

Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Newsletter
May 2006

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RECENT NEWS

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Newsletter!

The Commission is developing plans for more than 40 unique programs and events to commemorate the 200th birthday of America's greatest president in 2009, and the Newsletter is intended to keep you informed of their progress. In this issue:

- A report on ALBC's meeting on May 1
- A calendar of upcoming Lincoln-themed events
- 'Live the Legacy' - how you can be involved
- Lincoln in the News
- Forever Free - the traveling panel exhibit

The Commission thanks you for your interest in their work and invites you to take an active part in the activities being planned nationally and locally. Together, the United States will celebrate the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln in a manner that is "fitting and proper" for our greatest president.

CALENDAR

April 19 - June 2

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Traveling panel exhibition organized by the Huntington Library (San Marino, CA) and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (New York, NY), in cooperation with the American Library Association, with major funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. (On-going, various locations)

Hays Public Library, Hays, KS
Ypsilanti Public Library, Ypsilanti, MI

May 13 – October 29

Mrs. President: From Martha to Laura

An exhibit on the history of America's First Ladies with artifacts, White House furnishing, intimate letters and other writings and videos.

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum
Springfield, IL

May 15, 6:30 p.m.

Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Michael F. Bishop, executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, leads scholars James L. Swanson and Edward Steers Jr. in a conversation about Lincoln's assassination and its aftermath.

Smithsonian Resident Associate Program
Washington, DC

June 1-4

Lincoln As President

Colloquium with Allen Guelzo and Mark E. Neely

George Mason University School of Law
Arlington, VA

June 3, 9:30 a.m.

"Living with the Lincoln Legacy"

Lecture by Brian Knight

Hildene Beckwith Room

Hildene Estate

Manchester, Vermont

June 14 – August 4

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Leavenworth Public Library, Leavenworth, KS

June 15-16

Third Annual Lincoln Institute for Teachers

"The World of Abraham Lincoln: The Frontier Years"

Call 800-489-4474 or email hsi@usi.edu

Historic Southern Indiana

University of Southern Indiana

Evansville, IN

July 8, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Descendants Reunion

Descendants from the original New Salem residents will be visiting throughout the day. Programs on the history of New Salem will be announced at the Visitor Center.
Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site
Petersburg, IL

August 16 – September 29

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Irving Public Library
Irving, TX

August 25

Legacy: Abraham Lincoln in the Presidential Years

<http://sluma.slu.edu/legacylincoln.htm>

Opening of an exhibit that will feature autographed manuscripts as well as significant historic artifacts relating to the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

St. Louis University
St. Louis, MO

August 25 – October 20

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Virginia City High School & Community Library
Virginia City, NV

September 14 – October 27

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Benicia Public Library, Benicia, CA
and
Oxnard Public Library, Oxnard, CA

October 11 – November 24

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

San Diego Public Library
San Diego, CA

October 19-21

James Madison and Abraham Lincoln

A conference sponsored by the International Lincoln Center at Louisiana State University in Shreveport. Director William D. Pederson has issued a call for papers. For more information, call 318-797-5138 or email wpederso@lsus.edu.

November 3 – December 22

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Park City Library

Park City, UT

November 9 – December 21

Forever Free: Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ppo/currentprograms/foreverfree/foreverfreeabraham.htm>

Brigham City Library, Brigham City, UT

and

Multnomah County Library, Portland, OR

November 16-18

Lincoln Forum Symposium

<http://www.theincolnforum.org/symposiumSchedule06.html>

“The Genius of Abraham Lincoln”

Gettysburg College

Gettysburg, PA

November 18, 1:00 p.m.

Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremonies

Annual parade of Civil War living history and reenactment groups through Gettysburg with ceremonies to follow at the G.A.R. Memorial and the High Water Mark Monument. Sponsored by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

Gettysburg, PA

November 18

4th Annual Luminaria

Luminary candles will be placed on each Civil War grave as a testament to the sacrifices made there in 1863. Sponsored by the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg. For more information, contact Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg, 717-334-0772.

Soldiers National Cemetery

Gettysburg, PA

November 19, 1:00 p.m.

143rd Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address

An annual observance with brief memorial services. Sponsored by the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania and held in conjunction with the Lincoln Forum Symposium (see above).

COMMISSION MEETING

ALBC Endorses Projects

Eight projects, including a children's song about Abraham Lincoln and a documentary series on medical practices during the Civil War, were endorsed by the Abraham Lincoln

Bicentennial Commission at its May 1 meeting at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial in southern Indiana.

At the invitation of Commissioner Darrel Bigham, the Commission met at the Memorial, located near Lincoln City, Indiana. The site marks the farm where the Lincoln family lived from 1816, when Abraham was 7 years old, to 1830, when they moved to Macon County, Illinois. Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the president's mother, is buried in the pioneer cemetery located at the site.

In addition to voting to approve the eight endorsement requests, Commissioners agreed to the creation of a finance committee; continued their discussion on a possible partnership with the National History Day organization; reviewed a preliminary proposal for an international Lincoln conference at Oxford University; and heard a report on activities of the Lincoln Tri-State (Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois) working group; and received reports on continuing program and communications developments.

Projects endorsed by the Commission are granted permission to use the ALBC logo in their promotion. In addition, endorsed projects will be listed on the ALBC Web site. Information on how to apply for ALBC endorsement can be found on the Web <http://www.lincolnbicentennial.gov/planning/>.

Projects granted the ALBC endorsement on May 1 include:

- *A Man Named Abraham Lincoln*, by Boston-based singer-songwriter Gary Cherone, is an educational and patriotic song featuring simple lyrics which celebrate Lincoln's life and legacy. Released in January 2006 to coincide with Lincoln's birthday, the song is intended to inspire children and adults to learn more about the 16th president.
- "Now He Belongs to the Ages: Lincoln's America" symposium, organized by the Abraham Lincoln Museum and Library in conjunction with the Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn. This two-day symposium, Oct. 20-21, 2006, will address changes wrought by Lincoln's presidency and the Civil War, the traumatic aftermath of his assassination, and the attempts to reunify the country after the Civil War.
- *Civil War Medicine: A Documentary Series* was proposed by the Abraham Lincoln Foundation of the Union League of Philadelphia, which is underwriting the production by JAMCO Films. Lincoln's interest and concern for the care of battlefield wounds changed the course of wartime medicine and fostered innovation in the field of medicine. This four-part series planned for broadcast on PBS will explore Lincoln's influence and his legacy in the field of medicine.
- Presidential Academy for American History and Civics. Fifty secondary teachers will participate in the two-week Academy, administered by the Ashbrook Center for Public Affairs at Ashland University in Ohio. They will focus on the pivotal turning points in American history memorialized by the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and King's "I Have A Dream" speech.

- *Our American Cousin* opera, composed by Eric Sawyer with libretto by John Shoptaw, tells the story of Lincoln's assassination from the perspective of the actors presenting the comedy of the same name at Ford's Theater in April 1865. It will premiere at the Academy of Music in Northampton, Mass., in April 2007, as part of a weeklong festival honoring the civil rights movement and Lincoln's impact on American democracy.
- *Apart From That*, a play by Theseus Roche of the Manhattan Youth Players, is a loose recreation of the April 14, 1865, performance of *Our American Cousin*. The target audience is school-aged children.
- Bicentennial Celebration of the Marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks at the Lincoln Homestead State Park in Kentucky will serve as the kick-off of the services and programs of the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. The one-day event on June 3, 2006, will be centered around the premier of a new theater performance of the wedding in the context of its importance to Lincoln's personal and professional life.
- Annual Lincoln Days Celebration – October 14-15, 2006 at Hodgenville, Kentucky. This festival, held for over 30 years, promotes the influence of Lincoln's Kentucky years on his future politics and policies, and features reenactment activities, ceremonies, rail splitting, frontier attire, pioneer games, and other activities.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation

With funding from the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, an acclaimed traveling panel exhibition titled *Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation*, will extend its run through 2011, visiting an additional 63 public and university libraries across the United States. The exhibit was originally scheduled to conclude its initial three-year run at the end of 2006.

The exhibit is organized by the Huntington Library of San Marino, California, and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York City, in cooperation with the American Library Association. It draws upon original documents in the collections of the Huntington Library and the Gilder Lehrman Institute.

Though Americans might agree that President Lincoln saved the Union, his role in the destruction of slavery in the United States and the nature of his views on racial equality have always attracted controversy. Was Abraham Lincoln really the "Great Emancipator?" Or did Lincoln reluctantly embrace emancipation only after the actions of

abolitionists in the North and enslaved African Americans in the South left him no other choice?

Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation demonstrates that slavery was the underlying cause of the Civil War. It also shows that it was the slavery controversy that handed the presidency to an unlikely nominee named Abraham Lincoln, a moderate former Whig with no executive experience and little prior claim to national prominence. Finally, the exhibit tells how it was that Lincoln, a gradualist who had rejected immediate abolition, became the president who abruptly abolished slavery.

The exhibit does not present a Lincoln biography, but rather focuses on the president's evolving approach to emancipation, and on the masterful way in which he worked to prepare the northern populace for the end of slavery. The thesis of *Forever Free* is that from the summer of 1862 on, Abraham Lincoln was the unwavering champion of unconditional freedom for all the slaves in America, and that, until the end of life, he continued to move toward a recognition that the freed people deserved the rights of citizenship. The exhibit reveals Lincoln as a consummate politician. His seeming reluctance, his apparent indifference to the justice of emancipation, was actually part of a highly successful strategy.

Forever Free is organized chronologically in six thematic sections. The first section, "Young Lincoln's America," briefly introduces visitors to the contradiction inherent in the creation of the slaveholding republic, and moves on to realities of American slavery and white racism that Abraham Lincoln encountered as a young man and an aspiring politician.

The second section, "The House Dividing," covers the period from Lincoln's return to the political arena in response to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 until his election as the first Republican president in 1860, an event that was closely followed by the secession of the seven lower South slave states.

Section three, "War for the Union," reveals Lincoln trying first to prevent secession and Civil War, and then, waging war of limited objectives – to restore the old "Union as it was," with slavery still intact in the South.

The fourth section of the exhibit, "A New Birth of Freedom," examines Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree, the most revolutionary step ever taken by an American president, completely transformed the character of the Civil War.

The fifth section, "War for Union and Freedom," continues the treatment introduced in section four of the essential contribution of Black fighting men to Union victory. Finally, the sixth section, "Legacies," examines the final months of the Civil War, and of Lincoln's life.

Through June 2, the exhibit can be seen at Hays Public Library in Hays, Kansas, and at the Ypsilanti Public Library in Ypsilanti, Michigan. From June 14 to August 4, the exhibit will be on display at the Leavenworth Public Library, Leavenworth, Kansas.

The second tour of *Forever Free*, underwritten by the ALBC, will open September 14 at the Benicia Public Library in Benicia, California, and simultaneously at the Oxnard Public Library, Oxnard, California.

LINCOLN IN THE NEWS

Penny Remains Popular

Abraham Lincoln is the most favorite president featured on U.S. currency, according to a recent poll, and two-thirds of Americans want to keep the penny as legal tender.

The 8th Annual Coinstar National Currency Poll, a consumer study that provides a look at Americans and their money, polled the U.S. public over 2005 to explore the practicality and popularity of the penny. The poll also found that:

- four out of five people will still pick up a penny from the ground
- 73% of women and 58% of men want to keep the penny in circulation
- only 27% of Americans want to eliminate the penny
- Abraham Lincoln beats out George Washington -- 28 percent to 25 percent -- as the most popular president on U.S. currency

In December, President Bush signed legislation promoted by the ALBC that mandates the first major redesign of the penny in 50 years. In 2009, the Bicentennial year, the U.S. mint will release pennies with four new tails-side designs with images reflective of Lincoln's life in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Washington, DC.

Kentucky Legislature Funds State ALBC

Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher on April 25 approved the state legislature's two-year appropriation of \$4 million dollars for the state's Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. In addition, the Louisville will receive \$2 million for a new Lincoln memorial along the city's Ohio riverfront. National ALBC member Tommy Turner, who co-chairs Kentucky's state commission, also reported that another \$4 million was appropriated for local Lincoln Bicentennial initiatives.

Illinois, New York Governors Announce State Commissions

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and New York Gov. George Pataki recently named the members of their states' Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commissions.

Blagojevich, who created Illinois' ALBC by executive order in February, named its 40 commissioners on April 19, in conjunction with the first anniversary of the opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

In addition to statewide constitutional officers and other elected officials, Illinois' commission includes representatives from academia, business, the arts, community development, civil rights, and historic preservation organizations.

Pataki announced the establishment of New York State's commission on Feb. 19, with Harold Holzer and William F. Howard as co-chairs. Holzer, who is senior vice president for external affairs at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, is a co-chair of the national ALBC. Howard, first deputy secretary to the governor, serves as Pataki's representative to the national ALBC's Governors' Council.

In addition to the establishment of the state commission, Pataki also announced the creation of a Lincoln Commemorative Marker Program, which will commemorate Lincoln's travels and appearances in New York State.

'LIVE THE LEGACY'

...simple ways you can be involved in the Bicentennial

Commemorative Bicentennial Coin

Please phone, fax, or email your congressional representatives to cosponsor H.R. 2808 in the House and S. 811 in the Senate, legislation to create a commemorative coin in honor of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday in 2009.

Currently, there are 88 cosponsors in the House of the 290 necessary. In the Senate, where 67 cosponsors are needed to bring the bill to a vote, there are currently 14 cosponsors.

Proceeds from the sale of these collectible commemorative coins will fund bicentennial programs and activities. You can help us achieve the required two-thirds cosponsorship in both houses of Congress, and produce a "fitting and proper" tribute to our greatest president.

Contact information for your Senators and Representatives can be found in the Blue Pages section of your phone book, and on the Web at www.senate.gov and at www.house.gov.