

# Kentucky

Kentucky Humanities Council Inc.

*humanities*

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The Lincoln Issue



## Lincoln to the Fore, and a Fond Farewell

Dear Friends,

Welcome to a special issue honoring Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday on February 12, 2009. We hope you'll enjoy this collection of insightful articles that look at the great president and his legacy from a variety of perspectives.

John E. Kleber writes of Lincoln with a constant view to his lifelong ties to Kentucky. Kleber's article—"Shall Any Claim Come Before the Mother?"—is a superb overview of Lincoln's life and career. In "A Power Trio," James C. Klotter focuses on Lincoln's relationship with two Lexingtonians who played major roles in his life, Henry Clay and Mary Todd. Jonathan Jeffrey recounts the fascinating stories of the many Lincoln memorials that have arisen in Kentucky over the past hundred years—and are still rising—in "Now He Belongs to the Ages."

Slavery was the issue that dominated American politics during the Lincoln era. From Karolyn Smardz Frost we get "Flight to Freedom," the amazing story of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, whose bold flight from slavery in Kentucky ended in Canada. There, as Kentucky slave catchers tried to reach across the border to drag them back, the Blackburns made legal history. Their case turned Canada into the runaway slave's promised land.

And there's more to discover, including a useful chronology of Lincoln's life, the origins of Kentucky's many Lincoln place names, and an essay on the conflicted legacy of Lincoln's wartime rival, Jefferson Davis. The president of the Confederacy was a Kentuckian too—2008 is his bicentennial year.

This special issue is just one of the ways the Humanities Council is celebrating the Lincoln bicentennial, and there's big news about one of our other Lincoln programs: *Our Lincoln*, the musical and dramatic tribute that was such a smash in Lexington in February 2008, is on the way to Washington! We'll present *Our Lincoln* at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on February 2, 2009. See page 48 for details—and tickets.

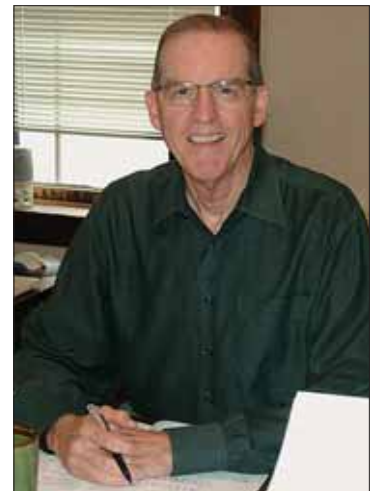
Finally, some news about this magazine. This issue is my last as editor of *Kentucky Humanities*. After almost nineteen years of doing my best to help advance the noble goals of the Kentucky Humanities Council, I am moving on. Editing *Kentucky Humanities* has been a rare opportunity and a labor of love. Your compliments and encouragement—and constructive criticism—have been the best rewards an editor could hope for. My deepest thanks for your attention and support.

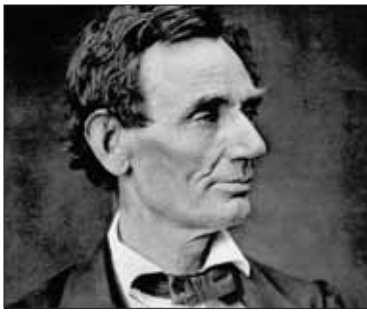
Beginning with the April 2009 issue, *Kentucky Humanities* will be in the capable hands of the new editor, Julie Nelson Satterly. Julie is an outstanding journalist who comes to the Council from the world of newspapers, most recently as the editor and publisher of the *Oldham Era*. Read all about her on page 49.

Now I'm off to join the rank and file of my favorite special interest group—the readers of *Kentucky Humanities*. Best wishes always, and happy reading.

*Charles Thompson*

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# Kentucky

The Lincoln Issue

## humanities

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On the cover: Bust of Abraham Lincoln by Robert Berks. Photograph by Sid Webb.

## “The Philistines Are Upon Us”

In her Civil War diary, Josie Underwood of Bowling Green reflected Kentuckians’ dislike of Abraham Lincoln—and she was a Unionist.

**J**OHANNA Louise (Josie) Underwood was born in 1840 to one of Bowling Green’s wealthiest families. The Underwoods lived on a beautiful farm called Mt. Air. By the time she began her diary in December 1860, Josie was a reigning belle of Bowling Green. Knowledgeable and outspoken, she painted a vivid picture of the hardships and heartaches the Civil War visited upon her prosperous town and its people. The Confederates were the first to occupy Bowling Green—that’s when Josie wrote that “the Philistines are upon us.” After the Confederates pulled out, the Union army moved in and stayed for the duration of the war.

The Union occupiers were even less popular than the Confederates. Nevertheless, Underwood was resolute in her support of the Union—and in her distaste for Abraham Lincoln, as the following comments from her diary make clear. In the first excerpt, she starts with what a secessionist said at a party.

### Jan. 1, 1861

*“How could Washington dream a Lincoln—a low born clod hopper, would ever be elected president of the United States? And he never*

*was either—only a part of the country wants him and the sooner we separate forever from that part—the better for the South.” I was glad the dancing stopped his talk. It is plain to see that the older—wiser people are for preserving the Union in spite of their antagonism to Lincoln and his party—but it is dreadful to hear how so many of the younger men talk—Mr. Western advocates secession as a fundamental principle for any free country—he and Mr. Grafton are very fond of the expression, “A secessionist per se.” In spite of this episode I never spent a pleasanter evening or attended so brilliant a party.*

### Jan. 27, 1861

*They are organized as state guard but do not hesitate to say—they will fight against the Union—I asked under what flag and Mr. Grafton said “A Banner with the Virginia motto ‘Sic Semper Tiramus [sic],’ on it and your friend Lincoln for the prostrate figure would please us best”—He knows I dislike Lincoln as much as he does and speaks of him as “your friend Lincoln” just to provoke me and then laughs when I get excited—This is one of the hard things for the Unionists to contend with—so many of them don’t approve Lincoln’s course and have to fight his extreme views as well as the secessionists.*

Josie Underwood’s father, whom she refers to as “Pa,” was Warner Underwood, a prominent lawyer and politician who had served in the Kentucky legislature and the U.S. Congress. He was a staunch Unionist. Though he claimed an “antipathy” toward slavery, Underwood owned slaves. He called himself an “advocate” of colonization in Liberia, but did not free any of his slaves so that they could emigrate to Africa. In the presidential election of 1860, Underwood campaigned hard for the Constitutional Union Party ticket of John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts. Bell and Everett emphasized saving the Union and ignored the issue of slavery.

### April 13, 1861

*Sister Fanny and Mr. Grider went in town to their home after dinner and when Pa came from town he was grieved greatly to find the firing on Sumter had turned a number of wavering people to secessionists, for they argue now there is no chance of saving the Union and right or wrong they want to go with the South. But the staunchest and most prominent men in the town—are all determined still to stand by the Union, and save the country from being broken up like South America—as is inevitable if the right of secession prevails—but oh! how they wish they had a less Ultra partisan than Lincoln, at the head of the Government. Pa knows Lincoln well and whilst he does not agree at all with his ideas—and as a Bell and Everett elector did all in his power to defeat him for President—he thinks him honest in his convictions and his desire to do what is right—however his ideas differ with the great Union party of Kentucky and other conservative states—*

In July, 1862, Josie traveled to Washington with her father. Warner Underwood met with President Lincoln at the White House, and later introduced Josie to Mary Todd Lincoln.

### July 20, 1862

*Pa had met Mr. Lincoln before this trip and knew Mrs. Lincoln well—when she was Miss [Mary] Todd and Pa a young man in*



*the Kentucky Legislature. The President and family were staying at the Soldier's Home. The day after we reached Washington, Pa had called on Mr. Lincoln at the White House—but a few days after—in the afternoon—he got a carriage and invited Mr. Etheridge and Miss Bell with me—to dine with him to pay our respects to Mrs. Lincoln. I was most agreeably surprised when I met her. Instead of seeing the coarse, loud, common woman the papers had made her out to be—she really was a handsome gentle woman dressed in deep mourning (for her little boy—not long dead) her conversation was agreeable. Her manner gentle—Mr. Etheridge thought—this owing to the sadness which was very apparent though she did not intrude it upon us—only responding to Pa's very appropriate expressions of sympathy and then tactfully passing on to other subjects. However, it was—I think it a great shame to so misrepresent a president's wife or any other woman.*

And then they met President Lincoln on the road, alone on horseback.

**July 20, 1862**

*As we met, Pa had the carriage stop. The man did the same and Pa introduced us to Mr. Lincoln. He leaned over, shook hands with us, then slouched down on one side of the saddle—as any old farmer would do, as he talked for ten or 15 minutes with us. Pa and Mr. Etheridge thought it very imprudent and unwise risk for him in such a time of warfare and especial hatred of Mr. Lincoln himself for him to be riding unattended, unguarded out a lonely country road—and called his attention to the dangers—Mr. Lincoln's smile—expressed kindness to all men and fear of none—as he said—he “did not think anybody would hurt him that way”—shaking hands again with us—he galloped on, neither did we meet anybody else for quite a little way so it was very evident there were no guards—following him.*

Josie Underwood's Civil War diary ends on September 8, 1862. The next day, her family sailed for Scotland—Lincoln had appointed her father American consul in Glasgow. During the war the Underwood estate in Bowling Green was destroyed, and the family never quite regained its antebellum prosperity. Josie married in 1870, had four children, lived in New York and California, and returned to Bowling Green in 1912. She died in 1923. Her diary was lost for many decades. In 2009, it will be published for the first time by the University Press of Kentucky as *Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary*. ●

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# Celebrate the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial the Kentucky Crafted way.

Commemorative gifts, historic replicas, literature, music and fine art prints are now available through the Kentucky Arts Council at [www.artscouncil.ky.gov/shop/merchandise.htm](http://www.artscouncil.ky.gov/shop/merchandise.htm).



# Lincoln This and Lincoln That

Our place names detective investigates  
Kentucky's many Lincoln place names

BY ROBERT M. RENNICK

At least a dozen Kentucky counties have Lincoln names, but not all honored the sixteenth president. Lincoln County, one of the three established by Virginia in 1780, was named for Revolutionary War general Benjamin Lincoln, no kin to the future president. Several of the president's forebears, notably his father and paternal grandparents, are credited with a few other names.

There's Lincoln Run, a branch of the Salt River's Beech Fork, some five miles north of Springfield in Washington County. The president's paternal grandparents, Virginia-born Capt. Abraham and Bersheba (Herriott) Lincoln settled there in the fall of 1782. After Capt. Lincoln was killed by Indians in 1786 on his newly settled Long Run home in Jefferson County, Bersheba brought their family, including young Thomas (the future president's father) back to Lincoln Run. It is commemorated today in the Lincoln Homestead State Park, which houses replicas of the Lincoln Cabin and the nearby Berry Home where the president's mother, Nancy Hanks, was raised.

In 1803 Thomas, trained as a woodworker and cabinetmaker, acquired a 238-acre spread on Mill Creek in Hardin County (some eight miles from Elizabethtown), where he and Bersheba moved. Just west of the creek and two miles east of Radcliff, in the Fort Knox Military Reservation, is the Lincoln Memorial Cemetery.

While living in Hardin County, Thomas applied his woodworking skills in furnishing the Hardin-Thomas family home in Elizabethtown. It's now the Lincoln Heritage House. Another Elizabethtown landmark is the Lincoln-Haycraft Memorial Bridge, built in 1936 at Severn Creek crossing—said to be the route Thomas and his family took on their way to Indiana in 1816.

Two years after Thomas and Nancy married in 1806, they moved to the Sinking Spring Farm on the south fork of Nolin Creek, three miles south of Hodgenville, in what is now LaRue County. Here Abe was born on February 12, 1809. Ostensibly because of land title irregularities, the family moved some ten miles northeast to the Knob Creek farm in 1811, leaving for Indiana when Abraham was seven.

The Knob Creek farm is now part of the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, a national shrine on US 31E in the vicinity of the site of the natal log cabin. The Memorial Building was dedicated by President William Howard Taft in November 1911 and accepted as a national shrine by President Woodrow Wilson in September 1916. In its center is a log cabin that is now called the "symbolic" Lincoln birth cabin. About a mile south is the Lincoln Memorial Church. Drive north on the Lincoln Parkway into the center of Hodgenville and you will find yourself in Lincoln Square.

Lincoln names were applied to three other places in north central Kentucky. In Grayson County is Lincoln Branch, the one-mile-long Clay Lick tributary of Bear Creek, near the Edmonson County line, that heads just south of the old Sadler post office. Lincoln School is two buildings in Edmonson County just south of Demumbrun's Store and just north of the Mammoth Cave National Park's northern boundary. And Lincolnshire is a sixth-class city with a population of 150 on the east edge of the old Louisville city limits between the Watterson Expressway and Taylorsville Road. Precisely which Lincoln these were named for is not yet known.

Between US 60 and I-64, about a mile and a half southwest of Simpsonville in Shelby County, is Lincoln Ridge, the

site of the Lincoln Institute. This school was organized on October 1, 1912 to provide vocational and teacher training programs for Kentucky African Americans. It became a public secondary school in 1947 and closed in 1966. The building later became the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Residential Manpower Center. To serve the Lincoln Institute and the village growing up around it, a post office was established by Edith M. Ellis. Her preferred names, Lincoln Institute and Lincolnia, yielded to Lincoln Ridge. In 1967, the office became a rural branch and closed for good in 1974.

Another Lincoln post office, ostensibly named for the president, was the first of the two offices serving the Short Creek vicinity in Pulaski County. It was established by Eli Farmer about a mile east of Buck Creek and opened in April 1891. In March of the following year, James P. Sears had it moved one mile northwest to Short Creek, where it closed in December 1913.

Clay County also had a Lincoln post office. This was established on May 26, 1923 by Hughey L. Tankersley to serve the Old Theophilus Smith place, four and a half miles up Buzzard Creek, a Collins Fork branch. Actually Tankersley's first name choice, Harding (for another president) was rejected by postal authorities as too similar to Hardin, in use in Marshall County. Lincoln is assumed to have been suggested to honor the earlier president since the area it would serve had been very pro-Union and remained well within the Republican fold. In 1945, the office was moved a mile down the creek. It closed in 1974.

Finally there's Lincoln Creek (known to local residents as Old Meadows Creek), a two-and-a-half-mile long intermittent stream in the eastern section of Wayne County. But this we know was not named for Abraham Lincoln or his family. While Wayne County historians aren't sure of this, they believe it may have honored one Lincoln Denney, whose descendants and collateral kin still live in the area. ●

Robert M. Rennick is the coordinator of the Kentucky Place Names Survey.



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*in cooperation with the Kentucky Humanities Council Inc.*

**February 2, 2009**

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.



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Abraham Lincoln left Kentucky when he was seven years old, but the great president's connections to his native state were strong and lifelong.

# Shall Any Claim Come Before the Mother?

ON a dank and muddy day, February 12, 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt arrived at the small town of Hodgenville, Kentucky. In what was to be one of the last public events of his presidency, Roosevelt laid the cornerstone for a memorial building commemorating Abraham Lincoln's birthplace "as a shrine for all times." The occasion was the centennial of the birth of the sixteenth president, and the day was auspicious only in the dignitaries and large crowd it attracted. Indeed, the prospect of the president traipsing through the mud to the dedication site prompted the purchase of rubber shoes when the presidential train briefly stopped in Louisville. The weather prevented Emilie Hardin Helm, the only remaining sister of Mary Todd Lincoln, from reaching the ceremonies. However, those who did make it heard a number of speakers, including former slaves and Civil War veterans.

Following the president's remarks, Kentucky Governor Augustus E. Willson clearly claimed Lincoln as a scion of the Bluegrass state. Recognizing that our entire country claims him, Willson noted how some states have special claims. Illinois says, "He was mine, the man of Illinois; here on my prairies he ripened into noble

manhood and here he made his home." And Indiana says, "He was mine. In my southern hills the little child grew strong and tall." While each was right and true, Kentucky surpassed both because it could say, "I am his mother. I nursed him at my breast; my baby born of me. He is mine. Shall any claim come before the mother?"

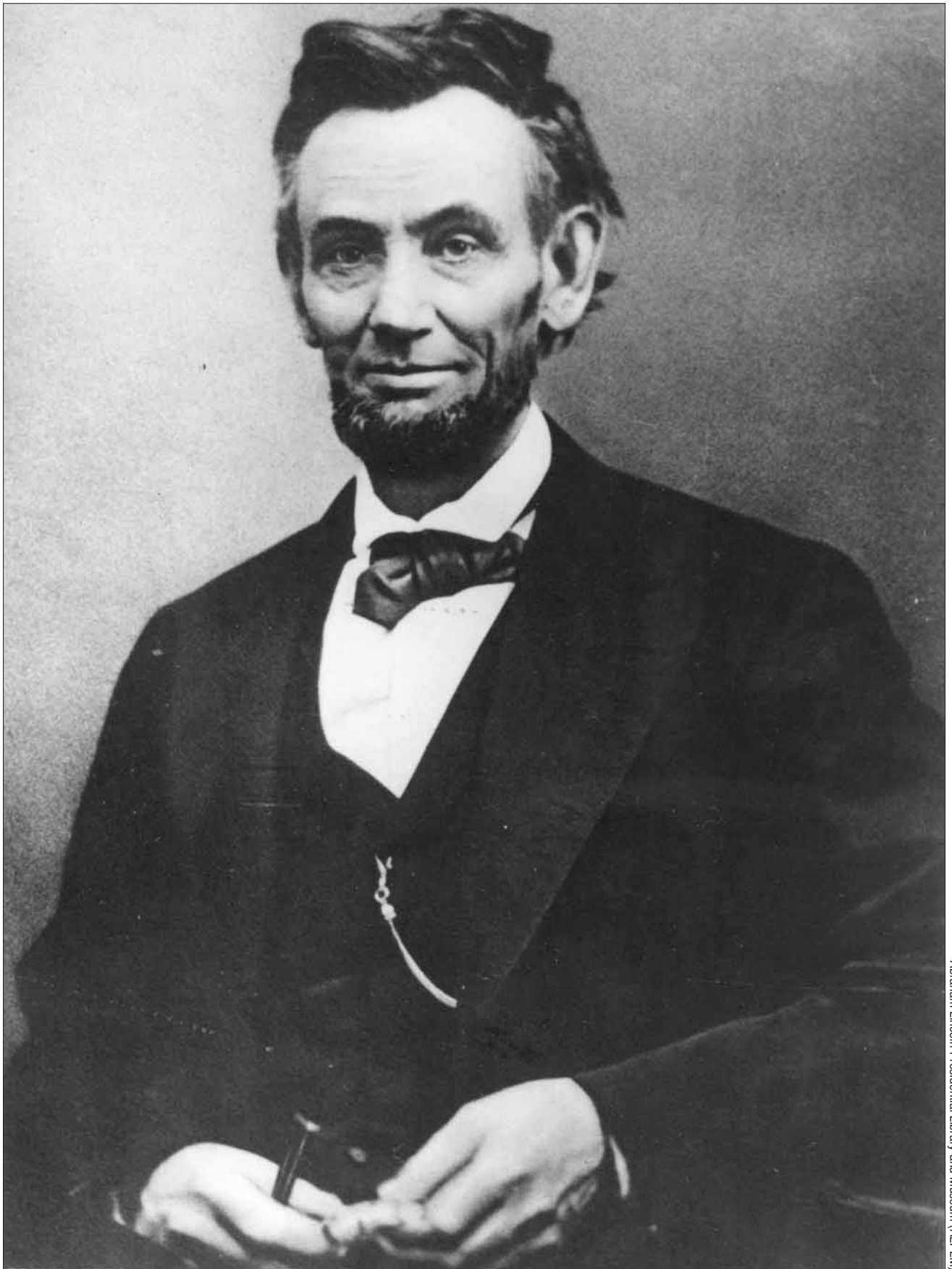
**Looking back, Kentucky's warm embrace of the centennial of Lincoln's birth was very surprising, indeed remarkable.**

The answer, obviously, was no. Kentucky's claim led to the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's decision to begin the celebration of Lincoln's 200th birthday in Hodgenville in February 2008. That was no surprise. Looking back, however, Kentucky's warm embrace of the centennial of Lincoln's birth was very surprising, indeed remarkable. Following the Civil War, Kentucky joined the Confederacy, mainly because Kentuckians did not like the wartime

policies of Lincoln. Confederate president Jefferson Davis was our hero. Time was to change that. The writer Irvin Cobb said Kentucky looks like a fallen camel, and the straw that broke its back was when it first voted for a Republican president. That was William McKinley in 1896. By 1909 Kentucky had a Republican governor who was proud to help dedicate the Lincoln Memorial building in Hodgenville as a "shrine second to none, even Mt. Vernon, in the affection of the American people." Forty-four years earlier, Governor Thomas Bramlette foretold the change when he addressed a crowd in front of the Jefferson County Courthouse following Lincoln's assassination. "We may have differed with him, and have differed with him," Bramlette said, "but when the judgment of future events has come, we find we were differing blindly, that he was right and we were wrong." By 1909 Kentucky recognized it had been wrong.

KENTUCKY was much more to Lincoln than a birth site. The seven years he lived here produced the earliest memories of this impressionable youth. Growing up on the Knob Creek farm adjacent to the important Louisville and Nashville Turnpike, he encountered a larger outside world that beat a path to his





Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM)

*A. Lincoln*

1809-1865

*Photograph by Alexander Gardner, Feb. 5, 1865*



*Lincoln's family moved to the Knob Creek farm when he was two, and stayed until departing for Indiana five years later. The farm was adjacent to the busy Louisville and Nashville Turnpike.*

doorstep. On that road, Lincoln met a veteran returning from the battle of New Orleans. He encountered Christopher Columbus Graham, a natural scientist, who spent the night and told Abe that he knew Daniel Boone, and had a friend named John James Audubon who could paint pretty fair pictures of birds. No doubt Lincoln first heard about Louisville living along that road. From his father, he would have learned that his grandfather had been killed by Indians near Louisville. The wagons that each day lumbered past connected Lincoln to a larger world, and those who traveled it must have excited his imagination.

In 1815, a traveler passing the Lincoln farm and continuing north would have also passed a large home being built on a plantation known as Farmington outside Louisville. It was the home of the Speed family. The builders, John and Lucy, had a son, Joshua, who would become Lincoln's best friend. Although a mere fifty miles separated the two homesteads, there was a world of difference between the Lincolns'

simple log cabin and the grand home of the Speeds. Yet, in time, Lincoln traversed that distance, albeit with several detours, and was entertained in the Speed family home. The fact that he was received so warmly by one of the leading families of Kentucky demonstrates how he could reach across both distances and class lines. It shows how the American dream of opportunity worked through him.

Joshua Speed was but one of many Kentuckians who kept crossing Lincoln's path after the family moved north of the Ohio River in 1817. The women Lincoln loved were from Kentucky. His three law partners were from here. His political mentor was Henry Clay. Joshua Speed's brother, James, became Lincoln's second attorney general. His stepmother was from Elizabethtown. During the Civil War, his native state was much on his mind, and his knowledge of Kentucky and its people enabled him to maneuver to keep it in the Union. Although Kentucky turned against its native son, he never lost his affection for it, an affection that can be traced to the late eighteenth century when his grandfather migrated from Virginia.

A man of substance, the older Abraham came to Kentucky and acquired several parcels of land. In May 1786, he was killed during an Indian raid on a parcel

east of Louisville on Floyd's Fork Creek. He left several children, among them eight-year-old Thomas, the future president's father. Grandfather Abraham was one of those pushy, ambitious Virginians who had moved into Kentucky when it was still just a place of promise. They were part of an irresistible migratory current that had a pull so great neither King nor Indian danger could stop it. Young Abraham must have heard stories about the Indian menace. That may explain his willingness to enlist in the Black Hawk War and his harsh retribution against the Sioux when they rose up during the Civil War.

The fatherless Thomas Lincoln moved with his mother to the beautiful region of Washington County. Later, mother and son moved to Elizabethtown. In 1806, he married Nancy Hanks. Nancy was described as a lonesome woman of dark complexion. She had come from Virginia with her mother and was reared by relatives in Springfield. Thomas saw her at a camp meeting. The two soon married and set up housekeeping in Elizabethtown. Although he learned to be a competent carpenter, Thomas wanted land, and the couple acquired a substantial parcel known as Sinking Spring. On a cold February day in 1809, Thomas came out of the cabin to the road, stopped a passerby, and asked him to fetch the midwife, for Nancy would soon have need of her. On February 12, Nancy delivered her second child and first son. We know little of the circumstances surrounding the birth, but the location was no meaner than many others in the frontier regions. From there, the family moved to a smaller more fertile farm known as Knob Creek, a few miles outside Hodgenville.

"My earliest recollection is of the Knob Creek place," Lincoln recalled. "Our farm was composed of three fields. It lay in the valley surrounded by high hills and deep gorges. Sometimes when there came a big rain in the hills the water would come down through the gorges and spread all over the farm." There began what one writer called his "frontier rough-and-readiness and masculine democratic traits."

Although he was largely self-educated, it was at Knob Creek that Abraham first went to school. The school was about a mile and a half up the road from the

**“When I came of age...  
I could read, write, and  
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of necessity.”**

Lincoln cabin. In later years he remembered the names of two of his teachers—Zachariah Riney and Caleb Hazel. These teachers used the blab method, brought over the mountains from Virginia, which emphasized recitation and memorization. Lincoln had a prodigious memory and would often commit long poems to it. He said of his early education, “When I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.”

Necessity was a good teacher for Lincoln. Instinct directed him to just the right books to read. As a young boy he read Aesop, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Weems's *Life of Washington*. The Bible and later Shakespeare were important to him and developed his writing skills. As he grew older, he liked the essays of John Stuart Mill, the poems of Lord Byron and Robert Burns. For humor he read *Petroleum V. Nasby* and Artemus Ward. And for most of his life he was an avid reader of newspapers, some of them published in Kentucky. During the Civil War, it was noted that he was no longer reading the newspapers. When asked why not, he replied that he knew more than they did, but that was atypical of his lifelong enjoyment of reading. For that he gave credit to his illiterate mother and illiterate stepmother.

His teacher Riney and many others in the area were Catholic, but the Lincoln family was Baptist. Indeed, Nancy and

Thomas were founders of the Little Mount Separate Baptist Church and were Calvinists. Abraham never embraced the faith of his parents and largely remained aloof from formal religion. His stepmother's religion was more moral than doctrinal, and he preferred that. Early in life he had been something of a freethinker and skeptic. Later he was drawn to Presbyterianism, perhaps because of the dogma of pre-destination, which mitigated his personal responsibility in the Civil War. The Bible taught him the beauty of language, provided him with the phrases of speech, and helped explain the retribution wrought upon the nation for slavery. The idea of Divine Providence—an overruling, ever guiding force—was important to him. Few presidents have more frequently acknowledged implicit dependence on Divine Providence. He used the term in his farewell address to the citizens of Springfield, and asked for their prayers.

**I**T was said of early Kentucky that he who buys land buys a lawsuit. Indeed, the uncertainty of land holdings, mainly due to the antiquated system of Virginia surveying, discouraged some from settling and caused others to flee. And so it was with Thomas Lincoln's land holdings. When the

title was challenged, he thought about more secure land somewhere else. Like many in Hardin County, he did not prosper. Then too, the area was quickly filling with slave holders, an institution Thomas abhorred. In the new free state of Indiana there was good timber, good water, and cheap and secure land. In 1817, he crossed the Ohio River and acquired land on Little Pigeon Creek in what is now Spencer County. He returned to Kentucky and prepared his family to move, selling much of what they possessed. We do not know the route taken from Knob Creek, but it probably led over old Muldraugh Hill past Little Mount. At Elizabethtown, they most likely put up over night, perhaps with old friends, before pushing on to a point on the Ohio opposite the mouth of Anderson Creek, where the ferryboat landed. Arriving on the Indiana side near the little town of Troy, they loaded their supplies into a borrowed wagon and set out for their new homestead. Thus closed the Kentucky chapter of Abraham Lincoln's life. But other chapters will be filled with Kentucky acquaintances and ties because so many others imitated the same westward migration. Living in southern Indiana or Illinois was almost like never leaving Kentucky.

In Indiana, Abraham's mother Nancy died of milk sickness, an illness caused by drinking milk from cows that



*Farmington, the Speed family's Louisville estate, was a world apart from Lincoln's childhood log cabin, but he bridged the gap, becoming a fast friend of the Speeds and an honored guest in their home.*

Sid Webb

have eaten the poisonous white snakeroot plant. Thomas returned to Kentucky, to Elizabethtown, to find an old acquaintance, Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow. After a brief courtship, they wed. Sarah agreed to move to Indiana only if she could take her furniture. The furniture was symbolic of the more comfortable lifestyle she would afford the Lincoln children. She had children of her own, and so Abraham became part of a mixed but harmonious family. He loved his stepmother. Shortly after his election as president, he visited her for the last time. She had the misfortune of living long enough to endure the sorrow of his assassination.

The Lincoln family removed to Illinois after several less than prosperous years in southern Indiana. After a few years in New Salem, Lincoln decided that his fortune could best be made in the new Illinois capital, Springfield. He moved there in March 1837 at the request of his friend and commander in the Black Hawk War, John Todd Stuart. Also a transplanted Kentuckian, Stuart was the cousin of Mary Todd of Lexington. A graduate of Centre College, he saw potential in Lincoln and encouraged him to read law, then asked him to become his law partner in Springfield. Later, he would introduce him to his pretty cousin at a party at the home of her sister, Elizabeth Edwards.

Springfield was a typical raw western town of some 1,500 inhabitants. It had recently wrested the state capital from Vandalia, and so opportunity abounded. Be it

Lincoln entered to ask for credit to set up housekeeping. As Speed later wrote, “He had ridden into town on a borrowed horse with no earthly property save a pair of saddle-bags containing a few clothes . . . Lincoln came into the store with the saddle-bags on his arm. He said he wanted to buy the furniture for a single bed.” Instead of lending him credit, Speed suggested that Lincoln share his room and the large double bed above the store. Speed continues, “He took the saddle-bags, went upstairs, set them on the floor, and came down with the most changed expression of countenance. Beaming with pleasure, he explained, ‘Well Speed, I’m moved.’” What convinced Speed to so quickly offer Lincoln a place to live and eventual friendship is an intriguing question. Whatever it was, it endured until Lincoln’s death. Lincoln seldom revealed himself to anyone, preferring to keep his own counsel, but he came closest to opening himself to Speed. When Speed returned to Louisville at the death of his father, he invited Lincoln to visit his Kentucky home.

ON a sweltry day in August 1841, Lincoln got off a steamboat at the wharf and rode six miles through the streets of Louisville to the Farmington plantation. He had accepted Speed’s invitation. It was a particularly difficult time for him. He was depressed because of his broken engagement to Mary Todd and considered himself the most miserable man living. He called his depression the hypo, and he suf-

tions of the Speed farm, the freedom from unpleasant reminders, the company of his staunch friend and above all the motherly care and delicate attention of Mrs. Speed exerted a marked influence over Lincoln.” He took long walks in the fields and had good conversations with Joshua. All around was the bounty of Farmington—hemp, corn, wheat, apples, sheep—all tended by slaves. He made friends with Mary, Joshua’s half-sister, with whom he “romped.” He visited James, Joshua’s brother, in his law office across from the new courthouse. The two talked at length and years later Lincoln asked James to serve as his attorney general. Lucy Speed fed him peaches and cream, gave him motherly attention, and put an Oxford Bible in his hands when he departed.

Farmington was Lincoln’s first opportunity to closely observe a slave plantation. He would have preferred Speed not own slaves, but he respected his right to do so. Downtown, he must have seen the slave pens where people were held awaiting transfer down river. Indeed, the bondage of slavery was the last image Lincoln carried away from Louisville. He and Speed left on or about September seventh. Also aboard the boat to St. Louis were slaves. In a letter to Mary Speed, Lincoln described their plight. “A gentleman had purchased twelve negroes in different parts of Kentucky and was taking them to a farm in the South. They were chained six and six together. A small iron clevis was around the left wrist of each, and this fastened to the main chain by a shorter one at a convenient distance from the others; so that the negroes were strung together precisely like so many fish upon a trout line.” Many years later Lincoln said that sight had been a continual torment to him.

A little more than a year after returning home, mutual friends brought him and Mary back together. The two were wed on November 4, 1842. Mary had gone to Springfield in the summer of 1839 to escape an intolerable home situation. A stubborn person, she could not abide her stepmother, who had called her a limb of Satan. She decided to accept the invitation to stay with her sister, Elizabeth Todd Edwards, whose husband, Ninian, was a graduate of Transylvania law school. From

## **Lincoln was disturbed by the enthusiasm for slavery among a new generation of Kentuckians—“thoughtless and giddy headed young men who looked upon work as vulgar and ungentlemanly.”**

fate or luck, on the day of his arrival in town Lincoln strode into a mercantile owned by Joshua Speed, originally of Louisville. Five years Lincoln’s junior, Speed had gone to Springfield in 1835, like many a child of Kentucky slave owners, to make his own way. He was described as a well-educated, wealthy man with dark curly hair and an air of elegance. A lady’s man, some called him.

ferred many bouts of it, so it was a good time to get away. For three weeks he was entertained in a grand manner. It was one of the happiest times of his life, and he returned to Springfield with good memories and in a better frame of mind.

The entire Speed family was responsible for that alteration. Biographer William Herndon wrote, “The congenial associa-

the hill where the Edwards' house overlooked the city, Mary spent the summer observing the events of the town. It was to that house that her cousin, John Todd Stuart, brought Abraham Lincoln to meet her in 1839. She may have remembered his name from her Kentucky days, for he was listed in the *Kentucky Reporter* as a candidate for the Illinois legislature in the summer of 1832, and she too was a thorough newspaper reader.

Born to wealth and privilege on December 13, 1818, Mary was the daughter of prominent Lexingtonians Robert Todd and Elizabeth Parker Todd. She received an excellent education at Madame Mentelle's school on Richmond Pike. Fluent in French and conversant in current affairs, she was the belle of Lexington, a position she also assumed in Springfield. We do not know how many men courted her, but given the high proportion of men to women in Springfield, it must have been many. Even Lincoln had two earlier "loves," both from Kentucky. Anne Rutledge died young, and Mary Owen, from Green County, rejected him. But Mary Todd saw something in him. His law partner and biographer William Herndon said it was "position in society, prominence in the world, and the greatest social distinction." By 1840, friendship had turned into courtship with the understanding that they might marry.

Elizabeth warned Mary that she and Lincoln were not compatible. In his early thirties and a rising politician, Lincoln remained in some ways an awkward farmer's son. To the Edwardses and even the casual observer, he seemed to share with the aristocratic Mary little besides a Kentucky birthplace. "Mr. Edwards and myself," said Elizabeth, "believed they were different in nature, and education and raising. They had no feeling alike. They are so different that they could not live happily as man and wife." After all, she was a Todd of Lexington and few beaux would have been good enough. As Lincoln humorously observed, they spelled their name with two "d"s, one more than even God needed. But both loved poetry and were interested in politics. Mary saw his great potential and so love prevailed. Their marriage lasted for

twenty-two years. Marriage, said Lincoln, is neither heaven nor hell, but purgatory. Whatever it was, the two made accommodations and relied upon one another, neither being easy to live with. He was a good husband in his own peculiar way, and in his way only. They had four sons—Edward, Robert, William and Thomas.

**I**N September 1876 Mary, accompanied by her grand nephew Lewis Baker, returned to Lexington. She had been away from Fayette County for twenty-five years and much had changed. Several of the family places had disappeared, but she showed him Transylvania, and a short way away Grandma Parker's home on Short Street, and the decaying brick mansion of her grandfather on the Richmond Pike. She noticed that the Todds and Parkers had nearly disappeared from the city directory. They found them in Lexington Cemetery. Slightly behind the graves and overshadowing them was the tall obelisk dedicated to Henry Clay. Here were two parts of Lincoln's Kentucky connection in close proximity—his wife's family and his political mentor. From Lexington they went on to Mammoth Cave, a wonder known by every American of that time. On their way back to Lexington, they passed close to Hodgenville and the Knob Creek farm. Historian Jean Baker speculates they may have stopped there.

It was to Lexington that Mary had taken her husband to meet her family and see Henry Clay. Their first visit came in October 1847 on the way to Washington, where Lincoln was to serve in the House of Representatives. In Congress, Herndon said, he would find many men who possessed twice the good looks and not half the good sense. Lincoln returned to Lexington twice more—in 1849 at the death of Mary's father, and in 1850 at the death of Grandma Parker, to settle her estate. In 1847, they were warmly welcomed to the Todd home on West Main Street. For Lincoln, it was a three-week vacation. He visited relatives, read newspapers, swapped stories at Cheapside, and talked politics around the court house. Mary may have taken him to see Henry Clay at his Ashland estate, although there is no hard evidence to



Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM)

*Mary Todd Lincoln about four years after her 1842 marriage to Abraham Lincoln. The daughter of a prominent Lexington family, she was well-educated and, like her husband, ambitious.*

substantiate the meeting. He did hear Clay speak at the Lower Market House on Water Street. Clay took the opportunity to criticize the Mexican War and support the gradual emancipation and colonization of slaves in Africa. Lincoln was impressed by what he heard, but by then he was already a Whig partisan.

By 1842, Illinoisans recognized Lincoln as one of the rising stars of the Whig party. Like many in that party, Henry Clay was his political mentor. Lincoln had broken with Andrew Jackson over the idea that government should be divorced from economic enterprise. Lincoln said, "The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do so well, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities." He soon included that to mean Henry Clay's American System. The system's three basic principles were a national bank, a protective tariff, and internal improvements financed by the federal government. To Lincoln, Illinois and the West needed such economic aid to develop. Indeed, while Mary may have thought of him as a president, he likened himself to DeWitt Clinton, the New York governor who built the Erie Canal.

Clay stood for more than economic development. For Clay and his colleague Daniel Webster, nothing was more important than the Union. Lincoln saw in them the hope for the future. If a slave-holding Southerner like Clay could agree with a New England descendant of the Pilgrims such as Webster, then anything was possible. While the Union is something we take for granted, it was, as historian Paul Nagel pointed out, an idea that was forced to prove itself in time and then only through armed conflict. For Clay, Webster, and ironically Jackson, the Union simply had to be preserved. For Jefferson Davis and the South, who found their mentor in John C. Calhoun, it was something dear but not as dear as liberty and honor. The South did not know how well Lincoln had learned the lessons of nationalism from Clay. It was that ignorance that would in time spell its defeat. One might say that it was the metal of Union, bequeathed by Clay to his fellow Kentuckian, that, when combined with Lincoln's indomitable will, saved the Union.

**K**ENTUCKY also taught Lincoln about slavery. He had another chance to observe it closely in Lexington. Newspapers carried notices of slave sales, and he saw five sold at the courthouse door.

The slave jail of W.A. Pullum stood in plain view of Grandma Parker's home. He looked into its yard and saw the whipping post. He could hear the cries someone called "the death knell of Kentucky liberty." Lincoln had an early dislike of slavery. It may have started at his father's knee. His visits to Lexington gave him insights into the problem of

## The South did not know how well Lincoln had learned the lessons of nationalism from Henry Clay. It was that ignorance that would in time spell its defeat.

slavery that only personal contact and first-hand observation could provide. In 1849, while in Lexington, he took great interest in Kentucky's constitutional convention. He hoped that Kentucky would take the opportunity to end slavery. Robert Todd pushed for it. It was not to be, and Lincoln was disturbed by the enthusiasm for slavery among a new generation of Kentuckians. He called them "thoughtless and giddy headed young men who looked upon work as vulgar and ungentlemanly." One of them told him, "You might have any amount of land,

money in your pocket or bank stock and while traveling around nobody would be any wiser, but if you had a darkey trudging at your heels everybody would see him and know that you owned slaves." Kentucky reflected a callous indifference to the unhappy and hopeless situation of slaves. The Kentucky experience convinced him slavery

must never be allowed to obtain the slightest foothold in new territory because once entrenched it seemed to thrive and flourish despite opposition.

One wonders how many individual African Americans Lincoln knew. Observation rather than acquaintance, and belief in the words of the Declaration of Independence, seemed to motivate his anti-slavery stance. The sight of slaves sold on the auction blocks of New Orleans and Lexington and families separated under slavery's terrible oppression had upon him the same negative impact it had upon Harriet Beecher Stowe. Kentucky also inspired this young woman to look askance at the peculiar institution. The result was her book *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. That it helped to end slavery cannot be doubted, hence Kentucky ironically played a pivotal role in its demise by influencing this remarkable woman. It is reported that when President Lincoln met her at the White House he identified her as the little lady who started the great Civil War. In truth, Lincoln did not blame the war on Mrs. Stowe's book, but he did think it a kind of awful retribution for the sin of slavery, a sin he observed in Kentucky.

While serving in Congress Lincoln took pleasure in seeing another man with Kentucky ties go to the White House. In 1848, he supported Zachary Taylor rather than Henry Clay, saying "I go for him, not because I think he would make a better president than Clay, but because I think he would make a better one than Polk, or Cass, or Buchanan, or any such



Sid Webb

*The Todd family home on West Main Street in Lexington. The Lincolns spent three weeks here in 1847. Lincoln was on the way to Washington to take his seat in Congress.*

creatures . . .” The tie that bound this free state man and the Louisiana slave holder was their resolute devotion to the Union and their insistence on the containment of slavery. Taylor was the only president to have lived in Kentucky a great many years. As historian Holman Hamilton wrote, Taylor inherited a mixture of western and southern attitudes from here, so that he was both a slave holder and a lover of the Union. Taylor’s Unionist stand anticipated the Lincoln position of 1861. After Taylor’s inauguration, Lincoln expected to be named commissioner of the general land office, but his criticism of the Mexican War had not been popular. He could have become the territorial governor of Oregon, but declined, saying that Mary would not permit him to move so far. In truth, it would have placed him far outside the mainstream of political happenings that were rapidly clouding the future of the Union in the 1850s.

THE issue that then dominated political thinking was the expansion of slavery into western territories. The matter was exacerbated by the acquisition of large amounts of territory from Mexico in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In Congress, Lincoln supported the Wilmot Proviso that would have prevented slavery in the Mexican cession. The issue was resolved in the Compromise of 1850, much of it Clay’s work. The Compromise admitted California as a free state and created two new territories—Utah and New Mexico—with no stipulation on slavery. Lincoln held no office during the Compromise debates, but as a former congressman he must have followed them with great interest. He was probably pleased with the peaceful outcome, but was later criticized for not denouncing the Fugitive Slave Law. The law was favored in Kentucky, which was losing slaves through the growing Underground Railroad. When expansion raised its troublesome head again, Lincoln would not be so passive.

In 1854, Lincoln’s political rival, Stephen Douglas, maneuvered through Congress a bill that reopened the Louisiana Purchase above latitude 36 degrees 30 minutes to settlement and allowed the settlers of Kansas and Nebraska to decide for them-



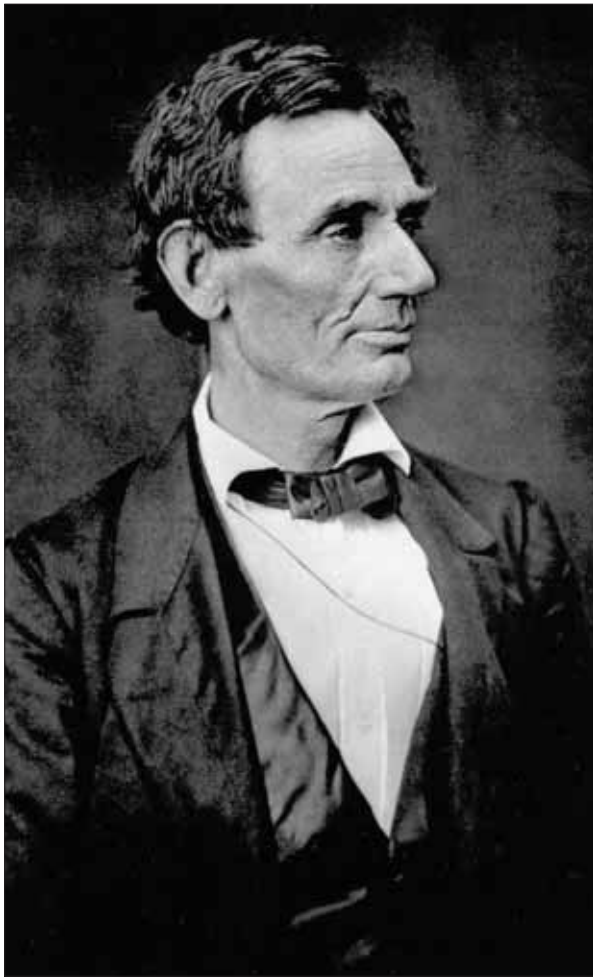
Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate

selves whether to permit slave holding in those territories. This position Douglas called popular sovereignty. The reaction was both swift and ominous. It was greatly opposed in Illinois and gave rise in the North to the Republican Party. Lincoln felt it expanded slavery so that it might not gradually disappear, as he hoped it would. Therefore, Lincoln reentered the political arena. He joined the Republican Party in 1856 and sought to become its leader in Illinois and the mid-West. It was this issue that dominated the Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858. Lincoln insisted that Congress could and must exclude slavery from the territories. During these debates he made his famous house divided statement—“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe the government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half-free.” Lincoln lost the senatorial election but gained national recognition.

Abraham and Mary Lincoln wanted to be president and first lady. Even before he met Mary, Lincoln was politically ambi-

*Though there is no proof they ever met, Kentucky statesman Henry Clay was the biggest political influence in Lincoln’s life. More than thirty years older than Lincoln, Clay died in 1852. (Portrait by Matthew Jouett, c. 1819)*

tious. He was elected four times to the Illinois State Legislature from 1834 to 1840, and held this relatively high position when Elizabeth Edwards felt he was not good enough for her sister. This tells us the electorate saw something in the young Lincoln, and so did Mary. While she did not give him his political ambition, she certainly made him realize his potential to go higher. Behind this successful man was a very ambitious woman. Lincoln often told friends that his wife expected him to be president, an expectation that amused him only until November 7, 1860. When the Republican delegates who gathered in Chicago at the Wigwam auditorium nominated him on the third ballot, both Lincolns were delighted. The party’s platform tells much about its prevailing philosophy.



*Lincoln in 1860. Later that year, at the suggestion of an eleven-year-old girl from Westfield, New York, he grew a beard—and was elected president of the United States.*

Taking a lesson from its defeat in 1856, the party tried to offer something to everyone, although the important part was the preservation of the Union, a stand Lincoln could easily support.

Another Kentuckian now crossed Lincoln's path—John C. Breckinridge, the vice president of the United States. When the Democratic Party divided over the issue of slavery, Breckinridge became the presidential candidate of the Southern Democrats. Four men vied for the presidency that year—Lincoln, Breckinridge, Stephen Douglas, the northern Democrat, and John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party. Lincoln got very few votes from Kentucky, and even Breckinridge did not do as well as expected. Kentucky, concerned about the prospect of war, sought a president who would bring reconciliation of the

sections and so supported Bell. Lincoln won only a plurality of the national popular vote, but by carrying the electoral-vote-rich states of the East and mid-West he became president.

**T**HE period between his election and his inauguration on March 4, 1861, was one of great uncertainty and crisis. President James Buchanan was surrounded by traitors and, as a lame duck, nearly powerless. Lincoln remained in Springfield and refused to comment on the darkening events. In his own mind, he was already on record and any statement might be misconstrued. The historian Alan Nevins criticized Lincoln for indecisiveness. Circumstances were so unusual that he needed to provide direction for the

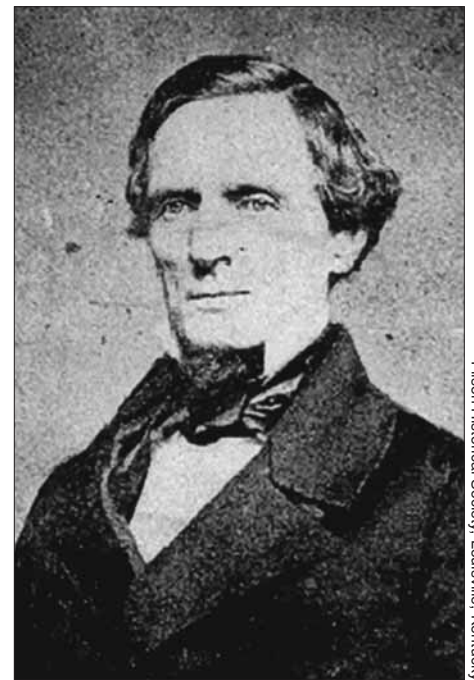
nation. In February, seven southern states formed the Confederate States of America. Jefferson Davis had pleaded with his fellow southerners to wait and see what Lincoln would do. When they did not heed his message, he accepted the presidency. On March 4, 1861, the country had two native Kentuckians in two executive mansions.

Davis was born less than a year before Lincoln and not many miles away in Christian (now Todd) County. The youngest of five sons and five daughters, he was the son of Samuel Lemory and Jane Cook Davis. Davis was here only two years before his father moved the family to Louisiana and then to Mississippi. But young Jefferson was sent back to Kentucky for his education at St. Thomas College of St. Rose Priory, a school operated by the Dominican Order in Springfield, and Transylvania College in Lexington. He withdrew from the latter to go to West Point. Davis's ties to Kentucky were strengthened when he married Sarah Knox Taylor, the daughter of Colonel Zachary Taylor, at Springfield, the Colonel's home near Louisville. Three

months later Sarah died of malaria. Unlike Lincoln and Taylor, who took many western values from Kentucky, Davis took values that were more southern. For him, slavery was a principal to be defended even if it meant separation of the Union.

Bidding farewell to the citizens of Springfield, Lincoln made his way slowly, by a circuitous route, to Washington. When he spoke at Cincinnati, he wanted to cross the Ohio River and speak in Covington also, but better judgment prevailed. To do so might have invited a lynching. He had seen the election returns. Newspapers in Kentucky saw the election as placing abolition in ascendancy. Secession was his fault, for the election of a "black Republican" was incompatible with the maintenance of the Union. Still, Lincoln tried to reassure residents of Kentucky and the South that they had nothing to fear and that he would respect slavery as guaranteed by the Constitution. Had he crossed into Kentucky, he was prepared to remind his audience that "I too am a Kentuckian."

Lincoln made the same assurances in his inaugural address on a cold March day. Present at the speech was a young Henry



*Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy, was, like Lincoln, born in Kentucky. But Davis's family headed south, and he developed a view of the world very different from his rival's.*



Watterson, who would later edit the *Courier-Journal*. If we are to believe his autobiography, he got so close to the president that he lifted his hand to take Lincoln's hat, but Douglas reached over and took it. Watterson commented upon Lincoln's black suit and tie and the walking stick he carried. To him, he looked self-possessed and dignified. His words were resolute and firm, having made up his mind as to his constitutional duty. His voice was a little high-pitched and resonant and reached the outer fringes of the crowd. His expression was serious to the point of gravity, with not a scintilla of humor. Herndon said Lincoln was the most serious man he had ever met, and the crisis of the Union fitted his personality.

THE Civil War began on April 12, 1861, at Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor. The fort was commanded by Major Robert Anderson, a Kentuckian loyal to the Union. Lincoln knew him because he had sworn Anderson into the military in the Black Hawk War. More than that, he fully trusted his actions. After his surrender, Anderson was ordered to Cincinnati, where he enlisted Kentucky troops into the Union army. Recruits were diverted there because Kentucky had declared neutrality and Lincoln promised to respect its position. On September 3, General Gideon Pillow's Confederate troops occupied Columbus, prompting General Ulysses S. Grant to take Paducah. With Kentucky's short-lived, and impossible, policy of neutrality shattered, Lincoln moved to see that the state did not fall into Confederate hands. He knew its importance and said, "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone we cannot hold Missouri, nor I think Maryland." Kentucky meant command of the Ohio River, vital as a commercial and military artery and a line of defense. It contained vast resources and a vital transportation link in the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Indeed, he gave so much attention to Kentucky that a frustrated Stephen Douglas said, "We pay more attention to the advice of the half-rebel state of Kentucky than to any suggestion coming from the loyal North." The genius of Lincoln is that he knew he had no other choice.

One of the military maxims of Frederick the Great was "Know the man you are fighting." Lincoln knew who he was fighting in Kentucky. Thanks to the Todd family he had a good sense of upper class opinions here. He was not without his supporters, who advised him on matters relative to the Commonwealth. Joshua Speed was one. Cassius Clay, a vocal advocate of emancipation, was another—Lincoln made him ambassador to Russia. From his visits here Lincoln knew Kentucky's former Whig leaders and the strength of their commitment to the Union. He had read Kentucky newspapers from the time he was a resident of New Salem. George

North wore down the South. In time, Lincoln offered himself as the final casualty of that bloody conflict.

Lincoln never expected any favors from Kentucky just because of his ties. He knew his emancipation principles made him unpopular. Offers to compensate Kentucky slave owners if they gave up their property were spurned on more than one occasion. That disappointed him. Once the war came, Lincoln had to make decisions that made him unpopular in Fort Wayne as well as Savannah. Copperheads derided him in the North. He was disliked for his enlistment of black troops and his suspension of habeas corpus. Kentucky Governor Thomas Bramlette continually fired off

**In no loyal state was there so much personal abuse—he was unmercifully maligned, ridiculed, and persecuted. In spite of all that, he continued to regard Kentucky with a high degree of affection.**

Prentice's *Louisville Journal* was one of his favorites because it was an organ of the Whig party. It was sent to Sam Hill's store, where transplanted Kentuckians read it. He read the *Lexington Observer*. "The *Observer* has been coming to our home ever since Mary and I were married and I reckon there is no better weather-cock for Kentucky politics just now," he said. It worked. As much as anything, Lincoln must be given the credit for keeping Kentucky in the Union. Like a delicate barometer, he recorded the trends of pressure in the Commonwealth. His policy was to protect slavery here as long as necessary, and do whatever else was needed. Time and again he listened with deference, and often grievances were righted. When John C. Frémont moved to free the slaves of Missouri, Lincoln countermanded the order and reassured Kentuckians. But in time he found both the opportunity to emancipate the slaves and the general to give him victories. In time, the superior war machine of the

complaints about the actions of military governors who appeared to be arbitrary and insensitive to civilian rule. With the gradual impoverishment of all classes of people, the growing stagnation of business, and mounting mortality, the state's newspapers turned against him. News items were distorted and editorials were partisan and contemptuous. Even Union newspapers attacked him. When he ran for reelection, Kentucky overwhelmingly supported his Democrat opponent, George McClellan. In no loyal state was there so much personal abuse—he was unmercifully maligned, ridiculed, and persecuted. In spite of all that, he continued to regard Kentucky with a high degree of affection, and its people came to feel the same way, though only years after his assassination.

THE first news of his death was carried in a Louisville newspaper, which merely reported that he had been shot and had died. With the official news a veil of sorrow fell on the city, the one place in Kentucky where he would be mourned.

There was a look of solemnity stamped upon almost every face. A service was held at the Jefferson County courthouse on April 18. Governor Bramlette came to speak. The man who had made Lincoln's life so difficult during the war offered a *mea culpa* that in later decades resonated well with Kentuckians. "We may have differed with him, and have differed with him, but when the judgment of future events has come, we find we were differing blindly; that he was right and we were wrong," Bramlette said. "Standing as we did in local positions, surrounded as we were by local prejudices, he occupied an elevated stand-point and viewed the whole political surroundings of the country, grasping with massive intellect the logic of events . . ." And Prentice wrote, "It was the old saying of Martin Luther that 'God buried his workmen, but their work goes on.'" Newspapers pledged their support to the new president, Andrew Johnson.

Governor Bramlette and other Kentuckians attended the funeral in Springfield. The *Frankfort Commonwealth* said it was fitting that at the grave Kentucky should bear testimony to the nation's great loss and that she should there renew her fealty to the old Union

**Lincoln came "from a stagnant putrid pool like the gas which set on fire by its own energy and self-combustible nature rises in jets blazing clear and bright."**

in the presence of the sacred dust of him who proved its savior. Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, conducted the services and said, "Four years ago, O Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man and from among the people. We return him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine any more, but the nation's, not ours, but the world's. Give him place, Oh ye prairies. In the midst of this great continent his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to the shrine to kindle anew zeal and patriotism."

Listening to these words was William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner. In 1891, Herndon was to be buried in the same Oak Ridge Cemetery. Herndon was from Green County, Kentucky. He was Lincoln's third law partner. The two earlier partners were also from Kentucky, both cousins of Mary Todd. The first, John Todd Stuart, was followed by Stephen Logan. After three years, Logan withdrew and Lincoln turned to their young clerk, Herndon. Herndon stocked their office with good books. He preceded Lincoln into the Republican Party. The legal research he did allowed Lincoln to travel the circuit, engage actively in politics, and go to Congress. He even endured the antics of the Lincoln boys when they visited the office, a great test of patience. During the war, he became Lincoln's eyes and ears in Springfield, all the time waiting until his friend returned to take up their practice, as Lincoln had instructed him to do. When it was not to be, Herndon mourned his friend and decided to write about him. His love for Lincoln was equaled by his dislike for Mary, whom he called a "she-wolf" and a "wild-cat." She returned the compliment and would not permit him to visit the family's quarters at the White House.

Immediately after Lincoln's death, Herndon began to gather information for a biography. It would not be published until 1889. By then, many Americans had no memory of Abraham Lincoln. To educate them, Herndon published his biography of "a great life based upon personal recollection." He traveled extensively and conducted interviews with many who remembered the fallen president in Kentucky and elsewhere. Regardless of what he thought of Mary, this pioneer biography was the beginning of the serious study of our sixteenth president. Biogra-



*William H. Herndon was Lincoln's law partner, biographer and fellow Kentuckian (a native of Green County). No subsequent biographer has equaled his understanding of Lincoln the man.*

pher Benjamin P. Thomas said that Herndon's *Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life* was controversial, but to Herndon "more than to any other writer, we owe our knowledge of Lincoln the man—how he looked and walked, his love of fun, his melancholy, the way he thought, his personal habits and idiosyncrasies." In the ensuing years, thousand of books have been published. None of them quite capture the intimate feelings Herndon had for his friend who came "from a stagnant putrid pool like the gas which set on fire by its own energy and self-combustible nature rises in jets blazing clear and bright." That life will blaze forth in a new cascade of books to be published during the bicentennial celebration of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. They will note his Kentucky birth and ties, for no claim shall come before the mother. ●

John E. Kleber is a professor emeritus of history from Morehead State University and a Senior Fellow at the McConnell Center at the University of Louisville. He is the editor in chief of *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* and *The Encyclopedia of Louisville*.

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When they fled slavery in Kentucky in 1831, Thornton and Lucie Blackburn just wanted to be together and free. They became two of the most important refugees in the history of the Underground Railroad.

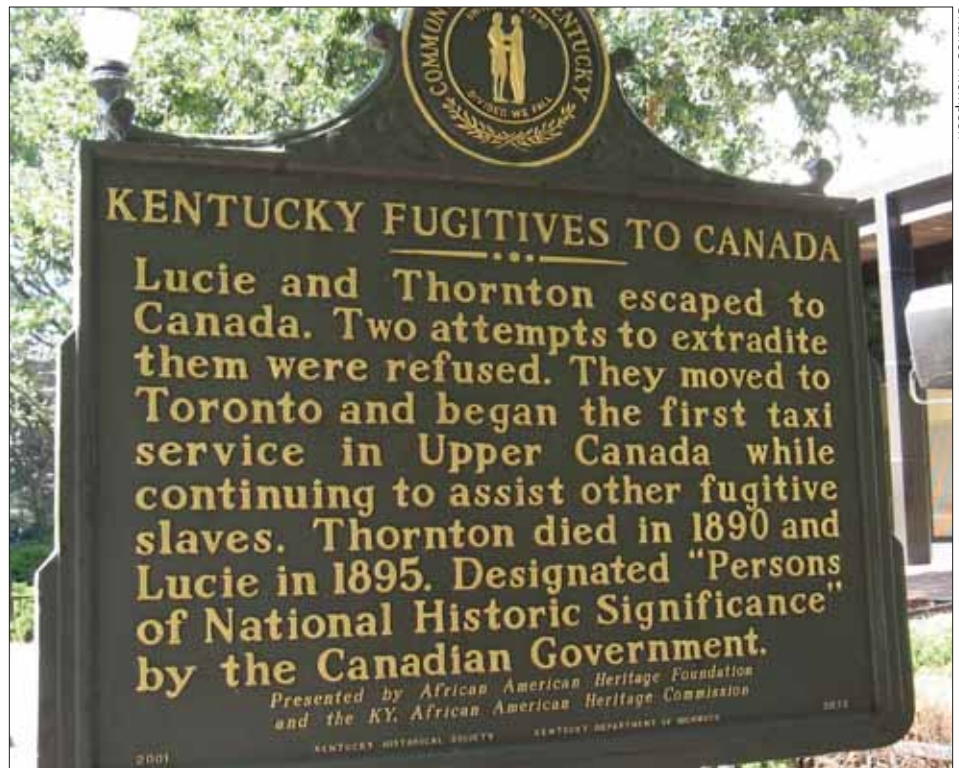
# Flight to Freedom

## The Blackburns' Great Escape

*These are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You work and toil and earn bread, and I eat it." No matter what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle...*

**Abraham Lincoln, 1858**

**A**T the northwest corner of Fourth and Main streets in downtown Louisville, there is a bronze historical marker entitled "Kentucky Fugitives to Canada." It describes the remarkable adventures of runaway slaves Thornton and Lucie Blackburn. There is a matching marker dedicated to the Blackburns in downtown Toronto, for the couple's daring flight to freedom in 1831 made history on both sides of the long border the United States shares with Canada. In a few sentences, both plaques recount how the couple's 1833 recapture by Kentucky slave catchers in Michigan resulted in Detroit's first racial riot. The Blackburns'



Charles Thompson

subsequent escape across the river to what is now Windsor, Ontario, led to a landmark extradition case that established Canada as the main terminus of the fabled Underground Railroad.

Despite its international significance, the Blackburn story had been long forgotten. Neither Lucie nor Thornton could read or write, and they had no chil-

*The back side of a marker telling the amazing story of Lucie and Thornton Blackburn. The sign is at Fourth and Main in downtown Louisville.*

dren. What little remained of the material evidence for their lives had lain buried for generations. Then, in the summer of 1985, archaeologists digging under the

asphalt of a Toronto schoolyard brought to light the remains of a narrow frame house, a barn and a mysterious cellar. The first owner of that property was listed as “Thornton Blackburn, cabman, colored.” He had occupied the land from 1834 until the 1890s. An 1888 newspaper article credited Mr. Blackburn and his wife with starting Toronto’s first taxi business. An earlier article identified the couple as well-to-do philanthropists devoted to the cause of assisting fugitive slaves, who arrived in Canada’s largest city in increasing numbers in the years before the Civil War. The refugees’ plight inspired anti-slavery feeling on the part of the populace, white and black, as well as deep concern for their welfare.

THE tale of the Blackburn family’s experiences in slavery and freedom spans some 120 years. Thornton’s young mother, Sibby Blackburn, was born near Manassas, Virginia, in 1776, on a farm owned by George Washington’s friend, Colonel Thomas Blackburn. Sibby was one of the tens of thousands of enslaved African Americans carried into the newly opened lands west of the Alleghenies in the years following the American Revolution. In 1792, her third owner, William Smith, brought an entourage of more than 100 people—his own extended family and their slaves—out of Virginia to claim his bounty lands in Mason



Karolyn Smartz Frost

the laborious process of cutting down the forest and pulling the stumps so that the fields of their owner could be planted with his first Kentucky crops.

Sibby added to her owner’s wealth three times over the next few years. She bore three sons. Her first, John, died as a toddler. Her second, Alfred, was taken away when he was but 11 years old, sold to a family in Washington (Kentucky) to be trained as a stonemason. When her third baby, little Thornton, was born, Sibby must have been terrified. She had lost two sons, and she was again a mother.

*At the age of three, Thornton Blackburn was sold and taken to live in this house in Washington, Kentucky, a few miles from Maysville.*

litionist newspaper, the *Voice of the Fugitive*, wrote:

Sometimes standing on the Ohio River bluff, looking over on a free State, and as far north as my eyes could see, I have eagerly gazed upon the blue sky of the free North . . . and I thought of the fishes of the water, the fowls of the air, the wild beasts of the forest, all appeared to be free, to go just where they pleased, and I was an unhappy slave!

**Sibby’s fears were realized, for her youngest child was sold on June 17, 1815, to an elderly man named George Morton. He wanted a living present for his 9-year-old grandson and namesake.**

County, Kentucky. The Smiths would reside in a home built for them at the gracious little village of Washington, high on the tall limestone cliff that forms so impressive a backdrop to the river port of Maysville.

William Smith sent his teenaged son, Robert, to supervise Sibby Blackburn and his other field hands in clearing his farm. This lay a few miles distant, bordering the Clark’s Run Road that led to Germantown. There the bondspeople began

Sibby Blackburn’s plight was especially poignant. Whenever she traveled to town to market her master’s produce or carry a message, she could stand at the top of the Maysville Hill, high above the Ohio River, and gaze across those placid green waters to the free soil on the other side. Yet she had just given birth to a child destined to be a slave. Henry Bibb, a runaway slave from Kentucky who would one day publish Canada’s first black abo-

Sibby’s fears were realized, for her youngest child was sold on June 17, 1815, to an elderly man named George Morton. He wanted a living present for his nine-year-old grandson and namesake, one that would appreciate over time as his tiny slave grew older. Thornton, only three years old, was taken away from his grieving mother in Maysville and sent to live in Washington. There he resided in the household of William Murphy, the local postmaster and later president of the Maysville Jockey Club. Murphy’s elegant brick house is still standing, magnificently restored, its parlour graced by the original portrait of the dour man who oversaw Thornton Blackburn’s childhood training.

Thornton was brought up as a house servant and a coachman, a skill that would stand him in good stead in later life. He also gained some experience in stonemasonry when he was apprenticed alongside his brother, Alfred. Washington was noted for its fine local stone and the imposing Washington Courthouse was just a few doors away from the Murphy home where Thornton lived. One day a visitor to the town would make its courthouse internationally famous, for it was here that a young Cincinnati-based schoolteacher would witness her first slave auction. Years later,

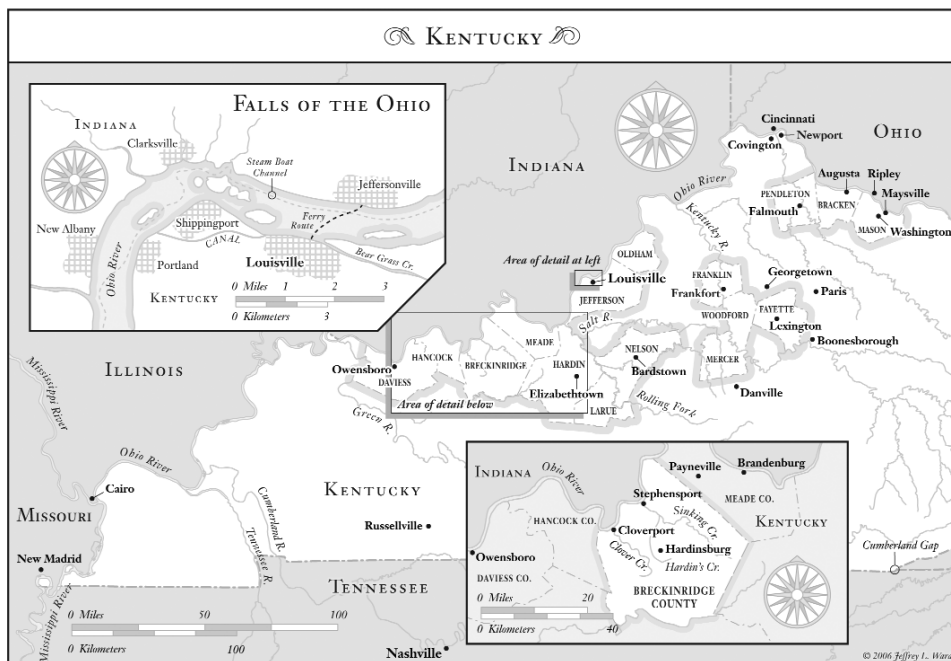
south often stopped at Stephensonport, a tiny river port sixteen miles from Hardinsburg. Dr. Brown may have made the journey to Stephensonport looking for a likely lad who had a way with horses, and come home with Thornton.

Dr. Brown's family was from Culpeper County, Virginia, and had settled some years earlier on the Rolling Fork of the Salt River in Nelson County. Although a prominent professional man, he was of modest means, but had married very well. His wife's father was the successful construction magnate and tavern owner, Clayton Talbot of Nashville. The Talbots were early pioneers

Churchill of the noted Louisville family. Abigail Oldham, John Pope Oldham's sister, later married Henry's youngest brother, Samuel Churchill, thereby hopelessly complicating the family tree. The Churchills' passion for horseracing was legendary. One of their descendants established a racecourse on the family estate that forever commemorates their name—Churchill Downs.

Thornton Blackburn lived with Susan and Gideon Brown and their five other slaves at Hardinsburg from 1825 to 1827. The town has more than a glancing connection with Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was born in nearby LaRue County (then Hardin), but his mother's parents, the Hanks, had land at Hardinsburg and were associated with the Oldhams in business dealings while they lived in the town. But in 1816, Abraham's father moved the family to Indiana and later to Illinois. The president would in later years say that it was partly because of Kentucky's legendary land disputes and "partly on account of slavery" that they left the state. The Lincolns passed through Hardinsburg on their way, and therein lies a tale that was recounted by local landowner David Murray Jr., who heard the story from his father:

When the Lincoln family moved from Hodgenville, they came through Hardinsburg on their way to their land-grant in Indiana . . . Lincoln was driving two large oxen hitched to a cart or wagon, and a cow was hitched to the hind end of the wagon. On account of the unusual size of the oxen, a crowd soon gathered to find out who these people were and where they were going. The outfit consisted of Thomas Lincoln with his family, his wife, a daughter, and a small boy about seven years old; some household furnishings such as bedding and cooking utensils; a cow he was taking along for milk, but looked as if she was about dry, and the team of oxen. Old Minerva, a Colored slave, who had been attracted to the scene, seeing the condition of the children, went back into the house and came back immediately with a plate heaped with slices of home-made bread covered with butter, a pitcher of milk, and some cups. She seated the



Harriet Beecher Stowe set her slave sale scene on the courthouse steps at Washington in her bestselling antislavery novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

**B**UT Thornton Blackburn was not there when Stowe visited in 1833, for at the age of fourteen he left the Maysville area forever. He next appears a good 200 miles west of Maysville in Hardinsburg, Kentucky, the county seat of Breckinridge County, as the property of Dr. Gideon Brown and his wife, Susan Talbot Brown. He may have come west with a migrating family, or been "sold down the river" to a slave dealer who intended him for the lucrative New Orleans market. Flatboats carrying slaves

of Fort Nash and Clayton was a one-time resident of Russellville, Kentucky. Early documents show that his Russellville home served as the Logan County courthouse, where documents were authenticated by being signed "on Clayton Talbot's billiard table." One of the attorneys who tried cases there was the bold young Andrew Jackson.

Pretty Susan Talbot met her dashing physician husband in 1812 while on a visit to her sister, Melinda, at Hardinsburg. Melinda Talbot was wife to John Pope Oldham, son of William Oldham, after whom Oldham County is named. The Oldhams were intermarried with some of the most illustrious families in the state. John Pope Oldham's mother had been widowed early and taken as her second husband Henry

*An inventory of the assets of the estate of Dr. Gideon Brown, deceased, made at his late residence this 9th of June 1829*

Negro man Thornton	700 00
do do	350
Negro woman named Jerry	275
do do do Kelyak	300
do do do do	125
do do do do Malinda	250
do do do do Leonard	175
One brown horse team	45
Maning horse	80
One mare & colt	55
One 2 years old colt	50
One white cow & calf	7 00
do do do do	8 00
One white face cow	6 00
One little black cow	6 00
do do do do	2 50
do do do do	2 50
2 harts & pigs	8 50
11 harts	2 50
One Wagon third year	50 00
One carriage & harness	100
One small saddle	2 50
One old skin saddle	2 50
do do mens saddle	4 50
1 old broken harness	2 00

An inventory of Dr. Gideon Brown's assets, made after his death in 1829. Thornton Blackburn was the first asset on the list, valued at \$400.

children on the steps . . . and fed them. When they left Hardinsburg, they drove to Cloverport to get across the river. In those days there were no ferry boats, and passengers, whenever any came along, were sent across in a canoe. When the Lincolns reached the ferry, a raft was made, with the assistance of several people, and the wagon placed upon it. With one man in the canoe to pull and one man on the rear of the raft to push with a long pole (the river was low at the time), the Lincolns were ferried across to the Indiana shore and landed. Then they came back, and the two oxen and the cow were made to swim over."

In later years her master, Colonel David R. Murray, would often laughingly remind Aunt Minerva of her kindness to a little boy who carried the big name of "Abraham Linkhorne."

Thornton Blackburn would have known kindly Minerva, but his time in Hardinsburg was destined to be short. When Thornton was seventeen, Dr. Brown and two of his children died of a sudden illness. Susan Talbot Brown had land and horses but little money, and she was left

with five minor children. The doctor's will ordered that his slaves be hired out to pay for his children's education. Susan's brother-in-law, John Pope Oldham, now a judge and the postmaster at Louisville, carried young Thornton off to the city to work as a porter at Wurts and Reinhard's dry goods store. This emporium stood at the corner of Fourth and Main streets in the heart of Louisville's mercantile district, not far from where the commemorative plaque to the Blackburns now stands. Susan Brown was paid \$110 per year for her slave's services. Thornton received clothing, food, and medical care as part of the contract between the dry goods company and John Pope Oldham as super-

intendent of Dr. Brown's estate. Mrs. Brown saved the cost of the young man's upkeep, avoided the chore of supervising him, and turned a tidy profit on his labor.

TWO years after Thornton moved to Louisville his life took a dramatic and very happy turn. He fell in love. Thornton must have been very charming and personable, for the object of his affections was a lovely young woman who was born in the West Indies and had come to Kentucky via New Orleans. Ruthie, who would in later years change her name to Lucie, was a nursemaid to a local merchant's family. She was 28 years old. Thornton Blackburn was only 19, but he wooed her, and won her, and began spending his Saturday nights at the Green Street home of Mrs. Blackburn's owners, George and Charlotte Backus. But the young couple's joy was to be short-lived.

In May of 1831, just months after Ruthie found her Thornton, both George and Charlotte Backus died. Their estate was found to be completely bankrupt. The couple's only possession of real value was their pretty nursemaid. And so Mrs. Blackburn was put up on the block in the parlor of the very house where she had

served and sold off to the highest bidder. Her purchaser was a local dry goods merchant named Virgil McKnight.

Virgil McKnight was destined to become a highly respected man. As the president of the Bank of Kentucky, he was credited with saving the bank's reputation and honoring its debts after the Crash of 1837. But in earlier years he participated in the highly varied trade in merchandise, land and livestock that was characteristic of Louisville wholesalers in the early part of the 19th century. His commercial dealings suggest that he not only bought and sold slaves on occasion, but also gathered up coffles of "likely" looking men, women and children. These he sent by boat down the Ohio River to the Mississippi where they would be resold at a profit in the great slave markets of the Cotton Kingdom at Natchez-Under-the-Hill and at New Orleans.

The most valuable of all Kentucky's slaves were beautiful women like Mrs. Blackburn. A striking painting from the 1850s entitled the *Slave Market* shows a lovely girl being auctioned off at the "fancy girl" sales in New Orleans. Abraham Lincoln's law partner and biographer, William H. Herndon, cited an occasion when Lincoln, on a trip to New Orleans in May of 1831, witnessed the intimate examination of a beautiful young woman by potential purchasers at a slave sale. This was just two months before



The Blackburns feared Ruthie's new owner, Louisville businessman Virgil McKnight, would sell her down the river.

Fulton Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky



Ruthie Blackburn could have expected to share her fate. The staunchly abolitionist Herndon attributed Lincoln's later opposition to slavery to his utter revulsion at this experience.

Thornton had lost his brother to a slave sale. He had been torn from his mother's arms at the age of three in a similar transaction. Now a young man, he could not bear to see his own wife carried off down the Ohio River to the auction rooms of the Deep South. He knew, as did she, that it was her very beauty that most

of well-forged manumission papers and a bold and confident manner. Leaving from the docks at the top of Third Street, where Thornton was a familiar figure due to his employment in the district, the Blackburns boarded a ferry to take them across the river to Jeffersonville, Indiana. From the Indiana shore they hailed a steamboat. They convinced the captain of the *Versailles*, a packet boat plying the Louisville-Cincinnati mail route, that they were free people. After paying their fare, the couple traveled for a night and a

*The Slave Market, an American painting from the 1850s, vividly portrays a "fancy girl" on the auction block in New Orleans.*

**It was her very beauty that most endangered her.  
In the fancy girl markets she would be sold as a rich man's mistress, or worse, a brothel keeper's wares.**

endangered her. In the fancy girl markets she would be sold as a rich man's mistress, or worse, a brothel keeper's wares. Just eleven days after her sale, Thornton took his wife north in search of freedom.

ON the morning of July 3, 1831, Thornton and his wife set forth on the most perilous of journeys. They were dressed in their finest clothing and armed with nothing more than a set

day all the way north to the Queen City of the West. There are coincidences in the Blackburn tale that could not be invented: the *Versailles*, bearing the Blackburns, landed on free soil in front of what is now the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center at Cincinnati on the glorious Fourth of July, 1831.

The Blackburns' flight from Kentucky was quickly discovered, but it was a long weekend and the next steamboat out

of the Port of Louisville was not sailing until Tuesday, July 5. By the time it reached Cincinnati bearing John Pope Oldham's eldest son, William, the Blackburns were long gone. He arrived in Cincinnati to discover a trail grown cold. Assuming the Blackburns were well away in Canada, William returned home to report to his father and to Mrs. Blackburn's new owner, Virgil McKnight, that their slaves had successfully escaped. The captain and owners of the *Versailles* would be prosecuted by Oldham and McKnight for their part in the Blackburns' escape. The court case lasted more than 15 years.

But Thornton had not taken his wife to Canada. Voyaging by stagecoach northwards through Ohio, the Blackburns made their way from Cincinnati to Sandusky and then to the city of Detroit, on the far northwestern boundaries of the Territory of Michigan. There, amidst friends, the young couple settled down to a life in freedom.

As did many fugitive slaves, Thornton earned his living as a free man using skills he had acquired in bondage. In Detroit he worked as a stonemason,




quite a well-paid position and one in great demand in his new home, which had recently experienced a huge fire and was in the process of rebuilding. Detroit was a raw and blustery place, the most distant fur trading outpost of France's far-flung Canadian empire. Occupied by the British after 1760, the town and its strategically placed fortifications on the Detroit River had finally been handed over to the Americans in 1796 under the terms of Jay's Treaty. There were about sixty black families in Detroit when the Blackburns lived there. Most were descendants of formerly enslaved people once claimed by Native American, French and British owners. More recent arrivals included Kentucky-born freedman Benjamin Willoughby and his wife from Falmouth, Kentucky; Caroline French and her husband, George, who had been brought up near Thornton south of Maysville; and the Virginia-born Madison Lightfoot and his wife,

**25 DOLLARS REWARD.**

The subscribers will give for the apprehension and return of a colored man, named **THORNTON**, who absconded from our employ on the 3d or 4th of July, inst. Said Thornton is about 5 feet, 9 or 10 inches high; stout made, and of a yellow complexion; light eyes, and of good address; had on when he left, a blue cloth coat and pantaloons, boots, and a black hat.

july 7

**WURTS & REINHARD.**



Tabitha. Together, they formed the nucleus of black society in Detroit.

Thornton's wages enabled him and his bride to live in relative comfort in their new hometown. This was the first time that he and Ruthie could live together as man and wife. Surely they found their time in Detroit very sweet. The young couple was now secure in the

Judge John Pope Oldham and Virgil McKnight that he had located their runaway human property.

**W**ITHIN days, slave agents arrived in Detroit to claim the Blackburns as runaways. On Saturday June 15, 1833, Thornton and his wife were tried as fugitive slaves before Judge Henry Chipman. Despite an impassioned defense by the city attorney of Detroit, Alexander Frazier, the unfortunate couple was sentenced to be returned to Kentucky and a lifetime of bondage. Detroit's African-American community packed the courthouse balcony and threatened to burn the city to the ground should the Blackburns be handed over to their former owners. The judge's hands were tied, however, for the federal law was clear. Thornton and Ruthie were jailed pending their return to Kentucky and slavery.

knowledge that one or the other of them would not be sold down the river. They could live off the fruits of their own labor, with no all-powerful master to collect Thornton's wages or "interfere" with his wife.

But the long arm of the Fugitive Slave Law was reaching out for them. Two years after their escape, the Blackburns were discovered in Detroit. Thomas Rogers, the very man who had supervised Thornton's labors at the Wurts and Reinhard store in Louisville, was traveling in Michigan and met Thornton Blackburn on the streets of Detroit. They talked. Rogers returned to Louisville to inform

From all over Michigan and as far away as Fort Malden in Upper Canada, armed men and women filtered into Detroit and a carefully choreographed rescue scheme was hatched. It was the brainchild of former Kentucky slave Benjamin Willoughby, the Frenches, and the Lightfoots with the unlikely but very welcome assistance of City Attorney Frazier and Charles Cleland, publisher of the *Detroit Courier*. Both men were abolitionists and offered to help in any way they could to secure the Blackburns' freedom.

On Sunday morning, June 16, following church services, a respectable pair of black congregants approached Sheriff

Map by Tim C. Walker, courtesy of Dr. James St. G. Walker





John M. Wilson. Mrs. Lightfoot and Mrs. French entreated him to let them visit Mrs. Blackburn to share with her the solace of friendship and prayer. Wilson likely considered the visit a means of helping diffuse the public tension. He agreed to let the ladies sit with Ruthie.

Night was falling when Mrs. Lightfoot and Mrs. French made their “sorrowful departure, the tears falling like rain, and all wringing their hands in terrible anguish.” The pair of visitors covered their faces with handkerchiefs and lowered their veils to hide their sorrow as they emerged from the jail and hurried home along the darkened streets.

It was not until the next morning that Jailer Lemuel Goodell realized it was Mrs. French sitting in Ruthie’s prison cell,



*Sir John Colborne, the Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, never had any intention of returning the Blackburns to slavery in the United States.*

wearing Mrs. Blackburn’s clothes. Ruthie was already safely ensconced in Amherstburg, across the Detroit River in Canada.

The very next day, Thornton was rescued from the steps of the Detroit jail by an angry mob in the event known in that city’s history as the Blackburn Riots of 1833. With the authorities in hot pursuit, he too made it across the river to Canada. The mayor of Detroit sent a letter over the river to the sheriff of Sandwich demanding the couple’s apprehension. Mrs. Blackburn, her husband and his seven youthful rescuers were all soon incarcerated within the cold stone walls of the Sandwich jail. From its barred windows they could see the lights of the Detroit shore just across the river.

This presented an interesting legal problem for both Michigan and Canadian authorities. The Blackburn case was the first test of the Fugitive Offenders Act, a new extradition bill allowing for transfer of accused criminals from Upper Canada (what is now Ontario) to the United States. It would be the only time in North American history that the return of a female fugitive slave living in Canada would be sought by the American government. Detroit officials accused the Blackburns of inciting the very riot that rescued them and of trying to kill the sheriff, who had been badly injured. These were capital offenses, thus qualifying them for extradition.

But the Canadian government had no intention of sending them back. At this time slavery was still technically legal in Canada, but a 1793 law had made owning slaves so financially onerous that the practice had died out. Lieutenant Gover-

*A View of King Street by John Gillespie. In the center of this 1846 view of downtown Toronto, you can see Thornton Blackburn’s taxi heading for the cab stand beside St. James Cathedral.*

nor Sir John Colborne, an abolitionist, ordered his attorney general to find a legal and diplomatic solution to the Blackburns’ dilemma, without inciting the Michigan government to unpleasant forms of retaliation. This is the conclusion that was reached: the punishment for the crimes of which Thornton and his wife were accused would be the same whether an American court judged the couple guilty or innocent—they would still be slaves for life. But that was more severe than any punishment for the same crimes under Canadian law. From that time forward, no accused criminal could be returned to any jurisdiction where the punishment for the crime they were supposed to have committed was more stringent than Canadian law would dictate. This is the same policy that underlies Canadian refugee law to this day, and it began with the Blackburn case.

On what were essentially humanitarian grounds, the Blackburns were given asylum in Canada. Ruthie changed her name in honor of her newfound liberty. Henceforth she would be “Lucie Blackburn,” a free woman in a free land. The Blackburn case had made Canada a safe haven and the main terminus of the Underground Railroad.

**T**HE couple moved to Toronto in the spring of 1834. There the Blackburns built a tiny frame shotgun



*The Blackburn family is permanently reunited under this obelisk in Toronto's Necropolis Cemetery.*

house in a sparsely settled area of the fledgling city, near the lake where land was cheap. Thornton went to work as a waiter at the courthouse belonging to the Law Society of Upper Canada, and the young couple started to make a new life for themselves. Thornton was 22 and his bride, now safe from all harm, was 31. Within two years, they had started a business. The first hackney cab, a new concept from London, England, had arrived in Montreal. Thornton conceived the idea of beginning a taxi business in Toronto—the first in Upper Canada. He painted his taxi red and yellow, named it “The City,” and set about making a success of his business.

The Blackburns’ adventures were far from over, however. For the rest of their lives, they would be involved in assisting other fugitive slaves and free black immigrants from the United States as they settled into their new Canadian homes. The couple’s names appear in the annals of the active antislavery movement that operated out of Canada’s largest city. Thornton’s taxi was a success and the couple grew wealthy. They contributed to the building of churches, mills and retail establishments. Two of the latter were at Buxton, a community in southwestern Ontario that provided employment and education for hundreds of fugitive slaves.

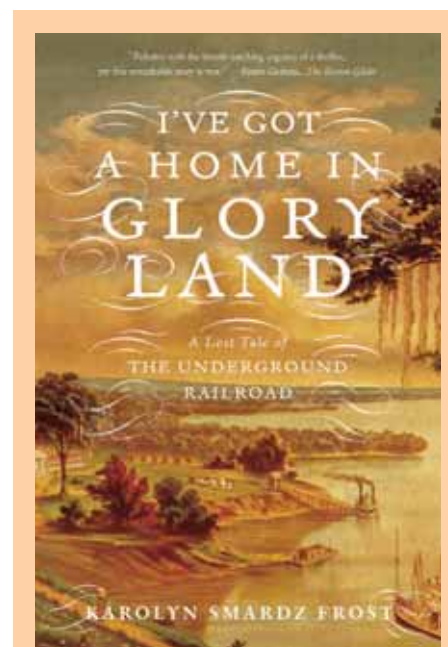
Thornton also managed to reunite his scattered family. Upon his arrival in Toronto, he must have been thrilled to discover that Alfred Blackburn, the brother from whom he had been separated for so many years, was already living there. We don’t know how Alfred escaped from his Washington, Kentucky, owners, but it is intriguing to note that one of the run-aways assisted by famous abolitionist John Rankin at his Liberty Hill home in Ripley, Ohio, was named “Alfred,” and he came from Maysville.

Both Alfred and their much-loved mother, Sibby, would find their final resting place under the tall granite obelisk in the Necropolis Cemetery that marks Thornton and Lucie’s Toronto gravesite. How Thornton managed to rescue his elderly mother, still living in slavery at Augusta, Kentucky, is almost unbelievable in its audacity. Returning to the United States by way of Detroit in 1837, just four years after becoming notorious for his part in the Blackburn Riots, he made his long and perilous way southward. Traveling through Michigan and then the length of Ohio, he reached the shores of the Ohio River. How he located his mother, whom he had not seen since he was fourteen years old, is not recorded, but one can well imagine the joy of their reunion. He brought the elderly woman home to Canada to live out her life in freedom.

On December 18, 1865, ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution freed all the slaves in the United

States. Lucie and Thornton Blackburn stayed in Canada, for their home and business were there. Like thousands of other fugitive slaves, the Blackburns had put down deep roots in Canada’s frozen soil. Far from the chains that had once bound them, the Blackburns had, indeed, found a home in Glory Land.

Like tens of thousands of people of African ancestry, Thornton and Lucie Blackburn were part of the vast enslaved labor pool that helped settle the American West. Their labor helped build Kentucky. The Blackburns died childless, but descendants of Kentucky’s thousands of black pioneers are today scattered across North America and beyond. Most of their stories are lost to history, but the amazing tale of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn stands as a monument to their courage and love of freedom. ●



Karolyn Smardz Frost, Ph.D. is an archaeologist and historian based in Toronto, Canada. She is the archaeologist who discovered the Blackburns’ home and spent 20 years tracking down their story. She tells the complete story of Thornton and Lucie Blackburn in *I've Got A Home in Glory Land: A Lost Tale of the Underground Railroad*, winner of the 2007 Governor General's Literary Award for Nonfiction. The book is available in paperback.

The Emancipation Proclamation, which took effect on January 1, 1863, was one of Abraham Lincoln's greatest achievements, but critics have never stopped asking: Why did he wait so long?

# A Question of Timing

In a lecture at the Lincoln Museum in 2004, (historian) Allen Guelzo noted that “the most obvious fact about the Emancipation Proclamation that raises question-marks in people’s minds is the matter of timing: why did he wait so long? . . . If the Civil War was really about slavery, and Lincoln was in earnest about abolishing slavery, why didn’t he pick up his pen on April 13th, 1861, [when Fort Sumter surrendered] and free the Confederacy’s slaves

These critics have a point. By 1861, it had become a common practice for governments at war with a slave-holding enemy to offer freedom to their adversary’s slaves. Why didn’t President Lincoln use this weapon against the South from the day the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter, just as he authorized the army to use muskets and cannon, and the navy to impose a blockade? At the beginning, the president must have hoped that, like President Wash-

about John C. Frémont’s emancipation order\* indicates that the president had already decided on the legal test—military necessity—that he would eventually use to justify the Emancipation Proclamation. If the Confederates were to be given rights under the law of war, why shouldn’t they suffer the penalties of that law as well, including having their slaves freed by the enemy army?

Professor Guelzo and others have pointed out that in the fall and winter of 1861, there was in fact a military necessity not to emancipate the enemy’s slaves, because this would have caused the secession of Kentucky, a strategically important border state. That necessity had ended by March 1862, however, and still the president waited. He waited until General McClellan’s army had been thrown back from the gates of Richmond, and the need for new approaches to the war was obvious. Only then, after the military necessity for emancipation would be clear to all but die-hard supporters of slavery, did he tell his cabinet that he had decided to issue an emancipation proclamation.

In the eyes of Lincoln’s critics, his delay can only be attributed to racism and a secret sympathy for the institution of slavery. The

**If Lincoln was really a reluctant emancipator who secretly believed in slavery, it is difficult to understand why the proclamation he issued was so radical in its scope.**

then?” During his lifetime, Lincoln’s antislavery critics had faulted him for delaying almost two years before issuing an emancipation proclamation. “From the genuine abolition ground,” Frederick Douglass observed in 1876, “Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull and indifferent.” In the twentieth century, this complaint was taken up by some activists for civil rights and racial equality.

ington in the Whiskey Rebellion, he could face down the secessionists without resorting to a full-scale war. By September, however, it was clear that the government would have to accord the Confederates most, if not all, the rights and privileges of a belligerent power under the international law of war. Lincoln’s correspondence with Senator Orville Browning (of Illinois)

\* On August 30, 1861, General John C. Frémont, commander of the Department of the West, issued a proclamation that emancipated the slaves in Missouri. President Lincoln, fearing it might cause Kentucky to secede from the Union, countermanded Frémont’s order.

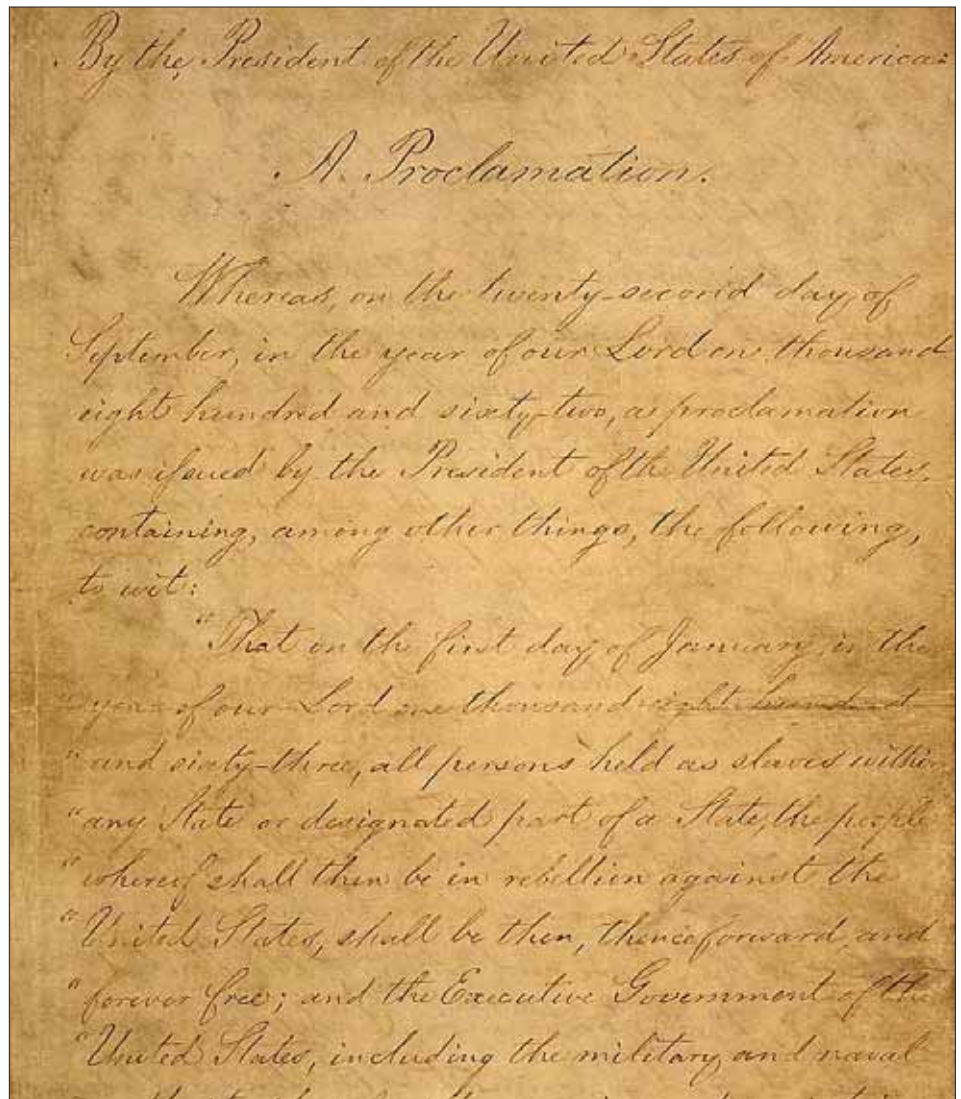
president's qualms about the legality of emancipation, as expressed in his letters to Senator Browning, can be dismissed as excessive sensitivity to the constitutional rights of slaveholders, combined with callousness toward the victims of slavery.

The unspoken assumptions of these critics are that any emancipation proclamation, even an unconstitutional one, was better than none at all, and that the president would have acted on that basis if he truly hated slavery. An invalid emancipation proclamation could do no harm, they assume, and might do some good by encouraging slaves to seek freedom. Even if the courts overturned the proclamation, at least some of these refugees would escape and remain free. As "Black power" advocate Julius Lester wrote in 1968, "his pen was sitting on his desk the whole time. All he had to do was get up one morning and say 'Doggonit! I think I gon free the slaves today. It just ain't right for folks to own other folks.' It was that simple."

Under nineteenth-century American law, however, it was not that simple. Then, as now, officers of the U.S. Army swore an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution, which declared the president to be their commander in chief. President Lincoln had a duty to the officers who had taken that oath not to order them to perform acts that he knew the courts would find to be illegal.

As a lawyer, Lincoln also knew that Federal officers who loyally carried out his illegal orders could be held personally liable for any monetary damages that resulted. Officers who received and protected fugitives under an illegal emancipation proclamation could be successfully sued by the aggrieved slave owners. Chief Justice Roger Taney had already ruled that superior orders provided no defense for an officer who took an American citizen's property. It was unlikely that Taney and his colleagues would make an exception for the antislavery orders of a president many of them loathed.

If the issue reached the Federal courts they might well hold that there was no true military necessity, and therefore no legal justification, for a premature emancipation proclamation. By waiting until the military necessity for emancipation was palpable and obvious, President Lincoln greatly increased



the chances that his Emancipation Proclamation would be upheld by the courts, and that loyal officers would not suffer for obeying it. The legal context in which he waged the war, rather than reluctance to strike at slavery, is a more likely explanation for why the president waited to issue his Emancipation Proclamation.

If Lincoln was really a reluctant emancipator who secretly believed in slavery, it is difficult to understand why the proclamation he issued was so radical in its scope. Had the proclamation truly been issued reluctantly, in response to abolitionist and Radical Republican pressure, then it should have gone no further than the other military emancipation documents issued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and granted freedom only to refugees who actually escaped to Union military lines. Section 9 of the Second Confiscation Act, which Lincoln quoted in his preliminary proclamation, only went this far, and the president

*The first page of the final Emancipation Proclamation, which on January 1, 1863, freed all slaves held in states or parts of states then in rebellion against the United States.*

could easily have deferred to Congress if he was acting only in response to pressure and against his personal inclinations.

Both section 9 and the historical precedents were based on the laws governing enemy property in wartime, and one cannot seize enemy property unless one has control of it. Lincoln, however, drafted his proclamation to emphatically reject the idea that it was limited by the rules applicable to property. From the speeches of Senator (Charles) Sumner (of Massachusetts), his correspondence with Senator Browning, and other sources, the president had learned that the law of war permitted him to do anything to defeat an enemy, except for a few acts that were inhumane. By declaring that the U.S. gov-

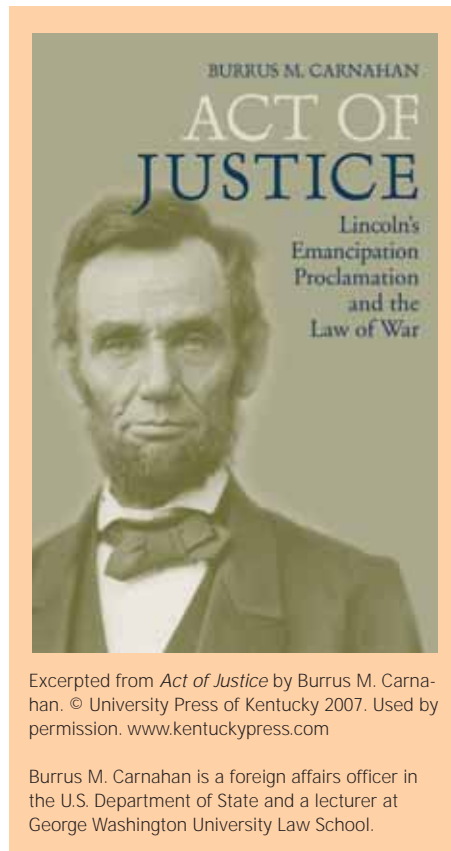
ernment immediately recognized the freedom of all slaves in the Confederacy, Lincoln dealt with them as an oppressed people, rather than as property, and appealed for their support as humans.

The document Lincoln signed on January 1, 1863, was the last emancipation proclamation issued in Western military history. Slavery was still legal in Brazil and the Spanish colonies of the Caribbean, but the death of the institution in the United States doomed it throughout the Western hemisphere.

Despite the end of slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation remains an important precedent. As an official refusal to recognize the legitimacy of enslaving a whole people, and an encouragement for them to resist, the Emancipation Proclamation found many echoes in the conflicts of the twentieth century. In 1932, for example, Secretary of State Henry Stimson declared that the United States would not recognize any territorial changes resulting from Japanese aggression against China.

The United States and other Western governments refused to recognize Stalin's annexation of the Baltic Republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia in 1940, a policy that aided their recovery of independence in 1991. During World War II, neither the United States nor the United Kingdom recognized the Vichy regime in France, and both gave material aid to the Free French forces that continued to resist German occupation. These policies attained universal approval in 1974, when the United Nations General Assembly adopted a definition of aggression that declared: "No territorial acquisition or special advantage resulting from aggression is or shall be recognized as lawful."

Many other examples could be given. What is significant is that Lincoln's decision to recognize the freedom of an oppressed people, to offer them assistance in securing that freedom, and to ask their aid against a common enemy, has remained an important diplomatic weapon in the continuing struggle for human liberty. ●



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# Proud to Support the Kentucky Humanities Council



Thrilled to send "Our Lincoln" to Washington!

# Final Emancipation Proclamation

## January 1, 1863

### By the President of the United States of America A Proclamation

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

“That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States.”

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the

people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth); and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

**By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN**  
**WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.**

Source: Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, vol. 6, 28-30 (R. P. Basler ed. 1953).

Henry Clay, Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln had a tremendous impact on the nation, but how did they influence one another? Historian James C. Klotter discussed this Kentucky power trio with *Kentucky Humanities* editor Charles Thompson.

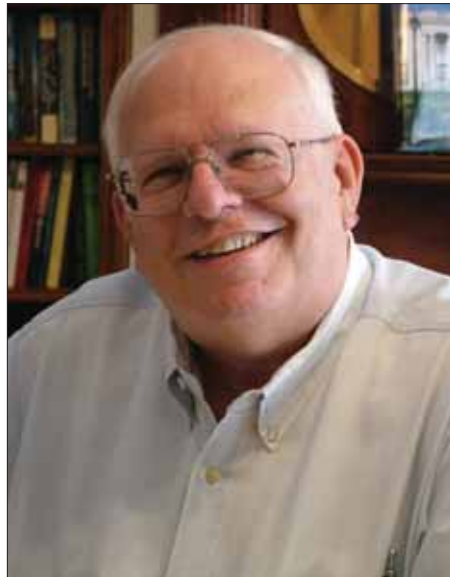
# A Power Trio

**James C. Klotter:** Both Lincoln and Clay are born in other states and then left their home states, Clay coming from Virginia to Kentucky, Lincoln going from Kentucky to Indiana and Illinois. Both were part of that westward movement, to new frontiers.

There are really a lot of similarities in their lives besides their movement west. They're both very tall for their time—Clay over six feet and Lincoln a giant-like 6-4, very tall and thin. Neither of them was considered handsome. In fact, Lincoln was considered ugly by most people, that's the reason he grew a beard, supposedly to disguise that. Clay's mouth, they said, was so large that he couldn't even whistle well. There's a physical similarity that shapes them.

Both are men who use humor to make their points—the humor of the frontier, the rough frontier. Lincoln was known for telling dirty stories and Clay was the life of every party he went to. They both had the ability to make people feel comfortable in their midst, and to become a part of their circle. There's a famous story about a new congressman from Georgia. At a party, somebody pointed out to this new congressman, "There's the famous Whig Mr. Clay. Don't you want to meet him? He's a famous man." And the congressman said, "No sir, no sir, I do not choose to subject myself to the spell of his fascination."

Lincoln and Clay had that kind of rough charisma about them, country charm, as well as an aristocratic charm. Clay, when he was making the peace treaty to end the War of 1812, was with



*James C. Klotter is a professor of history at Georgetown College and State Historian of Kentucky. A specialist in Kentucky history, he has written numerous books about the Commonwealth's past and is working on a book about Henry Clay.*

the giants and aristocrats of Europe. They called him Prince Hal because he was comfortable in their presence. English travelers who came to Kentucky said Clay was the one man who most impressed them because he was so good at conversation, and Lincoln was the same way.

They're both attorneys. Lincoln is actually more of an attorney than Clay is. Clay makes his living that way briefly, but he lives mainly as a politician and as a planter, whereas Lincoln pretty much depends on the law for his career. Even

though Clay may have had a little better legal background, Lincoln is the man who actually practices law longer and better. However Clay is a good lawyer too—he argues cases before the Supreme Court.

They both are the kind of men who can overcome defeat. Clay loses three presidential races and two other times loses the nomination. His beloved party platforms go down to defeat time after time. Neither life is filled with success after success. Lincoln, in his first political race, finishes far down the ladder. He loses his first attempt for Congress. He doesn't even run for a second term after he finally does win a seat in Congress. Just because we have some setback or defeat doesn't mean you can't overcome it and go on to better things. In Lincoln's case, obviously, the presidency. But he hadn't even held an office for twelve years before he became president. Clay never won the presidential prize he sought, but he would later be named one of the five greatest United States senators of all time. And, in a sense, he's more praiseworthy than a lot of the presidents in his era.

**Charles Thompson:** You'd have great difficulty finding anybody who could name all the men who were president when Clay was in public life.

**JK:** That's one of the reasons I'm studying Clay for a book. What was it that caused Clay to remain a fingertip away from the prize? But also what does it say about how we elect presidents, what does it say about his age, his time period, and how they selected people?



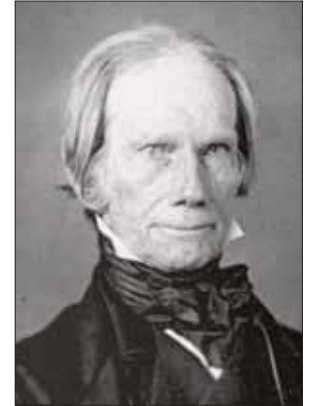
**CT: Lesser people were elected to the office.**

**JK:** Very lesser people in some cases. For instance, another person with strong Kentucky ties, Zachary Taylor, defeats Clay for the nomination in 1848 when Clay probably would have won. Zachary Taylor had never voted before he became president. How can you elect a man who has had no interest in politics over a man who had all this background as statesman and diplomat and great compromiser?

**CT: Clay is always described as Lincoln's political mentor. How did that develop?**

**JK:** Lincoln called Clay "my beau ideal of a statesman." And Lincoln's policies throughout his life right up into the Civil War certainly reflect the policies of Henry Clay. Now, it's not a blind devotion. In 1848, Lincoln leaves Clay, the man he's always supported, and supports Zachary Taylor simply because he didn't think Clay could win and he thought the Whig party deserved a winner. Lincoln's support for Clay came first and foremost on the policy level. He believed firmly in Clay's American plan of internal improvements—canals, roads, to build up ties between the sections, to make the nation stronger, to make it a better place. He believed in the high tariff to protect American industries, and in Clay's plan for the distribution of federal land in the territories. And he believed in a strong central bank.

On slavery, Lincoln would eventually diverge, but initially his policy was virtually the same as Clay's. He believed, as Clay did, in gradual emancipation with compensation or else just freedom by the owner, with colonization of many of the freed slaves to Africa. Both of them believed that race prejudice was too strong in America, that large numbers of free slaves in the southern population would create problems. So they believed not necessarily that all African Americans would have to leave America, but enough so that the numbers would not be a threat to the white population, and so that the white population would not be a threat to the black. This was Lincoln's policy even into the Civil War. He offered emancipation and compensation to



*These photographs show Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln c. 1846. They first visited Lexington together in 1847. The Clay photograph is c. 1850, about two years before his death at 77. Mary Todd and Clay inhabited Lexington's elite political and social circles. Lincoln was from a different world.*

*(Lincoln and Todd photos: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Clay photo: National Portrait Gallery)*

Kentuckians and they turned it down. I think it says that Kentuckians, and southerners generally, couldn't envision a world without slavery.

**CT: Lincoln formally proposed a colonization plan not that long before the Emancipation Proclamation.**

**JK:** He had various places he thought it could be, somewhere in central America, somewhere in the west. He just thought that was a more realistic plan. I think that's where the two differ, because Clay never grew out of his plan. He couldn't see a world in which you had immediate emancipation, and he didn't see the freed slaves as his equals. Lincoln had some of those same feelings, I think. His real strength is he grows out of that. He grows in office, as the good presidents do. People talk about Harry Truman, for example, the same way—a man who learns from experience. Lincoln meets people, talks to people. He grows and does have a metamorphosis. And in that sense, Lincoln does become a moral leader for the nation.

**CT: Lincoln was famously quoted as saying that he would do whatever it took to keep the Union together. And that was Clay's view too, wasn't it?**

**JK:** Somebody asked him what was the key to his life. He said, "If any man wants the key to my heart, let him take the key of union, and that is the key to my heart." The Union came above anything else, which I

think causes some people to misunderstand Clay, because they see that he compromises a lot and sometimes has to give up some of his cherished plans to make those compromises. Because of that they say he's wishy washy or he doesn't hold to principle, but I don't see it that way. I see that Clay basically did have principles, but his key principle was the Union, and it's so important that he's willing to compromise even some of his strongest principles to make sure that the Union survives. Over twenty-five years before the Civil War, Clay is talking about the dangers if we don't compromise and keep these sections together. There's going to be a war between the sections, literally pitting brother against brother—our fields will be devastated, our nation destroyed, our moral fiber wrecked. And he says, "If it does come to this, I will go with the Union." Because he feels this is, as Lincoln would say later, "the last best hope of earth." The United States was the model for the world and he wants to keep that model intact.

Lincoln will try to keep the Union together, but he decides somewhere along the way that there's one thing he cannot compromise on, and that's the movement of slavery into new territories. We look at Lincoln's decision today and say that it kept the union together and it ended slavery, but it cost 600,000 American lives. Clay's take would have been (he died in 1852): Can we do this some other way without destroying the union? But that

would have meant keeping slavery for many more years. There were costs to each approach.

**CT: Mary Todd grew up in a house where Henry Clay was a frequent visitor, then she married Abraham Lincoln. How does she fit in here?**

**JK:** Well, both men married well. The old saw says the fastest way to get rich is to marry well. Henry Clay certainly did that. You can see it from his tax records year to year. It also gave him contacts that proved very useful to him. Abraham Lincoln was the same way with Mary Todd. Holman Hamilton did a book called *Three Kentucky Presidents*, and he

never had in his life, and perhaps an ability to go on and not be overcome by the coils of melancholy which are part of his life too.

The Todds and Clay were close. So when Lincoln comes back to Kentucky with his wife and visits the Todds, he hears Henry Clay give a speech against the Mexican War, but we're not sure whether they ever met. And incidentally, that's another difference. Clay was a great speaker, everybody says that. But his words on paper were dry and lifeless. You read them and say, "How could this be a great speech?" And then you read the accounts of people yelling and cheering the same words because he

**Clay was a great speaker, everybody says that.  
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stresses that the marriage of Lincoln to Mary Todd was important to Lincoln's eventual success. First of all, it gave him an entryway into quarters of power he'd never had before. She was upper class, he was not. She came from a family with a lot of political ties, he came from one with virtually none. She allowed him to move in ways that helped him politically. Both Mary Todd Lincoln and Abraham Lincoln were ambitious. There's a quote from his law partner about Lincoln, "His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest." Mary Todd was probably just as ambitious, but being a woman in that time, her ambitions had to be channeled in different ways. She was a very smart woman, one of the best educated of her time. She was very cultured, spoke foreign languages, very different than Lincoln. Who knows what causes greatness, what mix brings it out in a person. Whatever it was in their marriage, that was a part of the mix. Plus, she gave him a love that he'd almost

knew what he could do with them. Lincoln was really not a great speaker. He was a good speaker, but his words on paper lived through the ages. Most people didn't hear these men speak, they very seldom saw them—they read their words in the papers. So, Lincoln was much better than Clay at reaching the masses through words that touched their hearts.

**CT: Is there any evidence of how Clay influenced Mary Todd in her exposure to him as she was growing up?**

**JK:** Well, there are stories, but you don't know how accurate they are. She supposedly rides out to Ashland and interrupts Clay during a dinner party and says, "Are you married, could I become a part of your circle?" He's charmed by her. I think she certainly was one of many in Kentucky who almost worshipped Henry Clay, and that she brought that with her to her marriage. As an intelligent woman of her time, she would have been able to communicate

the beliefs of Clay, and probably helped inculcate in Lincoln the support for the Clay program that he would follow for most of his political career.

**CT: In pictures and portraits of Clay, he looks a bit of a dandy. Lincoln certainly could never be accused of that, so he didn't exactly model himself after Clay in that respect.**

**JK:** I think Clay was more of an actor. When he got up to talk, the emotions he expressed and everything else he did were very carefully considered. Lincoln didn't try to be something he wasn't, which was one of the appeals he had. Clay turned some people off because they thought he was acting at times. Each of them did what they felt comfortable doing in their public careers. To me, the interesting part is below the surface. Both of these families had tremendous amounts of tragedy. Clay had eleven children, six daughters. And all the daughters die before Clay does. Every one of them. And his most beloved daughter, Anne—he's closer to her than any other member of his family—he can't be consoled when he hears about her death. And then his son, Henry Clay Jr., is killed in the Mexican War, which Clay had opposed. Most of the other sons had problems in their lives. Seven of his 11 children die before he does.

And in Lincoln's case, they had four sons, and three of the four die before Mary Todd Lincoln does. So, in these families there are tragedies, and the public person sometimes has a very different persona than the private one. When Clay is wandering the fields of Ashland, he's reminded almost daily of the family tragedies that have taken place there. The children who were playing who are now gone. And Lincoln, in the middle of the war, loses a favorite son. All these things make us realize that we judge people on their public image, but below the surface there are a lot of other factors that cause them to be the persons they are. Do they go on despite their feelings, or because of their feelings? Those are the things that make us know, I think, that we can never fully understand the individuals in history. ●



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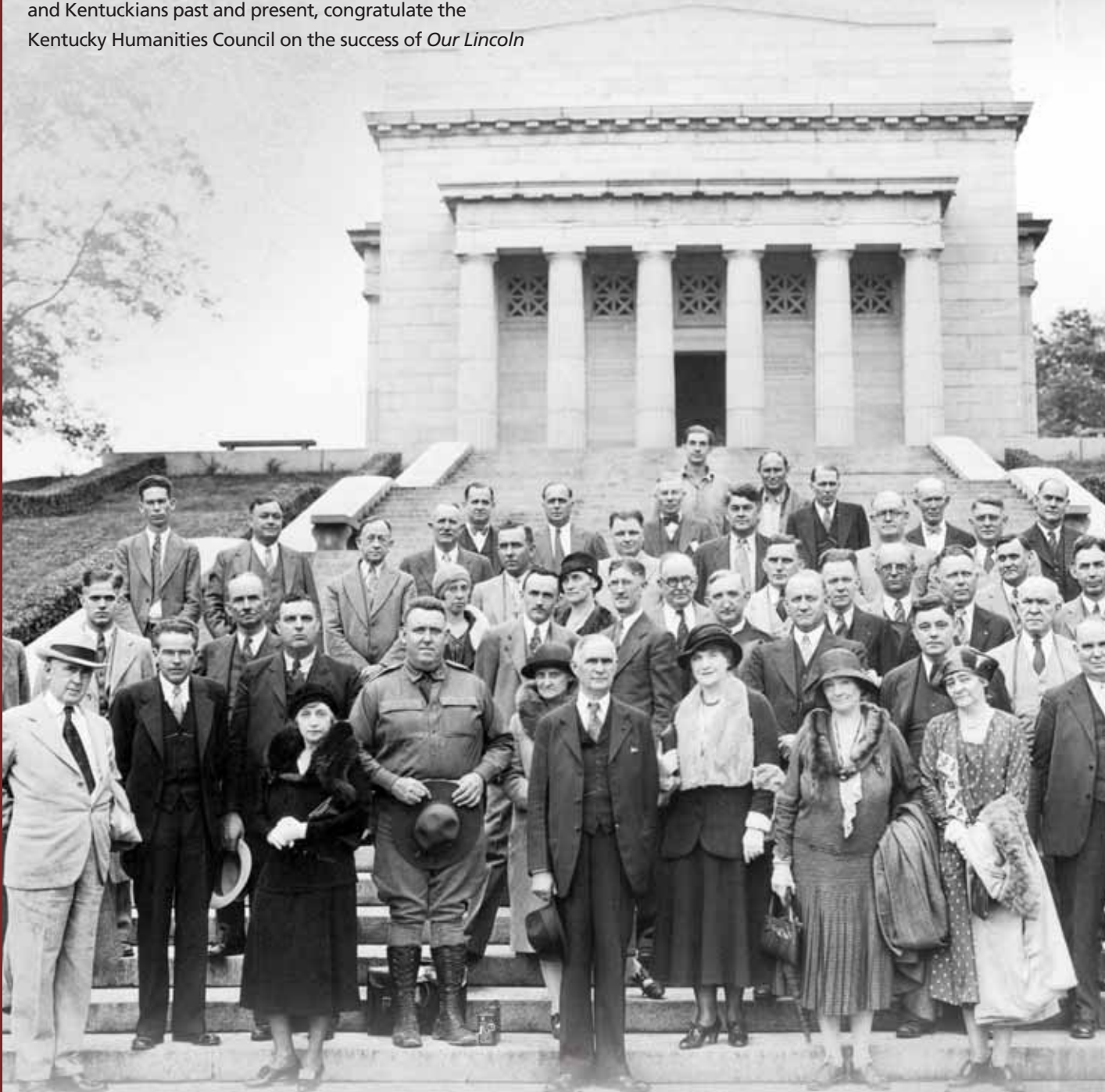
“With public sentiment, nothing can fail.  
Without it, nothing can succeed.” –Abraham Lincoln

The Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission,  
and Kentuckians past and present, congratulate the  
Kentucky Humanities Council on the success of *Our Lincoln*

★ 1809 - 2009 ★



KENTUCKY  
a b r a h a m  
LINCOLN  
★ BICENTENNIAL ★



c.1906, LaRue County. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

The KALBC is administered by the Kentucky Historical Society

For more information on *Our Lincoln*  
and other Bicentennial events, visit

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The Kentucky Historical Society is an agency of the  
Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet.



Reviled by many of his fellow Kentuckians when he was president, Abraham Lincoln became Kentucky's, and America's, idol during the 20th century. The Commonwealth is home to a growing list of notable Lincoln memorials.

# Now He Belongs to the Ages

## Memorializing Abraham Lincoln

**A**FTER Abraham Lincoln was shot on the evening of April 14, 1865, several men carried him from Ford's Theater to a lodging house across the street. Teetering on the brink of death for most of the evening, the Great Emancipator breathed his last at 7:22 the next morning. Several of Lincoln's cabinet members, including Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, witnessed his demise. With tears of grief streaming down his face, Stanton said: "Now he belongs to the ages."

As soon as Lincoln's mortal remains were safely interred in Springfield, Illinois, the American people began the process of memorializing the slain president. They first confined their efforts to paper: newspaper and magazine elegies, broadsides, and memorial photographs and engravings coupled with declarations of sincere sentiment. Gradually these expressions metamorphosed into memorials of stone, bronze, and scholarly tomes. These monuments were about more than memorializing a man; they were meant to perpetuate the ideals he espoused: unity, equality, and opportunity.



*No Lincoln memorial is more familiar than this penny. Over the past century, the U.S. Mint has churned out almost 289 billion of them.*

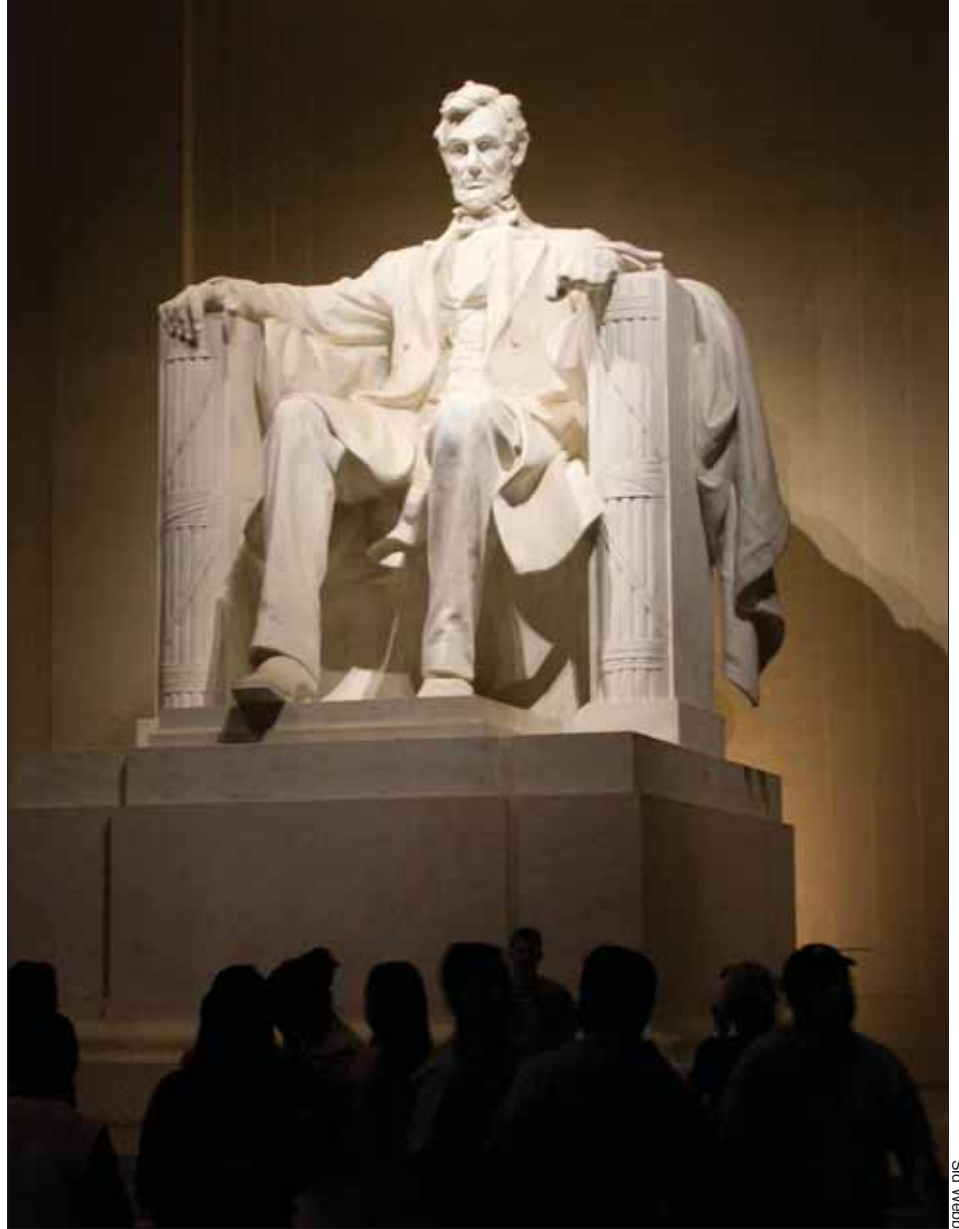
Lincoln's Springfield tomb, located in Oak Ridge Cemetery and completed in 1874, stands as one of the president's first memorials. The majority of the other Lincoln shrines found across the country were completed in the 20th century. A degree of healing needed to take place before a Lincoln memorial could be generally accepted, or, in some cases, tolerated. The centennial of Lincoln's birth in

1909 was the impetus for a number of memorials to the former president. One of the most significant of that year was the minting of the penny with a bust of Lincoln on the obverse side, replacing the popular Indian head penny. The Lincoln penny was the first U.S. coin to feature a presidential image. Perhaps no other Lincoln memorial has been so indelibly stamped on the nation's consciousness. Since 1909, the U.S. Mint has produced more than 288.7 billion pennies, enough to circle the earth 137 times if lined up edge to edge. The Lincoln Memorial was added to the reverse side of the penny in 1959 to honor the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's birth. On his 200th birthday, February 12, 2009, the U.S. Mint will release the first of four new versions of the Lincoln penny. The new pennies depict milestones in Lincoln's life, beginning with his birth in a Kentucky log cabin. Also scheduled for release in 2009: a Lincoln commemorative silver dollar.

During the 20th century Lincoln became America's idol. His name and image were emblazoned across the country: Lincoln Highway, Lincoln Park, the five dollar bill, the Lincoln Home Place,

Lincoln Square, Lincoln Center, the Lincoln automobile, the U.S.S. *Lincoln* submarine, Lincoln National (Life Insurance) Corporation, the Lincoln Law Office, Lincoln Logs, Lincoln University, *Lincoln Encyclopedia* and the Lincoln bust at Mt. Rushmore. Counties in nineteen states were named for Abraham Lincoln as well as dozens of communities. Lincoln, Nebraska, was actually named for him before he was assassinated. Besides these, numerous pieces of sculpture and other forms of public art honored the Civil War president. The amazing aspect of this story is that Lincoln memorials continue to be erected, and a number will be dedicated during 2009, the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth. Americans will continue to memorialize the spirit of Abraham Lincoln, who indeed "belongs to the ages."

WASHINGTON, D.C.'s Lincoln Memorial is perhaps the best known physical structure honoring the sixteenth president. Congress spent nearly fifty years debating the project's site and financing. Construction began in 1914 and the memorial was dedicated in 1922. Architect Henry Bacon designed the simple Doric temple. Its thirty-six Colorado marble columns represent each of the states in the Union at Lincoln's death. Inside, sculptor Daniel Chester French's seated Lincoln has mesmerized millions of visitors. Above Lincoln's head the incised inscription reads: "In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the mem-



Sid Mebb

ory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever." At one of the site's computer kiosks, a recent Lincoln Memorial guest wrote about her inspiring visit: "This is it! Poignant, memorable, stunning. Appropriate for this remarkable president."

*Since 1922 Americans have flocked to Washington, D.C. to see the Lincoln Memorial with its mesmerizing sculpture of a seated Lincoln.*

As the home state of Abraham Lincoln, the Commonwealth of Kentucky features an impressive array of Lincoln memorials. The earliest is in the place of his birth, LaRue County (Hardin County at the time). In 1808, Thomas Lincoln paid \$200 for a 348-acre tract of stony land on Nolin Creek known as the Sinking Spring Farm. Thomas and his wife, Nancy, were expecting a child when they moved there. The baby was born on February 12, 1809, as Nancy lay on a pole bed fitted with a mattress of corn husks and covered with bear skins. The couple named their new son for his grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, who had been killed by Indians east of Louisville in 1786.

Lincoln's birthplace cabin was used by several families in the fifty years prior to his election as president, when its historical and monetary value naturally increased. In 1861, Dr. George Rodman purchased the Lincoln farm and moved the remains of a log cabin, traditionally thought to be Lincoln's birthplace, to his neighboring farm. New York businessman A.W. Dennett purchased the cabin and returned it to the Sinking Spring Farm in 1895, but it was soon dismantled and became a traveling exhibit, displayed at the Nashville Centennial in 1897, in New York's Central Park, and at the 1901 Buffalo Exposition. The cabin then disappeared for a time and eventu-



Sid Mebb

*The cabin inside the Lincoln birthplace shrine has been called "symbolic" ever since it was proved that the logs are not old enough to be the authentic.*



*The Memorial Building at the Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site was privately funded and dedicated in 1911. The 56 steps approaching it equal Lincoln's lifespan.*

TWO years after Lincoln's birth, the family moved to a 228-acre farm on Knob Creek, about ten miles east of the Sinking Spring Farm. It was of this farm that Lincoln said he had his "earliest recollections." He attended nearby "blab" schools, where students learned by memorization and recitation. The Lincolns lived here for five years prior to moving to Indiana in 1816. Their Knob Creek log cabin was torn down in 1870. As a Lincoln memorial this farm has a rather unusual history. Chester and Hattie (Howell) Howard purchased a 308-acre parcel, which included the former Knob Creek Farm, in 1928, in order to open a "shrine" to Lincoln. Improvements to the adjacent road and its designation as 31-E, part of a transnational highway, encouraged them.

Hattie Howard's family, like many in the area of Lincoln's birth, possessed a long-time interest in the president's family. Her brother, Jim Howell, built the Nancy Lincoln Inn—a gift shop and restaurant complemented by picnic grounds and four tourist cabins—just across the parking lot from the Lincoln birthplace memorial. Jim offered Hattie a half-interest in the inn, but she want-

ally ended up in storage on Long Island, consigned to an unknown fate.

While the birthplace cabin remained in storage, the old Sinking Spring Farm brought national attention to LaRue County when it was sold to Robert J. Collier, editor of *Collier's Weekly*. Collier purchased the property with the intention of creating a monument to honor the former president. To execute this plan, the Lincoln Farm Association was incorporated in 1906. The organization's single goal was to erect a memorial to honor Lincoln on the 100th anniversary of his birth. The association attracted a stellar array of celebrities, including Samuel L. Clemens, Samuel Gompers, Jane Addams, Henry Watterson, William Jennings Bryan and Ida M. Tarbell.

After successful fundraising, the association commissioned architect John Russell Pope to design the memorial. President Theodore Roosevelt laid the cornerstone in 1909, and two years later, President William Howard Taft dedicated the neo-classical temple. The building sat on a small promontory, approached by a series of 56 steps, one for each year of Lincoln's too-short life. From 1911 to 1916, the Commonwealth of Kentucky owned the park. President Woodrow Wilson signed the legislation transferring ownership of the Sinking Spring Farm to the federal government in 1916. The War Department maintained and operated the memorial until the Department of the Interior took over in 1933.

Roy Hays, a Lincoln aficionado, was the first person to seriously question the authen-

ticity of the birth cabin enshrined in the granite temple. In 1949, Hays raised legitimate questions about the provenance of the logs used in the "authentic" Lincoln birthplace. A dendrochronologist—an expert who dates logs based on a number of factors including age rings—settled the matter in 2004 when he declared that the oldest log in the current structure dated from 1848. Today, interpreters at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site refer to the simple structure as the "symbolic cabin." The National Park Service has invested several million dollars during the last decade to preserve the shrine and to build new interpretive exhibits at the visitors center for the bicentennial celebration.



*Across the parking lot from the birthplace memorial, the Nancy Lincoln Inn was the Howell/Howard family's first Lincoln-related tourist venture.*



Sid Webb

*During the dedication of this statue in Hodgenville in 1909, a speaker called Lincoln “the genius of common sense, and the soul of common honesty.”*

ed her own Lincoln site. In 1931, the Howards purchased a single-pen log cabin near the Knob Creek Farm and had it reconstructed on the former Lincoln home site.

Chester Howard’s participation in the Lincoln home place project was strictly supportive initially, but his interest escalated when he noticed visitors frequently inquiring about available refreshments. With his typical entrepreneurial flair, Chester designed a stylized log cabin restaurant, gift shop and gas station called the Lincoln Tavern. The facility served tourists during the day, but from 9 P.M. to 1 A.M. the Lincoln Tavern operated as a full-service nightclub, complete with dancing and liquor. It enjoyed moderate success until LaRue County went dry in 1942, although dances continued there on a regular basis until 1949. The tavern gradually evolved into a museum. Despite the lack of authentic Lincoln structures on the property, the geography of the site is evocative of the landscape that Lincoln knew. This fact led director Stanley Kubrick to film extensively on the site in 1952 when the Ford Foundation hired him to produce the five-part movie biography, *Mr. Lincoln*. Howard family members operated the Knob Creek Farm from its opening

**“The statue, senseless though it was, gazed into the faces and inspiration came from the dull eyes as if from [the] living mind that filled its counterpart in the stirring years of the long ago.”**

as a tourist site in 1932 until 2001, when it was acquired for \$1 million in preparation for turning it over to the National Park Service. Today the Knob Creek Farm is officially administered by the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site.

Seven miles southwest of the Knob Creek Farm, in Hodgenville’s Lincoln Square, sits one of the oldest memorial sculptures in Kentucky. The U.S. Congress and the Kentucky General Assembly commissioned this seated figure in 1909 for the centennial of Lincoln’s birth. Sculptor Adolph Alexander Weinmann crafted the bronze work, which is six feet tall and rests on a twelve-foot granite pedestal.

Lincoln’s son, Robert Todd Lincoln, attended the May 31, 1909, unveiling of the Weinmann piece along with ten thousand other reverent onlookers. The sculpture was draped with an oversized American flag, symbolic of the Union that Lincoln had so ardently supported. Just prior to the ceremonial unveiling, hundreds of school children began singing the chorus of “America.” “When the banner fell away,” reported the *Courier-Journal*, “the statue, senseless though it was, gazed into the faces and inspiration came from the dull eyes as if from [the] living mind that filled its counterpart in the stirring years of the long ago.” Lauding Lincoln that day, “long winded but eloquent” *Courier-Journal* editor Henry Waterson noted: “His was the genius of common sense, the soul of common honesty. Knowing the people, he put his hand to the pulse of the nation, judged the distemper and was ready with a remedy.”

Ninety-nine years later, on May 31, 2008, Hodgenville officials, with considerably less fanfare, dedicated a new Lincoln monument titled “The Boy Lincoln.” Installed in front of the Weinmann statue, the boy Lincoln gazes into the face of his adult visage in Lincoln Square. The charming piece commemorates the boyhood Lincoln who roamed LaRue Coun-

ty’s hills and dales. It depicts him as a seven-year-old, leaning against a tree trunk, reading a copy of *Webster’s Elementary Spelling Book*. At his feet lies a linen satchel filled with ears of corn as well as a fishing pole. His ever faithful dog, Honey, waits attentively at his side. The statue’s playful stance and subject matter will be treasured by viewers, particularly children. The Daub Firmin Hendrickson Sculpture Group of Berkeley, California, created the design, which was selected from a field of more than seventy-five proposals submitted by sculptors nationwide.



Jonathan Jeffrey

*The Boy Lincoln, dedicated in May 2008, gazes up at the seated Lincoln in Hodgenville’s town square.*



*Photographed during the great flood of 1937, the Barnard statue of Lincoln still stands on the west lawn of the Louisville Free Public Library.*

KENTUCKY'S Lincoln memorials are not limited to the region around Hodgenville. The west lawn of the Louisville Free Public Library boasts the tallest Lincoln sculpture in the Commonwealth. Dedicated on October 26, 1922, the eleven-foot statue by sculptor George Grey Barnard was donated to the city by Isaac W. Bernheim, a Louisville distiller and philanthropist. Barnard was a bit of a Lin-

coln fanatic. A native of Indiana and the son of an ardent abolitionist, Barnard grew up hearing praise and honor bestowed upon the sixteenth president. The garrulous sculptor came to Louisville in 1913 in hopes of locating a model for a planned Lincoln statue. He eventually found a suitable model, but the unusual story surrounding this event did not become public until 1960. After reading a story about Barnard's sculpture in a 1960 *Courier-Journal* article, a woman contacted the newspaper and revealed how Barnard had hired her uncle, Charles Abraham Thomas, as the model. Thomas, a laborer for the Louisville Gas and Electric Company, had answered a newspaper ad placed by Barnard in 1913, and been selected for the position because of his resemblance to the president as well as his physical proportions. Not only did Charles Abraham Thomas share a name with the former president, he also had been born in February in Hardin County, had lived in a log cabin, and had split rails.

Thomas stayed with Barnard in New York City for six months as the sculptor completed his Lincoln likeness. The period clothes worn by model Thomas were reportedly provided by an elderly woman who donated her husband's wedding suit to the cause. The head of Barnard's Lincoln was modeled after the president's death mask. The original casting of this sculpture,

which was commissioned by the Charles P. Taft family, has stood in Lytle Park in Cincinnati since 1917, and there is a duplicate in Manchester, England. There was concern and controversy in Louisville over whether the city was receiving an original work or simply a knock-off of the Cincinnati Lincoln. Barnard said the Louisville Lincoln was original due to what he termed his "remodeling of all the details." Barnard did sign the two sculptures in different places, but close examination has revealed no other discernible differences between them.

**Many people did not realize how close the day came to disaster. Less than a week before the event, the sculpture was lost in transit from New York to Frankfort.**

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Henry Watterson was scheduled to deliver the dedication speech for the Barnard piece, but he died prior to the unveiling. The *Courier-Journal* printed excerpts from his manuscript. Sometimes a vociferous defender of southern rights, Watterson defended his admiration for Lincoln: "Let no Southern man point [a] finger at me because I canonize Abraham Lincoln, for he was the one friend we had in court when friends were most in need; he was the one man in power who wanted to preserve us intact." This magnanimous attitude toward Lincoln prevails to this day. So does a superstition of the sort that is common to pieces of public sculpture—the belief that rubbing Lincoln's left toe will bring good luck. Anyone who doubts that this superstition is alive and well need only view the Barnard Lincoln's well polished toe.

The state capitol in Frankfort boasts another significant Lincoln sculpture. Created by Adolph A. Weinmann, the nine-and-a-half foot tall bronze figure stands on a beautiful green serpentine marble



*Standing in the rotunda of the capitol in Frankfort, this statue was donated to the Commonwealth by James B. Speed of Louisville.*



## Other Notable Lincoln Memorials in Kentucky

**Lincoln Homestead State Park** (near Springfield): This park contains the original home of Lincoln's mother. There are also replicas of the 1782 cabin and blacksmith shop where his father was reared and learned his trade, as well as the home of Mordecai Lincoln, the favorite uncle of the President.

**Lincoln Marriage Temple** (Harrodsburg): Located in Old Fort Harrod State Park, the temple built of local brick enshrines the log cabin in which Rev. Jesse Head presided over the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks.

**Lincoln bust at the J. B. Speed Art Museum** (Louisville): A beautiful bust of Lincoln by Versailles native Albert P. Henry is on display. Lincoln actually sat for Henry as the sculptor produced a plaster model that he used later in executing the marble bust.

**Lincoln bust at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History** (Frankfort): This bust is by Robert Berks, whose textured style is well known and presents a striking contrast to more traditional cast bronze sculpture.

**Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln Memorial** (Elizabethtown): Constructed of vintage logs, this reproduction cabin was dedicated in 1992 to the memory of the step-mother of President Lincoln. She married Thomas Lincoln on December 2, 1819.

**New Lincoln statue** (Springfield): Sculptor Paula B. Slater's ten-foot tall bronze of Lincoln is the centerpiece of a plaza adjacent to the new Washington County Judicial Center in Springfield. The monument also features a plaque imprinted with a reproduction of the Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks marriage bond. The sculpture will be dedicated on February 12, 2009.

pedestal in the middle of the capitol rotunda. James B. Speed, a native of Louisville and member of a family that was very close to Lincoln, donated this work of art to the Commonwealth. He paid Weinmann \$12,000 for the work. Decorated with colorful bunting, Frankfort welcomed President William H. Taft for the statue's dedication on November 8, 1911, one year after the capitol building was completed. Many people did not realize how close the day came to disaster. Less than a week before the event, the sculpture was lost in transit from New York to Frankfort. Only three days prior to the unveiling, frantic transit workers found it in Lexington on a side-track. Taking no chances, the L&N Railroad assigned a special crew to accompany the sculpture for the final thirty miles from Lexington to Frankfort.

PERHAPS the Commonwealth's most unusual monument to Lincoln, and without a doubt its most obscure, is found 200 feet above Kentucky Highway 846 near Island Creek in Owsley County. In 1930 Granville Johnson carved this rather crude bas-relief of

Lincoln in a boulder of native sandstone said to weigh in excess of 50 tons. A retired teacher in his late 50s, Johnson clambered up the hill every day for about a month to carve the Lincoln likeness with chisels that had been hand forged by his blacksmith father. Apparently, Johnson intended to cut through the rock and make a three-dimensional statue, but ill health forced him to stop. Owsley County officials recently purchased the land surrounding the unusual piece and intend to make it a Lincoln heritage site.

One of Kentucky's newest Lincoln memorials is located near the entrance to the Mary Ann Mongan Library in Covington. Commissioned as part of Covington's Art of Discovery program, Matt Langford's life-size Lincoln steadies an axe alongside his right leg, symbolizing his dependence on hard work to support himself. Langford felt that the library made a perfect site for the sculpture, as his Lincoln clasps a book in his left hand, a metaphor of the president's future aspirations. Lincoln, Langford said, was "of humble origin, [but] through his work ethic and determina-



James L. Thompson

*Kentucky sculptor Matt Langford emphasized Lincoln's youthful strength and work ethic in this statue that has stood in Covington since 2004.*



*Louisville sculptor Ed Hamilton with his Lincoln statue, which is destined for Louisville's new waterfront park. In the background is a sketch for one of the bas-relief panels that will accompany the statue. (Photo courtesy Ed Hamilton)*

tion, rose to greatness.” For the plaque attached to the base Langford selected an appropriate Lincoln quote: “I shall prepare myself. Someday my chance will come.” Some might find Langford’s Lincoln too attractive, but the sculptor says: “Lincoln was called the backwoods Adonis in his youth. He had an unusual countenance that people took notice of, but he aged early.” Langford judged Covington the ideal place for a Lincoln sculpture as it marks the division between North and South.

The largest legacy resulting from the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration in Ken-

tucky will be a plaza/amphitheater located on the Ohio River in Louisville’s Waterfront Park. Planned by Louisville’s renowned sculptor Ed Hamilton, the park will contain a Lincoln statue as well as a series of bas-relief panels depicting scenes from the Lincoln era. The Louisville Waterfront Development Corporation secured \$2 million in state funds for the project, and it is to be dedicated on June 4, 2009. For the plaza centerpiece, Hamilton has crafted a Lincoln seated along the riverside. He clasps an open book in one hand, with his other hand extended as if he is inviting a passerby to engage in conversation.

In order to capture a believable Lincoln, Hamilton collected scores of photographs of the president and of Lincoln sculptures and had them enlarged and hung on the walls of his studio for study and inspiration. The bas-relief panels will feature scenes related to slavery, the Civil

War, and a lusty, youthful Lincoln. The central sculpture itself is intended to commemorate a younger Lincoln. George Barnard’s Lincoln at the Louisville Free Public Library often inspired Hamilton. “As a young kid I used to go see the statue of Lincoln . . . he was so big and tall and had big hands and big feet,” recalled Hamilton. And, along with thousands of other children and adults, he rubbed Lincoln’s foot for good luck as he passed by. ●

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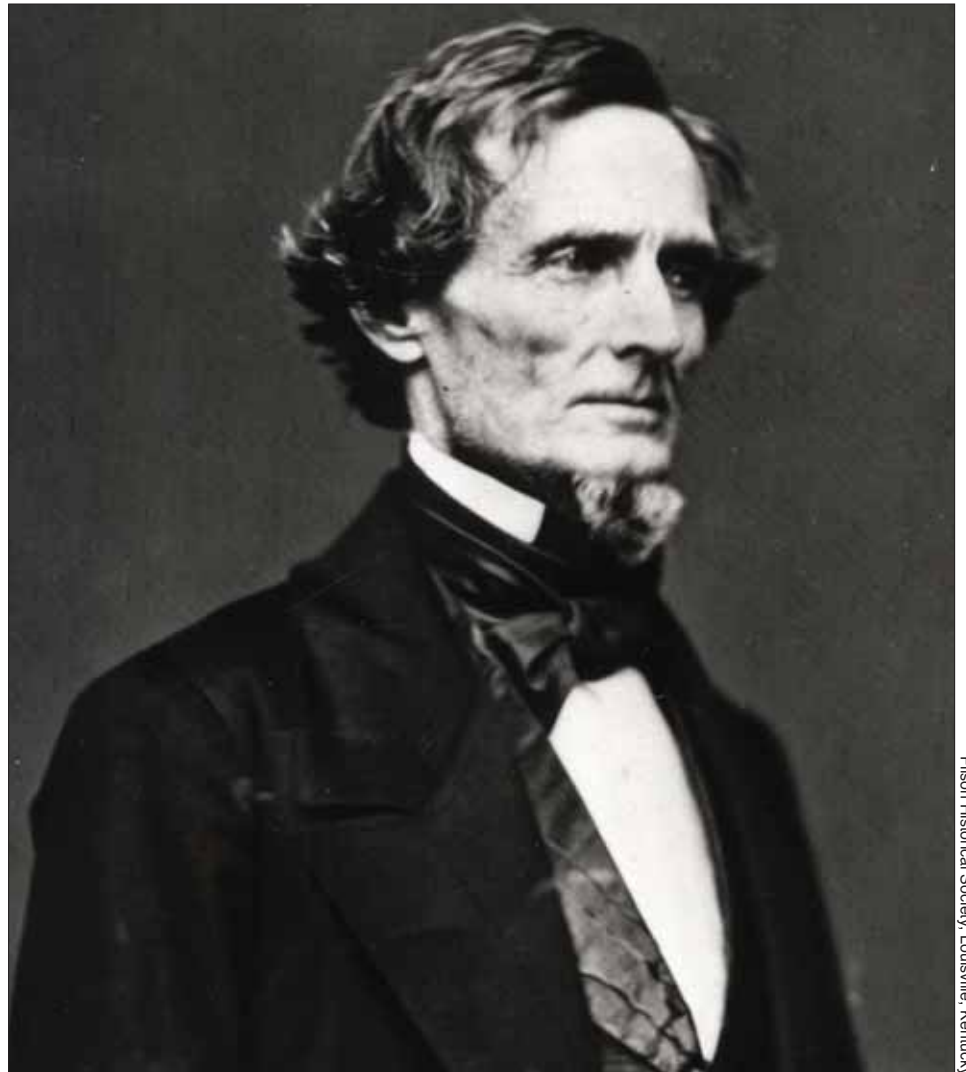
As president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis fought fellow Kentuckian Abraham Lincoln. In 2008, Davis celebrates his own bicentennial.

# Jefferson Davis at 200: Still No Respect?

**J**EFFERSON Davis, the only president of the Confederate States of America, is rather like the Rodney Dangerfield of the Civil War. He rarely receives the respect or the attention he deserves. Even in 2008, the bicentennial year of his birth, he is getting lost in preparations for the bicentennial of another Kentucky born president, Abraham Lincoln.

“Nothing succeeds like success” goes the old adage. Accordingly, most historians and most Americans rank Lincoln—the man who led the winning side in our bloody, cataclysmic Civil War—as one of the nation’s best presidents, while Davis, the man who led the losing side, is consigned to infamy as the traitorous leader of a morally bankrupt cause. And that’s only one aspect of Jefferson Davis’s identity crisis. Whereas Lincoln occupies an exalted status as “Father Abraham,” the personification of the Union cause, Davis was not “Father Jeff” and is rarely viewed today as the personification of the Confederacy. That distinction belongs to military officers, particularly Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson.

*Jefferson Davis was born in what is now Todd County, Kentucky on June 3, 1808. His family left for the deep south only two years later, but Davis returned to Kentucky for part of his education and to marry.*



Flison Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky



*The Jefferson Davis monument in Fairview, Kentucky, his birthplace. Funded by admirers of Davis, it was completed in 1924 at a cost of \$200,000. It is 351 feet tall.*

Davis is not exactly a neglected figure on the South's historical landscape. In fact, it is possible to follow his life story through visits to publicly accessible homes and monuments in Kentucky, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia. Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy, boasts the White House of the Confederacy—Davis' exec-

utive mansion—and Hollywood Cemetery, where Davis and his immediate family are buried. Visitors to these sites come with little knowledge about the only president of the Confederacy. They leave more enlightened, but still often calling him “Mr. Jefferson”—as if he were the man who was U.S. president the year Jefferson Davis was born, and after whom he was named.

Being president of the Confederacy earned Davis a place in the history books, but his accomplishments before 1861 earned him that controversial office. An 1828 graduate of the U.S. Military Acad-

emy, Davis served in the U.S. Army on the western frontier until he resigned to marry the daughter of his commander, future U.S. President Zachary Taylor. Sarah Knox Taylor contracted malaria on their honeymoon and died.

The grieving Davis devoted his energies to his Mississippi plantation and to laying the foundations for a political career. In 1845, the ambitious 37-year-old widower married 18-year-old Varina Howell of Natchez and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Shortly afterward, Davis resigned his office to become commander of First Mississippi Volunteers in the Mexican War and won a hero's laurels at the battle of Buena Vista. Military fame led to political success. From 1848 to 1861, he served two terms in the U.S. Senate surrounding four years as secretary of war in President Franklin Pierce's cabinet.

On the eve of the Civil War, Senator Jefferson Davis was a national figure, better known and more highly regarded than Abraham Lincoln, who was only beginning to emerge on the national stage. Davis was one of the U.S. Senate's most prominent defenders of southern rights (including slavery). As a moderate, opposed to southern secession from the Union, Davis was a possible compromise candidate for the 1860 Democratic presidential nomination. He had made a successful tour of New England in 1858 and won support of the Massachusetts delegation in the 1860 Democratic Party national convention.

It was this reputation that led southern statesmen to appoint him Confederate president in February 1861 and southern voters to elect him (unopposed) for a six-year presidential term beginning in February 1862. Because the government he headed ultimately failed (despite the stunning military victories that have made generals Lee, Jackson, Stuart, Forrest and others into legends), Davis has typically received low marks as president. Contemporary critics and historians have scored him for devoting too much attention to the minutiae of military affairs and of indulging in bitter and senseless arguments with other politicians and with military officers.

Certainly Davis's troubles as president owed in large part to his personality, which friends and enemies alike could find difficult. "Cold, haughty, peevish, narrow-minded, pig-headed, and malignant" and the cause of the South's troubles is how the editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger* described Davis in his private journal. Upon first meeting him, future wife Varina wrote to her mother: "He impresses me as a remarkable kind of man, but of uncertain temper, and has a way of taking for granted that everybody agrees with him when he expresses an opinion, which offends me . . ." She later explained: "If anyone differs with Mr. Davis he resents it and ascribes the difference to the perversity of his opponent."

Although still finding his personality prickly and problematical, the current generation of biographers has been kinder to Jefferson Davis. Historian William C. "Jack" Davis (no relation), author of the 1991 biography, *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour*, "graded" Jefferson Davis at a recent symposium co-sponsored by the Museum of the Confederacy and the Library of Virginia. The historian praised the president's work with Congress and his performance as commander in chief, but criticized his staffing decisions and his ability to inspire others. He assigned the president an overall grade of B+ but figuratively sent him home with a note telling his parents that "Jeff doesn't always play well with others."

Another Davis biographer on the symposium panel, William J. Cooper Jr., concurred with the overall grade. He agreed that the traditional portrayal of Jefferson Davis as a president who interfered too much in military affairs and was at loggerheads with Congress is inaccurate. Cooper maintained that the president deserves higher marks than Jack Davis gave him for taking his case to the southern people. Davis "was no Lincoln" in his ability to inspire others, Cooper noted, but that is an unfair measure. Jefferson Davis had not been a leader of the secession movement, but, once his state left the Union, his commitment to the Confederate cause was absolute.

Jefferson Davis devoted himself completely to the Confederacy, expected

others to do the same, and scorned those who put self-interest first. Already suffering from a host of debilitating illnesses, including bouts with malaria, severe neuralgia (facial pain), and near blindness in one eye, Davis worked long hours to the detriment of his own health. In the fall of 1861, Northern newspapers reported rumors that he had died. If the rumor were true, mused the *New York Herald*, "the first question suggested is: What will

## By the mid-1880s, the once disgraced former president emerged as a Confederate hero—a man deserving the monuments and shrines that dot the southern landscape.

be the effect of his loss to the bad cause of this Southern Rebellion?" The editors answered their own question with a backhanded compliment: "We think the loss of Davis at this time would be more serious to the rebel cause than would have been the defeat of Beauregard at Bull Run . . ." The *Herald* hailed Davis as "the very man required" for the job because he possessed "the very qualities"—conceit, will, arrogance and despotism—that are "most needful to enable him to give force and authority to his position as President of the Confederate States."

**D**AVIS did not die in 1861 or in the spring of 1863, when prolonged illness again produced rumors of his demise. He did not die until December 1889, outliving all of his four natural sons and the Confederacy—what Jack Davis dubbed his "fifth son." In the 24 years between the collapse of the Confederacy and his death, Davis saw his reputation fall and rise. Widely vilified in the South and the North for his wartime leadership, Davis won sympathy for enduring two years of imprisonment for treason (he was indicted, but never tried).

Davis became the South's "vicarious sufferer." A political enemy observed bitterly that "the imprisonment of Mr. Davis was the best thing that could have happened for his fame." By the mid-1880s,

the once disgraced former president emerged as a Confederate hero—a man deserving the monuments and shrines that dot the southern landscape. Jefferson Davis died a man without a country. The Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution stripped Davis and other high-ranking Confederate leaders of their right to hold public office. Unlike other former Confederates, Davis never applied for a pardon because he believed that doing so

would be to admit that secession was unconstitutional. Instead, he wrote a two-volume vindication of the Confederacy and his leadership.

Whatever Davis's own wishes, the U.S. Congress in 1978 posthumously restored Davis's citizenship rights (retroactive to December 25, 1868) as a gesture of reconciliation. Introducing the resolution, Sen. Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon called Davis "an honorable public servant of principle the like of which is all too rare in these days when expedience is more ardently practiced than conviction defended."

Jefferson Davis presents modern Americans with a paradox. Was he indeed an honorable public servant and a good American or a man who defended slavery and led a fledgling nation that, if successful, would have split the United States in two? Or, as Davis himself would answer, was he all of those things? ●

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A very useful listing  
of major events in the life  
of Abraham Lincoln.

# A Lincoln Chronology

## 1809

**Feb. 12:** Abraham Lincoln is born in Hardin County, Kentucky (now LaRue County) three miles south of Hodgenville, the son of Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln.

## 1811

**Spring:** The Lincoln family moves to a farm on Knob Creek, 10 miles north of Hodgenville.

## 1812

Another son, named Thomas, is born and dies in infancy.

## 1815

**Fall:** Abraham and sister, Sarah, attend a nearby school for several weeks.

## 1816

**December:** The Lincoln family moves to Perry County (now Spencer County) in southern Indiana, 17 miles north of the Ohio River.

## 1818

**Oct. 5:** Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, dies from milk sickness.

## 1819

**Dec. 2:** Lincoln's father, Thomas, marries Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow, in Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

## 1823

**June 7:** Thomas Lincoln joins Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, which the family attends.

## 1828

**Jan. 20:** Lincoln's sister, Sarah, who is married to Aaron Grigsby, dies in childbirth.

**Date uncertain:** Lincoln and Allen Gentry take a flatboat loaded with cargo to New Orleans.

## 1830

**March 1:** Thomas Lincoln leaves with his and his wife's families for Illinois; Lincoln drives one of three wagons.

**March 15:** The families locate 10 miles southwest of Decatur on the north bank of the Sangamon River.

## 1831

**March:** Lincoln, cousin John Hanks, and stepbrother John D. Johnston leave home and arrive in Springfield, Illinois, where Denton Offutt hires them to build a flatboat at Sangamon Town.

**April-July:** Lincoln pilots the flatboat to New Orleans for Offutt, then returns to New Salem, 18 miles northwest of Springfield.

**Aug. 1:** Lincoln votes for the first time in New Salem.

**September:** Lincoln is a clerk in Denton Offutt's new store in New Salem.

## 1832

**March 9:** Lincoln becomes a candidate for the Illinois legislature, favors improved navigation on the Sangamon River, changes in the usury (money lending) laws, and universal education.

**April 21:** New Salem men form a volunteer company to fight in the Black Hawk War, with Lincoln as captain.

**Aug. 6:** Lincoln is defeated in his bid for a seat in the Illinois legislature.

## 1833

**Jan. 15:** Lincoln and William E. Berry become partners in a store in New Salem.

**May 7:** President Andrew Jackson appoints Lincoln postmaster at New Salem, a position in which Lincoln serves until May 30, 1836, when the office is closed.

## 1834

**Jan. 6:** Lincoln becomes deputy surveyor of Sangamon County and does surveying for three years.

**Aug. 4:** Lincoln is elected as a Whig to his first public office, representing Sangamon County in the Illinois House of Representatives.

## 1835

**Aug. 25:** Ann Rutledge, alleged lady friend of Lincoln, dies at her family's farm near New Salem.

## 1836

**Aug. 1:** Lincoln is reelected to the Illinois legislature.

**Sept. 9:** Lincoln receives a license to practice law in the Illinois courts with final approval on March 1, 1837.

## 1837

**Feb. 24:** Lincoln supports a bill to move the Illinois capital from Vandalia to Springfield.

**March 3:** Lincoln makes his first attack on slavery when he protests an anti-abolitionist resolution in the House.

**April 15:** Lincoln moves to Springfield, becomes a junior law partner of John T. Stuart, and rooms with Joshua F. Speed.

## 1838

**Aug. 6:** Lincoln is elected to the Illinois House of Representatives for the third time.

**Dec. 3:** Lincoln, a Whig, is defeated for Speaker of the House by a Democrat.

## 1839

**June 24:** Lincoln is elected to the Springfield town board.

**Sept. 23:** Lincoln begins the practice of law on the newly organized Eighth Judicial Circuit and continues until he is nominated for the presidency in 1860.

**Oct. 8:** Lincoln is named a presidential elector by the state Whig convention (he is also selected in 1844, 1852 and 1856).

**Dec. 9:** The Illinois legislature meets in Springfield, the new state capital, for the first time.

## 1840

**March:** Joshua Speed's father dies and Speed announces plans to return to Louisville.

**Aug. 3:** Lincoln is elected for the fourth time to the Illinois legislature.

**August-September:** Lincoln campaigns in southern Illinois for the Whig Party.

## 1841

**Early January:** Lincoln is courting Mary Todd but has an emotional breakdown.

**April 14:** Lincoln leaves the law firm of John T. Stuart and becomes the partner of Stephen T. Logan.

**August-September:** Lincoln goes to Louisville to spend three weeks with his close friend, Joshua Speed.

## 1842

**Sept. 22:** A duel between Lincoln and James Shields is avoided when friends intervene.

**Nov. 4:** Lincoln and Mary Todd are married in Springfield in the home of the bride's sister, Mrs. Ninian W. Edwards, by an Episcopal priest, and they move into the local Globe Tavern.

## 1843

**Aug. 1:** The first of Lincoln's four sons, Robert Todd Lincoln, is born at the Globe Tavern.

## 1844

**May 1:** The Lincolns buy and move into a home in downtown Springfield.

**October-November:** Lincoln campaigns for Henry Clay in southern Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky; he speaks at his boyhood home near Gentryville, Indiana.

**Dec. 9:** William H. Herndon is admitted to the bar and becomes the junior half of the Lincoln and Herndon law firm.

## 1846

**March 10:** The Lincolns' second son, Edward Baker Lincoln, is born.

**Aug. 3:** Lincoln defeats his Democratic opponent, the Reverend Peter Cartwright, and becomes the only Whig congressman from Illinois.

## 1847

**Dec. 6:** The Lincolns spend most of November visiting Mrs. Lincoln's family in Lexington, Kentucky, then continue to Washington, where Lincoln takes his seat in the Thirtieth Congress.

## 1848

**Sept. 12-22:** Lincoln attends the Whig convention in Philadelphia and supports the successful candidate, General Zachary Taylor, for president; Lincoln speaks for Taylor throughout New England.

## 1849

**Jan. 10:** Lincoln supports a resolution in Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; he drafts an amendment to the resolution to provide compensated emancipation but never introduces it.

**March 7:** Lincoln is admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Aug. 21:** Lincoln declines the offer of the secretaryship of the Oregon Territory.

**Sept. 27:** He further declines the offer of the governorship of Oregon.

## 1850

**Feb. 1:** The Lincolns' second son, Edward Baker, dies after a protracted illness.

**July 25:** Lincoln delivers a eulogy for the late President Zachary Taylor at Chicago's City Hall.

**Dec. 21:** William Wallace Lincoln, the Lincolns' third son, is born.

## 1851

**Jan. 17:** Abraham Lincoln's father, Thomas Lincoln, born in Virginia in 1778, dies in Coles County, Illinois.

## 1852

**July 6:** Lincoln eulogizes the late Henry Clay in Springfield.

## 1853

**April 4:** Thomas "Tad" Lincoln, the Lincolns' fourth son, is born in Springfield.

**Aug. 27:** Lincoln allegedly uses watermelon juice to christen the new town of Lincoln, Illinois, named for him.

## 1854

**May 30:** Lincoln has lost much of his interest in politics over the previous five years, but he reenters the political arena following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, championed by Stephen Douglas, U.S. senator from Illinois. The law will apparently open up the Western territories to popular vote to decide whether a new state will allow slavery, and thus repeal the Missouri Compromise, which allowed Missouri into the Union as a slave state but prohibited slavery in future states carved out of the territory of the Louisiana Purchase.

**Oct. 16:** Lincoln and Douglas meet in Peoria for the first in a series of pivotal debates centered on the spread of slavery into the new territories.

**Nov. 7:** Lincoln is elected again to the Illinois legislature, but resigns on Nov. 27 to campaign unsuccessfully for the seat of Senator Douglas.

## 1856

**Spring:** The Lincolns have their home in Springfield enlarged from one-and-a-half stories to two full stories.

**May 29:** Lincoln is again a presidential elector and delivers a speech at the organization of the Republican Party in Illinois in Bloomington.

**June 19:** The first Republican National Convention meets in Philadelphia, where Lincoln receives 110 votes for vice president.

**Aug. 27:** Lincoln speaks in support of the Republican candidate for president, General John C. Frémont, at Kalamazoo, Michigan.

## 1857

**June 26:** In the Illinois legislature meeting in Springfield, Lincoln attacks the Dred Scott decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, which held that temporary residence in a free state does not give a slave freedom.

## 1858

**June 16:** Lincoln is chosen by the Illinois State Republican Convention, meeting in the statehouse in Springfield, as candidate for the U.S. Senate.

**Aug. 21:** Lincoln and Stephen Douglas, the Democratic candidate, meet for their first debate. From August through October, they meet at various Illinois locations for six more debates.

**July 10:** Beginning in Chicago, Lincoln makes at least 63 speeches during the campaign.

**Nov. 2:** In the election, Lincoln receives a majority of the votes, but because of the gerrymandered legislative districts, Douglas wins reelection to the U.S. Senate.

## 1859

Lincoln makes political speeches throughout Ohio, Wisconsin and Kansas.

## 1860

**Feb. 27:** Lincoln delivers his highly acclaimed address at Cooper Union in New York City.

**Feb. 28:** Lincoln begins a two-week speaking tour of New England.

**May 9-10:** The Illinois Republican Convention, meeting in Decatur, votes to support Lincoln for the Republican nomination for president.

**May 18:** The Republican National Convention, meeting in Chicago, nominates Lincoln for president on the third ballot. The nomination for vice president goes to Hannibal Hamlin of Maine.

**July:** After graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, Robert Todd Lincoln enrolls at Harvard University (upon graduation in 1864 he will become a captain on the staff of General Ulysses S. Grant).

**Oct. 19:** Eleven-year-old Grace Bedell of Westfield, New York, writes to Lincoln suggesting that he grow a beard—which he does

**Nov. 6:** Lincoln defeats three other candidates—Stephen Douglas, Northern Democrat; John C. Breckinridge, Southern Democrat; and John Bell, Constitutional Union—and becomes the first Republican to be elected president of the United States.

**Dec. 20:** The secession of states begins with South Carolina.

## 1861

**Jan. 31:** Lincoln pays a final visit to his elderly stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln, in Coles County, Illinois.

**Feb. 4:** The Confederate States of America is formed by delegates from South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Kentucky-born Jefferson Davis is chosen to be president and Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia is chosen as vice president.

**Feb. 11:** Lincoln delivers his emotional farewell address to the people of Springfield from the rear of the train at the Great Western Railroad Station.

**Feb. 23:** After a 12-day trip, punctuated by speeches and other public appearances, Lincoln arrives secretly in Washington.

**March 4:** Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th president of the United States.

**April 12-14:** Fort Sumter is attacked by Confederate forces and 34 hours later surrenders.

**April 15:** Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas secede from the Union.

**April 19:** President Lincoln blockades ports in South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas.

**April 27:** Lincoln suspends the writ of habeas corpus and blockades the ports of North Carolina and Virginia.

**May 24:** Lincoln weeps publicly mourning the death of his young friend, Colonel E. E. Ellsworth, shot by a Confederate sympathizer after Ellsworth had removed a Confederate flag flying over a hotel in Alexandria, Virginia.

**June 3:** Lincoln orders 30 days of mourning after the death of Stephen A. Douglas in Chicago at the age of 48.

**July 21:** Lincoln learns that the Union forces under General Irvin McDowell have been badly defeated at Bull Run.

**July 27:** Lincoln places General George B. McClellan in command of all the troops in the Washington area.



**Aug. 16:** Lincoln issues an order forbidding commerce with states in insurrection against the government of the United States.

**Nov. 1:** Following the resignation of General Winfield Scott, Lincoln designates General McClellan as the commander of the entire army.

## 1862

**Feb. 20:** The Lincolns lose their second son, William Wallace (Willie).

**April 6-7:** The Union forces of General Grant and the Confederate forces of General Albert Sidney Johnston clash near a small church named Shiloh in Tennessee, with huge losses to both sides.

**June 1:** General Robert E. Lee becomes commander of the Army of Northern Virginia.

**Aug. 22:** Lincoln admits publicly his policy on slavery in response to a critical editorial by Horace Greeley: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery."

**Sept. 22:** Lincoln issues his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation to take effect January 1, 1863.

**Nov. 5:** Lincoln replaces General McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac with General Ambrose E. Burnside.

**Dec. 31:** Lincoln approves the bill admitting West Virginia, which has seceded from Virginia, to the Union.

## 1863

**Jan. 1:** Lincoln issues the final Emancipation Proclamation, which frees slaves that are held in states that have seceded and are in rebellion.

**July 1-3:** General Robert E. Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania is ended by Union forces at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

**Oct. 3:** Lincoln proclaims the first national observance of Thanksgiving, to be held on Nov. 26.

**Nov. 19:** Lincoln delivers his address at the national cemetery at Gettysburg. Lincoln grants amnesty to Confederates who swear allegiance to the U.S. Constitution.

## 1864

**June 8:** The National Union Party, in convention at Baltimore, nominates Lincoln for president and Andrew Johnson of Tennessee for vice president.

**June 28:** Lincoln approves the act repealing the Fugitive Slave Act.

**July 11:** Lincoln witnesses the Confederate attack on Fort Stevens on the outskirts of Washington.

**Sept. 1:** General William T. Sherman's Union forces occupy Atlanta, thus ensuring Lincoln's reelection.

**Nov. 8:** Lincoln is easily reelected, defeating the Democratic candidate, General George B. McClellan.

**Nov. 21:** Lincoln writes his letter of consolation to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, who had reportedly lost all five of her sons in the Union cause.

**Dec. 1:** Lincoln appoints James Speed of Louisville, brother of his friend Joshua Speed, attorney general.

**Dec. 22:** General Sherman captures Savannah, Georgia, and presents it to Lincoln as his "Christmas gift."

## 1865

**Feb. 1:** Lincoln approves the Thirteenth Amendment, which, when ratified by the states, will abolish slavery.

**March 3:** Lincoln approves the act establishing the Freedmen's Bureau, which will assist the freed slaves.

**March 4:** Lincoln delivers his Second Inaugural Address, offering generous terms to the defeated southern states as they reenter the Union.

**April 2:** Jefferson Davis and his cabinet flee south from Richmond, Virginia.

**April 3:** Union troops occupy Richmond.

**April 4-5:** Lincoln visits Richmond.

**April 9:** General Lee surrenders to General Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

**April 11:** Lincoln delivers his final speech from a window in the White House, describing the condition of the Confederate states and a plan to bring them back into the Union.

**April 14:** Lincoln is shot by actor John Wilkes Booth while attending a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington.

**April 15:** Lincoln dies at 7:22 A.M. in the home of William Petersen, across the street from the theatre.

**April 19:** Funeral services are held for the slain president in the White House.

**April 21:** The Lincoln funeral train leaves Washington and takes a circuitous route west by way of Baltimore, York, Philadelphia, New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis and Chicago, arriving at its destination in Springfield, Illinois, at 9 A.M. on May 3.

**May 4:** Lincoln's body is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield. It is later moved to the present memorial in Springfield.

## 1870

Congress awards Mrs. Lincoln an annual pension of \$3,000, which is later increased to \$5,000, plus a one-time gift of \$15,000.

## 1871

**July 15:** Thomas (Tad) Lincoln dies of "dropsy of the chest" in Chicago, and his body is taken for burial to the Lincoln Tomb in Springfield.

## 1882

**July 16:** Mary Todd Lincoln dies in the Springfield home of her sister, Mrs. Ninian W. Edwards, the same house where she and Abraham Lincoln were married; she is buried in the Lincoln Tomb with her husband and three of her four sons.

## 1887

**June 16:** Robert Todd Lincoln and his wife present the Lincoln home in Springfield to the State of Illinois.

## 1926

**July 26:** Robert Todd Lincoln dies and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. He has earlier deposited his father's papers in the Library of Congress. ●

Reprinted from Wade Hall, *Abraham Lincoln of Kentucky: An Interview with the President*.  
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Joseph Rey Au



*Above: Renowned composer and fiddler Mark O'Connor will join the Our Lincoln cast at the Kennedy Center.*

*Left: Nick Clooney will narrate Aaron Copland's Lincoln Portrait.*

## Washington, Here We Come!

*Our Lincoln* was such a smash in Lexington that we're taking it to the Kennedy Center in Washington

ON February 2, 2009, the Kentucky Humanities Council will present *Our Lincoln* at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on the banks of the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. Almost 400 Kentucky artists and technicians will travel to the capital for this performance. There will be some starry additions to the *Our Lincoln*

lineup. They include tenor Gregory Turay, a University of Kentucky graduate, and soprano Angela Brown. Both have made their mark at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The celebrated fiddler and composer Mark O'Connor and radio personality and Kentucky native Bob Edwards will also join the cast, as will the University of Kentucky Symphony



*As it did in Lexington, the American Spiritual Ensemble will raise its mighty voice in Washington.*

Orchestra under the direction of John Nardolillo. Performers returning from the Lexington production include the Lexington Singers, the American Spiritual Ensemble, the Lexington Vintage Dance Society, the University of Kentucky Opera Theater, the living history artists of Kentucky Chautauqua®, and Kentucky Poet Laureate Jane Gentry Vance.

### It's A Go

Tickets are available for the Washington performance of *Our Lincoln*. Please join us for this unique opportunity to showcase Kentucky artists and honor our greatest son's 200th birthday.

#### **Our Lincoln**

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Monday, February 2, 2009

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[www.ourlincoln.org](http://www.ourlincoln.org)

[www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org)

## Four Gubernatorial Appointees Join Humanities Council Board

THE Kentucky Humanities Council has welcomed four new members to its Board of Directors. They were appointed to the Board by Governor Steve Beshear. They will serve during Beshear's term and can be reappointed if the governor is re-elected. These new members will represent the Council in their home areas, help set policies, review grant applications, and raise money for the more than 400 public humanities programs the Council supports every year. These programs reached all but six of the Commonwealth's 120 counties in 2008. The Council and its community partners invest more than \$1 million annually in public humanities programs for Kentuckians.

### Karen C. McDaniel



Karen McDaniel (Frankfort) is a visiting scholar at Eastern Kentucky University and one of three co-editors of the forthcoming *Kentucky African American Encyclopedia*. She is a professor emerita from Kentucky State University, where she was Director of Libraries from 1989 to 2005. A graduate of Berea College, McDaniel

has a master's degree in library science and is completing her doctorate in history at the University of Kentucky. Her research focuses on Kentucky African American women's clubs.

### Reed Polk



Reed Polk (Lexington) is a Crossroads Consultant, speaker and commentator for WKYT-TV. A graduate of Howard College (now Samford University) in Birmingham, Alabama, Polk was an administrator at the University of Kentucky Chandler Medical Center for 22 years. He serves on the United Way and God's Pantry boards of directors. He is past president of the Lexington Rotary Club and author of two books: *Running Into a Deadend While Escaping* and *Before and After: A Commentary for Our Times*.

### Howard V. Roberts

Howard Roberts (Pikeville) is the Burlin Coleman Distinguished Professor in Business at Pikeville College and chair of the division of business and economics. Before joining the college in 1984, Roberts worked for Turner Elkhorn Min-



ing in Drift, KY and Monsanto in Nitro, WV. A graduate of Pikeville College and Marshall University, Roberts is a member of numerous boards and organizations, including the Pikeville Rotary Club, the Pike County Chamber of Commerce and the Williamson ARH Hospital Advisory Board of Directors.

### Suzanne D. Rose



Suzanne D. Rose (Owensboro) is the chairperson of the English department at Kentucky Wesleyan College and an associate professor of English. Rose earned her bachelor's degree, master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. She has edited several professional publications, and is a member of the American Association of University Women and the Modern Language Association. She serves on the Bishop's Pastoral Council for the Diocese of Owensboro, and is a founder of the St. Benedict's Homeless Shelter.

## Julie N. Satterly Joins Council Staff

JULIE Nelson Satterly joined the Kentucky Humanities Council Inc. October 1, 2008 as the assistant director for marketing and public relations and editor of *Kentucky Humanities* magazine.

Satterly comes to the council after serving as editor and publisher of the *Oldham Era*, a 7,500 circulation weekly newspaper in La Grange, Kentucky, owned by Landmark Community Newspapers Inc. She started her career in newspapers as a copy editor and graphic designer at the *Jessamine Journal* in Nicholasville, moving then to Richmond (KY) to serve as news editor of the *Richmond Register*. She joined the *Oldham Era* in 2003.

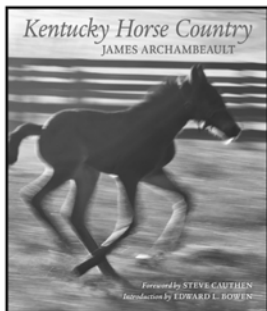
Under Satterly's watch, the *Era* won statewide recognition as the first-place recipient of the Kentucky Press Association General Excellence award in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Satterly has received numerous Kentucky Press Association, Society for Professional Journalists and Landmark Community Newspapers Inc. awards for excellence in writing and newspaper design.

Julie Satterly graduated from the University of Kentucky in December 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism. She was the managing editor of the university's newspaper, the *Kentucky Kernel*. Satterly lives in Danville with her son, Matthew, 2.



Julie Satterly



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