” His words at Gettysburg were sacred, yet strange with a color of the familiar: “We cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far beyond our poor power to add or detract.”

He could have said “the brave Union men.” Did he have a purpose in omitting the word “Union?” Was he keeping himself and his utterance clear of the passion that would not be good to look back at when the time came for peace and reconciliation? Did he mean to leave an implication that there were brave Union men and brave Confederate men, living and dead, who had struggled there? We do not know, of a certainty. Was he thinking of the Kentucky father whose two sons died in battle, one in Union blue, the other in Confederate gray, the father inscribing on the stone over their double grave, “God knows which was right?” We do not know.

Lincoln’s changing policies from time to time aimed at saving the Union. In the end his armies won and his nation became a world power immersed in international politics. In August of 1864, he wrote a memorandum that he expected, in view of the national situation, to lose the next November election. That month was so dark. But sudden military victory brought the tide his way: the vote was 2,200,000 for him and 1,800,000 against him.

Among his bitter opponents were such figures as Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, and Cyrus H. McCormick, inventor of the farm reaper. In all its essential propositions the Southern Confederacy had the moral support of powerful, respectable elements throughout the North, probably more than a million voters in the North believing in the justice of the Southern cause. While the war winds howled he insisted that the Mississippi was one river meant to belong to one country, that railroad connection from coast to coast must be pushed through and the Union Pacific Railroad made a reality.

While the luck of war wavered and broke and came again, as generals failed and campaigns were lost, he held enough forces of the North together to raise new armies and supply them until generals were found who made war as victorious war has always been made, with terror, frightfulness, destruction, and on both sides, north and south, valor and sacrifice beyond words of man to tell. In the mixed shame and blame of the immense wrongs of two crashing civilizations, often with nothing



Carl Sandburg

to say, he said nothing, slept not at all, and on occasions he was seen to weep in a way that made weeping appropriate, decent, majestic even, you might say.

As he rode alone on horseback near Soldiers’ Home on the edge of Washington one night his hat was shot off, a son he loved died as he watched at the bed in the White House, his wife was accused of betraying information to the enemy until denials from him were necessary. An Indiana man at the White House heard him say, “Voorhees, don’t it seem strange to you that I, who could never so much as cut off the head of a chicken, should be elected, or selected, into the midst of all this blood?” He tried to guide General Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, a Democrat, three times governor of Massachusetts, in the governing of some 17 of the 48 parishes of Louisiana controlled by the Union armies, an area holding a fourth of the slaves of Louisiana. He would like to see the state recognize the Emancipation Proclamation, “...and while she is at it, I think it would not be objectionable for her to adopt some practical system by which the two races could gradually live themselves out of their old relation to each other, and both come out better prepared for the new. Education for the young blacks should be included in the plan.” To Governor Michel Hahn, elected in 1864 by a majority of the 11,000 white male voters who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Union, Lincoln wrote, “Now that you are about to have a convention which, among other things, will probably define the elective franchise, I barely suggest for your private consideration, whether some of the colored people may not be let in – as for instance, the very intelligent and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks.”

Among the million words in the Lincoln utterance record, he interprets himself with a more keen precision than someone else

offering to explain him. His simple opening of the House Divided speech in 1858 serves for today: “If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it.” To his Kentucky friend Joshua F. Speed he wrote in 1855, “Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation we began by declaring that ‘All men are created equal, except Negroes. When the Know Nothings get control it will read ‘All men are created equal except Negroes and foreigners and Catholics.’ When it comes to this, I shall prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty.”

Infinitely tender was his word from a White House balcony to a crowd on the White House lawn: “I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man’s bosom,” or to a military governor: “I shall do nothing through malice. What I deal with is too vast for malice.” He wrote for Congress to read on December 1, 1863, “In times like the present men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity.” Like an ancient psalmist he warned Congress, “Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor or dishonor to the latest generation.” Wanting Congress to break and to forget past traditions, his words came keen and flashing: “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present. We must think anew, we must act anew, we must disenthral ourselves.” And they are the sort of words that actuated the mind and will of the men who created and navigated that marvel of the sea, the Nautilus, and her voyage from Pearl Harbor and under the North Pole icecap

The people of many other countries take Lincoln now for their own. He belongs to them. He stands for decency, honest dealing, plain talk, and funny stories. “Look where he came from, and don’t he know all us strugglers, and wasn’t he a kind of tough struggler all his life right up to the finish?” Something like that you can hear in any nearby neighborhood and across the seas. Millions there are who take him as a personal treasure. He had something they would like to see spread everywhere over the world. Democracy? We can’t find the words to say exactly what it is, but he had it. In his blood and bones he carried it. In the breath of his speeches and writ-

ings, it is there. Popular government? Republican institutions? Government where the people have the say-so, one way or another telling their elected rulers what they want? He had the idea. He embodied it. It's there in the lights and shadows of his personality, a mystery that can be lived but never fully spoken in words. Our good friend the poet and playwright Mark Van Doren tells us now, "To me, Lincoln seems, in some ways, the most interesting man who ever lived . . . He was gentle but this gentleness was com-

bined with a terrific toughness, an iron strength."

And how did Lincoln say he would like to be remembered? Something of it is in this present occasion in the atmosphere of this room. His beloved friend, Representative Owen Lovejoy of Kingston, Illinois, had died in May of 1864, and friends wrote to Lincoln, and he replied that the pressure of duties kept him from joining them in efforts toward a marble monument to Lovejoy, the last sentence of his letter saying, "Let him have the

marble monument along with the well assured and more enduring one in the hearts of those who love liberty, unselfishly, for all men." Today we may say perhaps that the well-assured and most enduring memorial to Lincoln is invisibly there, today, tomorrow and for a long, long time yet to come. It is there in the hearts of the lovers of liberty – this country has always had them in crises – men and women who understand that wherever there is freedom there have been those who fought, toiled, and sacrificed for it.

THE LINCOLN GROUP OF NEW YORK AT THE LINCOLN FORUM

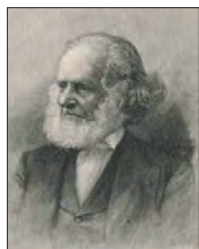
Fifteen LGNY members attended the 28th Annual Lincoln Forum Symposium at the Wyndham Gettysburg Hotel in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania from November 16th through the 18th. Seen from left to right are Hank Ballone, Tom Horrocks Henry Cohen, Steve



The LGNY at the Lincoln Forum

Koppelman, Ross Heller, Joe Truglio, Stuart Schneider, Harold Holzer, Jack Billig, Rob Kaplan, Priscilla Frein, Paul Ellis-Graham, Paula Hopewell, Bill Halstead, and Chris Garrabrant.

A LITTLE-KNOWN LINCOLN INSPIRATION

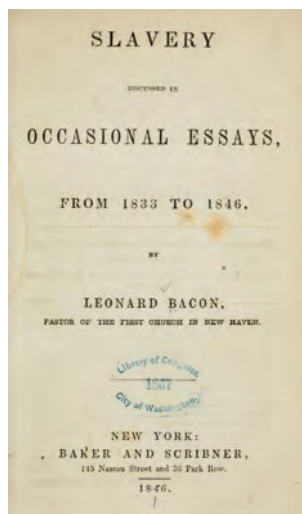


Leonard Bacon

There have over the years been numerous studies that discuss the writings from which Abraham Lincoln received inspiration, both divine and secular. Most frequently mentioned, of course, are the Bible and Shakespeare, but researchers

have uncovered more than 100 other sources ranging from Aesop's *Fables* (6th Century BCE) to Noah Webster's *American Spelling Book* (1825) to Karl von Clausewitz's *On War* (1832). One of the sources whose impact can be readily seen is a collection titled *Slavery Discussed in Occasional Essays, from 1833 to 1846* by Leonard Bacon (1802-1881).

According to Rufus Rockwell Wilson, author of *What Lincoln Read* (1932), "...there is little doubt that the book which most influenced his final views on the supreme issue of the time was [Bacon's book], published in 1846, eight years before the repeal of the Missouri Compromise called the Illinois lawyer back to public life. The son of that David



Bacon who planted the first settlement of New England men in the Western Reserve of Ohio, Leonard Bacon, was long pastor of the First Congregational Church of New Haven, and also from youth to age a defender of every cause that made for liberty and progress. His addresses opposing slavery, lucid in argument and moderate in spirit, strongly appealed to Lincoln, and their influence can

be traced in the latter's debates with Douglas. 'When, many years after the little book had been forgotten by the public,' writes Bacon's son, 'and slavery had fallen before the President's proclamation, it appeared from Lincoln's declaration that he owed to that book his definite, reasonable and irrefragable view of the slavery question, my father felt ready to sing the *Nunc Dimittis* [a Christian canticle the title of which means '(Lord) now you let (your servant) depart.]"

Bacon's influence on Lincoln's thinking is apparent throughout the book, but if further evidence is necessary, Richard Carwardine, discussing it in his book *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power*, cites a line from one of the essays that reads "If those laws by the Southern states, by virtue of which slavery exists there, and is what it is, are not wrong—nothing is wrong," a phrase clearly echoed in Lincoln's letter to Albert G. Hodges in April 1864. Bacon's book, incidentally, is included among the several little-known but interesting older books mentioned in the introduction to the list of new Lincoln books on page 11.



John E. Bingham

On the evening of April 14, 1865, a 19-year-old man originally from Williamsburg, Pennsylvania named John E. Bingham decided to go with some friends to Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, hoping to see General U.S. Grant who, it had been

announced, was to accompany the president and Mrs. Lincoln to a performance of *Our American Cousin*. Since, as it happened, the general and his wife chose instead to go home to New Jersey to see their children, Bingham never got to see Grant. What he did see – one of the most dramatic moments in American history – he recorded a week later in a letter to his uncle, John A. Bingham. At the time the older Mr. Bingham was a newly elected congressman from Ohio, who would soon afterward serve as both Assistant Judge Advocate General in the trial of Lincoln's accused assassins, a House manager in the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, and a principal framer of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The younger Mr. Bingham went on to study medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, as well as in Paris, London, and Vienna, and became a prominent physician in the Pacific Northwest, practicing in Oregon and Washington until he died on February 19, 1906.

Washington D.C. April 21, 1865

Dear Uncle,

You must excuse my negligence in not writing oftener of late, but the excitement which has prevailed for the last week has totally incapacitated me for any kind of labor. Day after day passed and every day brought with it good news and a prospect of the speedy termination of the war. Our cup of happiness was filled to the brim, and nothing could exceed the excitement

with which the news of the Surrender of Lee's army was received.

Mr. Lincoln had been pressed on several occasions to make a speech and finally did, taking for his subject the future prospects of the Country – the reconstruction of the Union, &c. I was present and heard it although it was raining, and now when I think of it I can almost see him delivering his address. On last Friday, just one week ago, I was told that Grant & wife would accompany the President to the Theatre. I must confess that I never yet have seen Grant, and as I was anxious for a glimpse I accompanied a couple of friends to the theatre. Considering the object of our going we took greater pains in trying to get a full view of the box and its contents, than in getting a good position for witnessing the performance. At about half past eight the President entered accompanied by his wife, Miss Harris and Major Rathbone.

We were all very much disappointed on not seeing General Grant but we certainly had good cause to be thankful afterwards ("Harpers Weekly" contains a tolerable good description of the assassination, with the exception that the President and his wife occupied a different position and that the assassin fired with his left hand.) The assassination took place I think shortly after ten o'clock. Shortly after the shot was heard Booth sprang to the stage. As soon as he recovered himself he drew a large knife and shouted "sic semper tyrannis" the motto of Virginia. Looking up to a man seated near me, who afterwards proved an acquaintance, he said "I have done it." By that time he had crossed the stage and partly turning he waved his dagger on high and shouted, "The South's avenged!" This was the last we saw of him.

His face is impressed on my mind so strongly that I think I never will forget it. His eyes gleamed like fire, his skin almost white to transparency and his jet black hair waving in accordance with his motions. But to continue. After hearing the motto I thought that something serious had happened and I with the rest rushed to the box. Such a sight as I saw there was enough to touch the heart of a savage.

Mr. Lincoln was stretched on the floor with his head pillowed in the lap of Miss Laura Keene. His brains were slowly oozing out into her lap. Mrs. Lincoln was frantic, screaming "O my God! They have killed him, they have killed him!" He was taken to a house opposite where everything was done but to no avail. Hour after hour the crowd wailed and lingered thinking perhaps he might be spared, but when they were told "he is dead" they all turned away each to his home. Some crying, some praying but most of them cursing the wretch who took his life.

I never saw anything that would compare with the obsequies of last Wednesday. The procession was more than two hours passing, and I have heard it spoken of and do not doubt it myself that there were one hundred and fifty-thousand people in the Avenue and fifteenth street. I am exceedingly sorry to hear of Jim Caruthers' death, and sympathize with Pheobe Jinnici [?] & all.

The weather here is exceedingly pleasant. You can rest assured that Todd [John's brother serving in the army] is safe. None but Cavalry were engaged in that fight.

Goodbye.

Your loving nephew,
J. E. Bingham

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ON "THE PERPETUATION OF OUR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS"

"At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

—From a speech before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, January 27, 1838

COLLECTING LINCOLN "UNUSUALS"



'Merica Cap



Fishing Lure



Bandages



Stuffed Bear



Bobblehead



Commemorative Plate



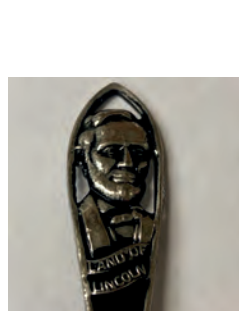
Shot Glass



Teapot



Nutcracker



Spoon

If the pages of *Antiques and the Arts Weekly* are any indication, there is a ready market among well-heeled Lincoln collectors for artifacts that are in one way or another connected to our sixteenth president. Last year, for example, two tickets for the Dress Circle at Ford's Theatre for the night of April 14, 1865, their right sides missing, presumably having been torn off by a ticket taker, were sold at auction for \$262,500. The year before there were several even more expensive items that went on the block. One of them, described as a "well-documented key to the presidential box" at the theater, began bidding at \$10,000 and ultimately sold for \$495,000. The same auction saw the sale of a pocketknife housed in a custom-fitted oak box and presented to Lincoln by the organizers of the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair after his visit there on June 16, 1864, the final price of which was \$519,000.

It's probably fair to say that most, if not all, Lincoln devotees would be more than happy to own any one of these items, but equally fair to say that the vast majority would never be able to afford them. Even so, a limited—and admittedly unscientific—survey among Lincoln fans suggests that even those on a relatively modest budget can, and do, surround themselves with Lincolniana, and at prices considerably lower than six figures. These include such mass-produced items as books, DVDs, videos, CDs, records, pictures, posters, paintings, busts, postcards, coins, stamps, bookends, and other collectibles. There is also, however, a subset of somewhat less-than-standard Lincoln-related items that might be called "unusuals," "oddities," or perhaps more appropriately what in Yiddish are referred to as *tchotchkes*, small objects that are decorative rather than strictly functional, many of which can be found on websites like eBay. While it's true that owning a pair of tickets from Ford's Theatre isn't the same as having an Abraham Lincoln Bobblehead, ultimately both serve the same purpose: to enable us to feel closer to a man we revere. Here are some examples.



Salt & Pepper



Lego Lincoln



Snow Globe



Socks



Rubber Duck



Smurf Lincoln



Train Model



Guitar Pick



Pipe



Root Beer Bottle Cap



Necktie

One of the stories included in J.E. Gallaher's *Best Lincoln Stories Tersely Told*, published in 1898, included a story by an unidentified clergyman who, having been impressed by Lincoln in one of his debates with Stephen A. Douglas, invited the Republican candidate to dine with him. In the course of the meal, as the clergyman related it, Lincoln remarked on "how much he felt the need of reading and what a loss it was to a man not to have grown up among books." "Men of force," the clergyman responded, "can get on pretty well without books. They do their own thinking instead of adopting what other men think." "Yes," replied Lincoln, "but books serve to show a man that those original thoughts of his aren't very new after all."

It would be interesting to hear what Lincoln might have to say about the originality, or lack thereof, of the thousands of books published about him, many of which would prove the truth of what he told his dinner companion. And yet, every year there are more new books, some of which, fortunately, show that there are at least some men—and women—who do in fact have original thoughts. The books on the list that follows attest to that truth. It is however important to note that, as usual, this is not a definitive list of Lincoln books published last year. What distinguishes them is that they are all new or new editions of adult nonfiction books published in hardcover and/or paperback by traditional publishers (i.e., not independently published) that are largely if not entirely about our sixteenth president.

It's also a good idea, though, to bear in mind that in addition to new books, there are a great many older books about or related to Lincoln whose copyrights have expired and are no longer in print—many of them published between the 1860s and 1930s—that may well have much to offer the interested reader. These are the books with unfamiliar authors and/or titles that are occasionally cited in the texts or bibliographies of more contemporary books. Thanks to websites like Amazon, AbeBooks, Alibris, and Biblio, original editions of these books are sometimes available, although often at prices well beyond the means of many readers. A considerable number of them, however, are available in print-on-demand editions produced by publishers that specialize in out-of-print titles, such as Forgotten Books, Kessinger Publications, BiblioLife, Scholar Select, and BiblioBazaar. These books are reprints of the



Lincoln & Tad Reading

original editions, usually trade paperbacks but sometimes hardcovers, that are well-bound, well-printed, and sold at considerably more reasonable prices on the same websites.

Among many other similar titles offered by these publishers one can find interesting, informative, and sometimes entertaining books such as Horatio Alger's *Abraham Lincoln, The Backwoods Boy* (1883); Leonard Bacon's *Slavery Discussed in Occasional Essays, from 1833 to 1846* (1846), a book said to have influenced Lincoln; Osborn H. Oldroyd's *The Poets' Lincoln: Tributes in Verse to the Martyred President* (1915); *The Life, Crime, and Capture of John Wilkes Booth* by George Alfred Townsend (1865); *The True Story of Mary, Wife of Lincoln* by Katherine Helm (1928), Mary Lincoln's niece; and one that might be of particular interest to members of the Lincoln Group of New York, *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Lincoln Fellowship, held at Delmonico's, New York City, Wednesday, February 12, 1908*, containing letters sent and speeches delivered to a forerunner of the LGNY by such Lincoln luminaries of the day as Alexander K. McClure, Jesse Weik, Joseph Oakleaf, and Frederick Hill Meserve.

Abraham Lincoln: A Life (Abridged) by Michael Burlingame, edited by Jonathan W. White, Johns Hopkins University Press, 720 pages, hardcover, \$34.95—A single-volume edition of the author's multi-award winning, two-volume biography originally published in 2009, and hailed as a definitive work on the subject, abridged and edited by Lincoln Prize-winner Jonathan White, with

new material added, and although a condensed edition, a full-bodied biography in its own right.

Abraham Lincoln and the Bible: A Complete Compendium by Gordon Leidner, Southern Illinois University Press, 260 pages, paperback, \$27.50—A brief biography emphasizing Lincoln's religious beliefs and focusing on his use of nearly 200 quotes from or allusions to the Bible, as cited in the *Collected Works*, along with a compendium of those uses arranged in order of their appearance in the King James Version.

Conflict of Command: George McClellan, Abraham Lincoln, and the Politics of War by George C. Rable, LSU Press, 496 pages, hardcover, \$49.95—A reinterpretation of Lincoln's contentious relationship with General George B. McClellan that focuses less on the military than the political aspects of that relationship, and in the process finds, despite the general's less-than-favorable reputation, much that was praiseworthy in him.

Differ We Must: How Lincoln Succeeded in a Divided America by Steve Inskeep, Penguin Press, 352 pages, hardcover, \$30.00—A series of discussions about Lincoln's interactions with sixteen individuals between 1849 and 1865, including both the well-known and the obscure, showing the interpersonal skills he employed to defuse differences between them and to gain the support of those with whom he disagreed.

Lincoln and California: The President, the War, and the Golden State by Brian McGinty, Potomac Books, 296 pages, hardcover, \$34.95—An explanation of what the author considers Lincoln's important but thus far overlooked relationship with California, both before and after the Civil War, including the part the state played in provoking the war and in helping the Union defeat the Confederacy, as well as histories of Lincoln's close friends who were closely associated with the state.

Lincoln Illuminated and Remembered by William C. Harris, University Press of Kansas, 248 pages, hardcover/paper, \$44.95/\$29.95—A series of essays on some of the lesser-known aspects of Lincoln's life and presidency, including his efforts to per-

suade the border states to abolish slavery, how the reaction to his “Spot” resolutions as a young congressman influenced his response to southern secession as president, and why he argued that “reverence for the law” should “become the political religion of the nation,” among other subjects.

The Lincoln Funeral Train by Michael Leavy, Arcadia Publishing, 128 pages, paperback, \$23.99—The latest relevant entry in the publisher’s “Images of America” series, an annotated collection of nearly 250 photographs chronicling “The Lincoln Special’s” twenty-day journey carrying Lincoln and his son Willie’s body from Washington to their final resting place in Springfield, Illinois.

The Lincoln Miracle: Inside the Republican Convention that Changed History by Edward Achorn, Atlantic Monthly Press, 512 pages, hardcover, \$30.00—Winner of the Lincoln Group of New York’s Award of Achievement, the behind-the-scenes story of the 1860 Republican presidential convention in Chicago, delineating the tactics of Lincoln’s campaign managers as they maneuvered their candidate into the nomination over frontrunners William Henry Seward, Salmon Chase,

and Edward Bates, in the process deftly conveying the excitement the convention’s participants themselves must have felt.

Lincoln’s God: How Faith Transformed a President and a Nation by Joshua Zeitz, Viking, 336 pages, hardcover, \$30.00—Combining a brief history of religion in antebellum America with discussion of Lincoln’s changing religious views, an argument that in order to gain political advantage Lincoln intentionally appealed to the then-current religious beliefs of Northern Protestants, largely by frequently using biblical language and exhibiting religious beliefs in his speeches and writings, as a result becoming, in the author’s words, the nation’s “first evangelical president.”

The North Star: Canada and the Civil War Plots Against Lincoln by Julian Sher, Knopf Canada, 480 pages, hardcover, \$28.00—A study of the involvement of Canadians on both sides of the American conflict, including those who assisted escaped slaves, volunteers who came south to serve in the Union army, the Canadian political and business elite who aided the Confederacy, and the Confederate agents who operated a spy network from

bases in Montreal and Toronto, some of whom were connected to John Wilkes Booth and members of his conspiracy.

Sovereign of a Free People: Lincoln, Slavery, and Majority Rule by James H. Read, University Press of Kansas, 432 pages, hardcover, \$39.95—An in-depth analysis of Lincoln’s strongly held belief that majority rule was “the only true sovereign of a free people,” and that while a constitutionally checked majority was not invariably correct in its decisions, it was nevertheless the most appropriate authority for dealing not only with routine political issues but also with major questions such as slavery.

Twelve Days: How the Union Nearly Lost Washington in the First Days of the Civil War by Tony Silber, Potomac Books, 400 pages, hardcover, \$36.95—A detailed account of events between the surrender of Fort Sumter on April 13, 1861 and the arrival of troops to protect Washington on April 25, focusing on the four principal scenes of action—Washington, Maryland (all that stood between Washington and the Confederates), Northern troops on their way to the capital, and Confederate planning and military movements.

THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Among the thousands who attended the 100th anniversary celebration of the Lincoln Memorial in 2022 were several LGNY members who brought with them a wreath created for the occasion by President Paul Ellis-Graham’s wife, Mary.



AWARD COMMITTEE: A special thanks to our dedicated members who served on the 2023 award committee:
Rob Kaplan, Chair / Anthony Czarnecki / Paula Hopewell

The Wide Awake Bulletin, the newsletter of the Lincoln Group of New York, has been published annually since 2004, and is named for the groups of young men who, in 1860, demonstrated their support on behalf of Abraham Lincoln’s candidacy for the presidency. We welcome your feedback, letters, and comments. Please direct correspondence to Rob Kaplan, Editor, *The Wide Awake Bulletin*, 399 Furnace Dock Road, Cortlandt Manor, NY 10567—robkaplan@optonline.net.