

Lincoln Lore

The Bulletin of THE LINCOLN MUSEUM



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A Walk through the 75th Anniversary Special Exhibition

We want to share our pride in the temporary exhibit which Carolyn Texley, Director of Collections, and her staff, Cindy VanHorn and Jim Waechter, have assembled to mark this special occasion. Exhibit open through February 12, 2004.



Lincoln Lore

is the quarterly bulletin of
THE LINCOLN MUSEUM

The mission of The Lincoln Museum is to interpret and preserve the history and legacy of Abraham Lincoln through research, conservation, exhibit, and education.

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**THE
LINCOLN
MUSEUM**

The Life and Legacy of Abraham Lincoln

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As one enters the gallery, the first thing which meets the eye is a case with a pyramid of books authored by former Directors Louis A. Warren, R. Gerald McMurtry and Mark E. Neely, Jr. It is an impressive recognition of the research which has been conducted in the past 75 years. The three outer walls are assigned to these scholars, and each contains artifacts and images relating to these specific time periods. The middle of the room contains a special "time capsule" with artifacts mounted on the outside walls and changing exhibits in the interior. The fourth wall is a "mini conservation station" with evidence of current projects being undertaken by the Collections Department and the Gardner Studio chair in its original mailing crate.

Display cases exhibit artifacts connected to places Lincoln lived and worked: a capsule of red dirt from the birthplace cabin site; a clover picked on Memorial Day 1928 by Louis Warren on the site of Thomas Lincoln's Spencer County cabin; wood and

On the cover: Restored flag which was displayed at Ford's Theatre April 14, 1865. Before and after photographs are on the back cover of this issue. Special thanks to our 75th Anniversary sponsors for funding the conservation of this significant artifact.

LINCOLN'S LEGACY



**THE LINCOLN MUSEUM
75TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION**

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nails from several Illinois courthouses in which Lincoln practiced law; flooring from the Stuart and Lincoln law office in Springfield; part of the original door board and a piece of rock from the foundation of the Lincoln and Berry store in New Salem; and a brick, a window shutter latch and wood from the Lincoln's house at 8th and Jackson in Springfield.

A case exhibits memorabilia from the Boy Scout Pilgrimages to the Manship *Hoosier Youth* statue in Fort Wayne, a custom which began in 1933. Other cases hold Lincoln commemorative coins and stamps. Former



All items in this case were used by the Lincolns in the White House 1861-1865. Two drapery fabric samples chosen by Mary Todd Lincoln. Rosewood chair decorated with mother-of-pearl and other inlays. It was probably received as a gift during their years in the White House. The chair was given to The Lincoln Museum by great grandson Robert Lincoln Beckwith in 1981. Dessert plate from the Lincoln china service designed by Mary Lincoln (see back cover).

Museum Director Mark Neely's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *The Fate of Liberty*, is proudly displayed, and our unique collection of Lincoln family photographs has fascinated visitors.

A special case commemorates the Emancipation Proclamation with our own copy of the Leland and Boker printing of

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Lincoln's Favorite Cake... Really?

By Donna McCreary, award-winning *Mary Todd Lincoln Presenter* and author of *Lincoln's Table*

Lincoln enthusiasts across America proclaim that Lincoln's favorite food was the apple — no, it was some type of chicken — no, it was gingerbread — no, it was those corn cakes which Lincoln claimed he could eat faster than anyone could make them. It was . . . Apparently these enthusiasts cannot agree what Lincoln's one favorite food truly was, but at least they agree that his favorite cake was Mary Todd Lincoln's Vanilla Almond Cake. Oral history tells us that when Lincoln was served this light, fluffy, white cake he proclaimed: "This is the best cake I ever ate." Lincoln historical sites across the nation hand out recipe cards detailing how this concoction is made. Every year, in February, people indulge in this tasty treat in honor of Lincoln's birthday. Yes, everyone agrees that this vanilla white cake, served with a candied fruit white icing, was indeed Lincoln's favorite cake. Have the people had a flour bag pulled over their eyes and been spoon-fed incorrect information? Have we baked the wrong cake in vain?

According to *Out of Kentucky Kitchens*¹, Abraham Lincoln did indeed proclaim the white cake as his favorite. The legend continues that this was the same recipe created by Monsieur Giron, the famous French caterer in Lexington, Kentucky. Monsieur Giron first baked this cake when his fellow Frenchman Marquis de Lafayette visited in 1825. The Todd family was given the recipe by Monsieur Giron and treasured it from then on. Members of the Todd family baked the cake on special occasions, including that special evening when Mary Todd wished to impress her beau, Abraham Lincoln, with a special dessert. The question becomes, was this truly Lincoln's favorite cake?

The King Library at the University of Kentucky in Lexington contains papers which originally belonged to Emilie Helm, Mary's half-sister. Included is a recipe card labeled "Mary's White Cake" which is believed to be the white cake from Monsieur Giron's bakery — although the card does not say that. It does not even indicate which "Mary" had the recipe. Considering the close relationship between Emilie and Robert Lincoln, one wonders if this is Mary Todd Lincoln's recipe, or Mary Harlan Lincoln's recipe. There is no other notation with it, nor does the candied icing recipe accompany it. It seems that years ago, someone knew the story about the fancy white cake and assumed this was the correct recipe. Later someone, somehow, added the icing recipe. Older cookbooks call for the cake to be baked in a "fluted copper pan."² Yet other versions have instructions for the batter to be placed in "three layers" or "as a sheet cake."³ Different versions include different icing recipes, slightly different ingredients, and different methods of preparing the almonds for the batter. Which version did Lincoln enjoy?

The cake's story truly began with Monsieur Mathurin Giron who emigrated from France to Lexington, Kentucky, sometime between the 18th and 19th centuries. He claimed to have been a French grenadier, and in Napoleon's Guard — although most have doubted this was possible because of his height.⁴ He was an "attractive little figure, rotund and rosy, suave and sunny, scarcely over five feet in height."⁵ He preferred French fashions, and as an exceed-

ingly tactful gentleman, kept his face smooth-shaven. He spoke broken English, and Mary Ann Todd loved to converse with him in his native French language. Giron's confectionery stood out as one of the most colorful places in Lexington. The charming establishment on Mill Street was a two-story, brick building, with Tuscan pilasters that supported a balcony of iron lace along the front of the upper story. The confectionery occupied the first floor. The second floor held a ballroom where dancing lessons were given to the aristocracy of Lexington.⁶ In the kitchens of the bakery, Monsieur Giron and his Swiss cook, Dominique Ritter, produced fancy desserts, fruitcakes, tall pyramids of meringues, and candies that delighted the eyes and taste buds of the young Todd children. Elizabeth Humphries Norris, a step-cousin and friend to Mary, wrote, "When Aunt was arranging for a dining or a party we always begged to be allowed to take the written order to Monsieur that we might feast our eyes on the iced cakes decorated with garlands of pink sugar roses, or the bride's cakes with their fountains of clear, spun sugar pyramiding in the center, veiling tiny fat cupids or little sugar brides."⁷ When Marquis de Lafayette visited Lexington in 1825, only the kitchens of Monsieur could create a cake spectacular enough to present to the dignitary as a gift from the city's citizens. A mammoth "casellated" cake was created. The Stars and Stripes etched in red, white and blue tinted icing gloriously adorned the cake. A large cake for a large assembly of people, the original recipe called for six cups of flour and the whites of 24 eggs. This recipe set the standard for snow-white cakes. It was deemed the Lafayette Cake.⁸ Was this Lincoln's favorite cake?

Caroline B. King was an author for *The Ladies' Home Journal* during the 1920s. She ventured throughout Kentucky searching for recipes that offered a taste of the state's finest kitchens. Sadly, Ms. King offered the reader no documentation or information about her findings. She did, however, give her audience information about various famous Kentucky homes and caterers. Monsieur Giron and his famous Lafayette Cake were mentioned, as well as his fruit punch that was surely enjoyed by Mary Lincoln. One of the famous Kentucky families mentioned in the article is that of Robert Smith Todd. The Todds were known for their lavish entertaining, and their slave butler, Nelson, was well known for his delectable mint juleps. Guests at the Todd home included family and friends who were attorneys, judges, professors, doctors, and statesmen. Dinner was served in the Victorian opulent dining room. Dessert, brandy, and cigars were served to the men in the back parlor. This was the home that Abraham Lincoln and his young family visited in 1847 while enroute to Washington, DC. Lincoln had been elected as a Congressman from Illinois. The trip east gave Mary an opportunity to introduce her husband and her two young boys (Bobby and Eddie) to her family. The visit gave the Todds an opportunity to introduce their exquisite life-style to Lincoln. In the Todd home, Lincoln was introduced to Henry Clay, the great statesman and friend to Robert Smith Todd. Lincoln was introduced to a family whose home was maintained by slave labor (although some of the servants were emancipated slaves). In the Todd home, Lincoln was introduced to Mary's family — some who would oppose his govern-

ment in later years. From the Todd library, Lincoln read *Niles Register* and poetry. He committed to memory "Thanatopsis." And, in the Todd dining room, Lincoln enjoyed ambrosial foods prepared by the loving hands of the family cook, Aunt Chaney. It was in the Todd dining room that Lincoln first ate the cake, which Caroline King claims was the one Lincoln proclaimed, "best cake I ever ate."⁹ It is a rich pecan cake, full of nuts and raisins. Although there are many variations of the recipe today, the original is said to have come from the Todd home. This recipe has been modified somewhat as it includes baking powders. Caroline B. King named it "Mary Todd's Pecan Cake" since its history is connected to her family and her husband.

So, was this pecan cake truly Lincoln's favorite? Or was it the almond cake? Or, was Lincoln the type of man who claimed every cake he ate was "the best I ever ate?" If we can trust Caroline B. King's research, then we must acknowledge that her article pre-dates any other information that has been published about Lincoln's favorite cake. Her article was published when Mary's half-sister, Emilie, was still living in Lexington, Kentucky. Is it possible that Ms. King received the recipe from a Todd family member? Or did she find it in some old cookbook?

We will probably never know for sure which cake was truly Lincoln's favorite. He enjoyed both of these, and many others. Although these recipes are old favorites, and somewhat time-consuming to make, both of them are well worth baking and enjoying.

Notes

1 *Out of Kentucky Kitchens* by Marion Flexner, University Press of Kentucky, c. 1949 Page 237.

2 *Ibid.* Page 237.

3 *Abraham Lincoln's Favorite Cake*, information card, The Lincoln Museum.

4 *The Confectionery of Monsieur Giron* by William Kavanaugh Doty, c. The King Library Press, Lexington, 1915 — with an afterward by Burton Milward, 1978. Page 4.

5 *Ibid.* Page 3.

6 *Lincoln and the Bluegrass: Slavery and Civil War in Kentucky*, by William H. Townsend, University Press of Kentucky, c. 1955. Page 64.

7 *Mary, Wife of Lincoln*, by Katherine Helm, Harper Brothers Publishing, c. 1928. Page 44.

8 "Famous Dishes from the Old Kentucky Home," *The Ladies Home Journal*, May 1923. Page 143.

9 Caroline B. King, *The Ladies' Home Journal*, "Famous Dishes from the Old Kentucky Home", c. 1923, Page 143-144.

Mary Todd's Pecan Cake

1 cup of butter
2 cups granulated sugar
4 c. flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
Six eggs — separated
1 cup orange juice
3/4 lb. pecan kernels (cut — but not chopped)
1/2 grated nutmeg
1 lb. raisins cut into small pieces

Preheat oven to a moderate heat (about 350 degrees)

Sift together flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Set aside.

Dredge nuts and raisins in 1/4 cup of the flour mixture. Set aside.

Cream butter well.

Gradually add sugar.

Separate eggs, beat egg yolks until frothy and add to sugar mixture.

Alternately add orange juice and flour mixture. Beat well.

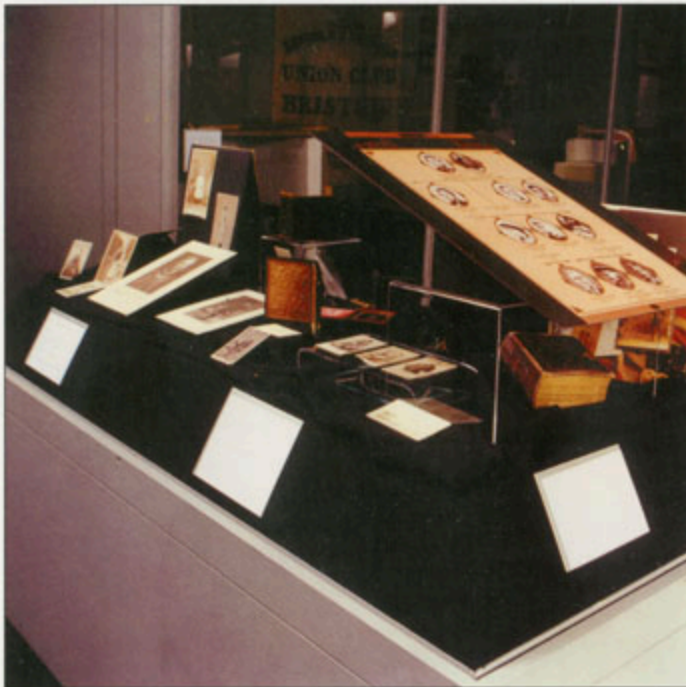
Add pecans and raisins to batter. Add nutmeg.

Beat egg whites until stiff. Gently fold into batter.

Pour into a well-greased and floured pan (tube, fluted, or fancy bundt cake) or into two smaller round cake pans. Bake for 3–4 hours depending on the size and shape of the pan. Since early recipes do not always translate easily to accommodate modern ovens and cookware, the cake should be checked frequently.

Gabor Boritt named 2003 McMurtry Lecturer Will speak at The Lincoln Museum November 8th

GABOR BORITT was born and raised in Hungary and educated in South Dakota and Massachusetts. He serves as the Director of the Civil War Institute and Fluhner Professor of Civil War Studies at Gettysburg College, and also as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the \$100,000 Lincoln Prizes. He lives with his wife, Elizabeth Lincoln Norseen, on a farm outside of Gettysburg where they have raised three sons. He has held visiting appointments at the universities of Cambridge, London, Harvard, and Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is author, co-author, and editor of fifteen books on Lincoln and the Civil War, some of them Book of the Month Club and History Book Club selections. He has received various awards and fellowships, most recently a Congressional appointment to The Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. His newest book from Oxford University Press is *The Lincoln Enigma* (2001, paperback 2002).



Lincoln's most famous act. Commissioned in 1864, forty eight copies were signed by Abraham Lincoln, his secretary John G. Nicolay and Secretary of State William Seward. These copies were auctioned for \$10 each at The Great Central Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia, June 7-29, 1864. The proceeds were used to purchase medical supplies. This document was purchased by Lincoln National Foundation in 1998 and given to The Lincoln Museum to honor retiring Lincoln National Corporation President and CEO Ian Rolland.

Assassination artifacts are displayed in a separate case. Items include: the newly restored Ford's Theatre flag; a Ford's Theatre playbill announcing "Benefit and Last Night of Miss Laura Keane in Our American Cousin" April 14, 1865; and a reproduction of Max Rosenthal's *The Last Moments of Abraham Lincoln* as George Washington and angels await Lincoln (see cover).



Left rear: Child's blue silk parasol that belonged to Robert Todd Lincoln's wife, Mary Harlan Lincoln. Right rear: Photographs autographed by Lincoln to be sold for charity at the Tazwell County fair in Illinois, 1864. Center: Two volume novel about spiritualism purchased and autographed by Mary Todd Lincoln in 1862. Left front: Pair of boot hooks owned by Lincoln. Center: Mary Todd Lincoln's opera glasses and fabric case. Right: Photo of Tad Lincoln and a note from the President requesting that Tad be given a navy sword. Lock of Willie Lincoln's hair in a small gutta percha case.



Election memorabilia: Center left: This 1857 photograph was distributed after Lincoln's 1860 nomination. Back right: A wooden torch used in campaign parades. Back left: A cane made from a rail split by Lincoln. Next to photo: A small 1860 campaign flag. Printing on stripes reads: For President Abraham Lincoln, For Vice President Hannibal Hamlin. Center: "Lincoln Union Flag" from 1864. Circle in blue and white reads: Liberty and Union Forever. Right: Campaign buttons and literature.



To celebrate the Lincoln Sesquicentennial in 1959, the Department of State's International Exchange Service sponsored a three month tour of the Far East by Museum Director Gerald McMurtry. McMurtry found an abundance of books about Lincoln in different languages. Displayed are some of the volumes which he purchased.



Samples of Lincoln memorials in glass, silver, Wedgwood, pottery and wood.

Business of Lincoln

From time to time, The Lincoln Museum and Lincoln Lore will examine the endurance and prevalence of Lincoln's name and legacy in our everyday world. In this issue we will begin to explore "The Business of Lincoln" by looking at one of the ways in which Lincoln's name has been used in the business community and at the business that Lincoln himself generates. It is amazing to think that 138 years after his death, this man and his legacy continue to inspire interest.

Commerce — a Basis for Lincoln Scholarship

Donald Ackerman, Editor-in-Chief The Rail Splitter

Few people who study Abraham Lincoln realize that they are beneficiaries of collectors, past and present. Materials used by researchers, those items located in libraries, museums and universities, did not fall out of trees. They were often donated, at least the major collections, by individuals who spent a lifetime scouring the countryside in order to accumulate Lincolniana. Naturally, the situation for building such large holdings is not as conducive as in years past. Much material has been permanently deposited in institutions. Some has been lost to attrition and the ravages of time. The cost of acquiring "significant" material is generally prohibitive today, thereby dimming the prospects greatly.

Still, there are countless individuals who continue in the tradition of Oldroyd, McLellan, Oakleaf, Horner and Barrett. In their quiet way, they go about acquiring Lincoln memorabilia as their situation warrants. Besides the joy of collecting and preserving the heritage of Abraham Lincoln, they are giving new life to current and future generations of Lincoln scholars.

While our journal and the auction are not-for-profit, they may be considered a business in a restricted sense, in that each party to the transaction receives a desired object of mutual benefit. That benefit may be pecuniary or spiritual, selfish or altruistic.

What is *The Rail Splitter* and what are its origins?

Approximately eight years ago, a small group of Lincoln collectors decided that it

would be beneficial to publish a periodical that was collector-oriented. This did not imply a bias against dealers. Indeed, topics of interest to one are usually of interest to the other. When we use the term "collector," we imply "collector/dealer." Our target audience was anyone interested in buying and selling Lincolniana, in contrast to someone whose interest is strictly educational or recreational. Credit for the development of the journal as it exists today must go to publisher Jonathan Mann, who insisted on high standards of excellence.

The journal was designed to answer certain universal questions plaguing collectors: What is it worth? Where do I find it? What's real, what's not, and how can I tell the difference? What's the story behind the origin of specific items? What types of items do people collect? In answering these questions, collectors were treated to personal stories about the "hunt" or acquisition process and other details that reinforced feelings of community. A continuing effort was made to present subjects in an entertaining manner, touch on the diverse interests of the readership, and publish information previously unknown or unavailable elsewhere. Debunking previously held beliefs, when the opportunity presented itself, was an added perk.

The original purpose of the magazine, besides the dubious one of self-gratification for its founders, was to provide entertainment and educational information to the readership. It was, as the masthead indicates, a journal "For the Lincoln

Continued on next page >

Collector.” It also served a purely journalistic function, reporting on sales and transactions of Lincoln memorabilia. In the beginning, it was not envisioned as a means to facilitate the acquisition or disposal of unwanted items. That mission soon was revised. Inspired by specialty auctions (bottles, advertising items, postcards, militaria, etc.), it was decided that an annual auction of Lincolniana and related Civil War items was appropriate on several levels. Any profits generated could put the journal on a firmer financial footing. An additional service could be provided to the subscriber base, thereby making the journal truly a “full service publication.” And, finally, the auction would help develop interest both in collecting and the study of Abraham Lincoln.

About the Rail Splitter Auction

Both the *Rail Splitter* journal and the Rail Splitter auction started small but have increased in size and quality. The first auction held in 1996 had 255 lots. The latest installment in May 2002 had 875. Full color centerfolds were added features of the last three editions. Although the first auction was a traditional live sale, subsequent ones have strictly been mail, phone, and fax-bid affairs.

The catalogs are professionally printed and sent out to a mailing list of collectors, dealers, and institutions so that everyone receives a catalog at least two weeks prior to the auction deadline. This allows sufficient time for prospective bidders to ask questions, preview the items by appointment, and submit bids. The two-week period before the deadline allows staff members to prepare the “bid books,” set up additional phone lines, and line-up volunteers to field calls. Staffers are treated to an all-day buffet of lasagna and other Italian delicacies graciously provided by one we call “the Sauce Man.” Four or five days are needed following the sale to prepare and mail out invoices. The work continues without respite, as hundreds of packages must be prepared, pending receipt of payment.

That covers the auction process in a nutshell; however, the preparation, similar to presidential campaigns, begins well in advance. As soon as one auction is over, we start on the next one!

Most of the items we sell are consignments from collectors (selling off certain items in order to finance a major purchase) or dealers. Sometimes we know about a particularly nice item in someone’s holdings that they really don’t plan on selling. We persistently broach the subject of consignment, dangling the prospect of a high return, our persistence usually resulting in an agreement. We got our most expensive item (an 1864 letter from Lincoln to Horace Greeley regarding negotiations with Confederate agents at Niagara Falls, which realized \$110,000) from a New Jersey historical society that needed money for a new building. Some major consignments have come from elderly collectors whose advancing years or poor health have prompted the decision to sell. We also get individual pieces from people who have inherited them and have no collecting interest. In addition, we are always buying items specifically for inclusion in the sale. These come from a variety of sources: other mail auction catalogs, antique shows, ephemeral shows, live antique auctions, and the internet (eBay or dealer web sites). We primarily buy political items, photographica and Civil War ephemera. Militaria (weapons and accouterments) are a small section of the sale and typically are consigned by specialists. We make the decision on whether to buy something or not based on our personal taste, knowledge of the marketplace, and how we did in the past when offering similar items. We can refer back to previous sales and see how many bidders bid on a specific item and at what price levels. This is a good indication of “future performance.”

After the items are gathered, they must be written up, photographed, and laid out in catalog format. We have developed contacts throughout the country whom we call upon for advice and vetting. These include experts in books, manuscripts, photography, paintings, and autographs. If we are not sure about something, a quick call is made and the needed information supplied. As far as provenance is concerned, we provide whatever information we are given by the consignor and let the bidder judge for himself. Most of the items we sell are manufactured goods (books, imprints, photographs, medals, etc.) where the question of provenance does not enter the picture.

Like consignors, our “bidder” base consists of collectors, dealers, and institutions.

While dealers are the largest individual buyers (often purchasing 20-40 items per sale), they are in the numerical minority as far as winning bidders are concerned. The typical buyer is a collector who purchases 1-5 items at a time. Our most popular items have generally been political textiles. Last year, we got a record price of \$67,750 for an 1860 Lincoln & Hamlin portrait flag that was uncovered behind a wall of a Michigan house during renovation work. Unusual cartes-de-visite have their aficionados, as well. We have sold two unpublished portraits of John Wilkes Booth and got \$16,250 for a set of three cartes of the hanging of the conspirators (quite unusual in that small format). We never know what will be “hot” from one year to the next. Four years ago a gentleman was actively pursuing items that he planned to donate to a Southern Civil War museum, resulting in a record price for a John Rogers group. Last year, memorial items (mainly ribbons) and assassination-account letters sold well. The same items if offered this year might fall flat. It takes two determined competitors to run up the price. We typically do not sell privately or maintain want lists, although occasionally we have obtained a second example after-the-fact, and have contacted the disappointed underbidder and made the sale.

The journal and the auction... a synergy

The combination of the journal and auction creates a synergy. Collectors can count on a steady source of material as well as an outlet for unwanted items. They have access to useful price information gleaned from auction “prices realized” lists and journal reportage. The marketplace for Lincolniana has therefore been stimulated and public interest encouraged. The publication of newly discovered items or the offering of such items for sale (especially primary source material) has helped shed new light on American history. Collecting is not only preserving history, but facilitating its writing, reaching far beyond the image of isolated individuals placing specimens in albums and binders.

Current annual subscription costs for the journal are \$24.00. The address is P.O. Box 275, New York, NY 10044. The web address is www.therailsplitter.com

***Redeemer President* by Allen C. Guelzo**

Reviewed by Sarah Joan Ankeney

Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President by Allen C. Guelzo (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999) may be the most profound biography of Lincoln ever written. The biography of a mind, it traces meticulously the development of Lincoln's religious thought from early Calvinist influence to the personal religious experience that Guelzo believes produced the "Meditation on the Divine Will" (September [30?], 1862), the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Second Inaugural.

This is not simply one more book that claims Lincoln as a professed Christian. His tendencies toward atheism, his thinking as a child of the Lockean Enlightenment, the importance of his Whig politics, and his hatred of the Jacksonian subsistence farm economy are thoroughly explored. The nature of the American Whig party to which Lincoln remained faithful throughout his presidency is described as a successful effort to replace the subsistence farm with the individual wage-earner economy. Guelzo shows the connection of the Whig ideal of economic betterment of the individual to the 19th century religious ideal of individual moral improvement. In showing this connection, he seems to imply that Lincoln, the good Whig, was also bound by his own unique religious thought to the party in spite of the fact that he was also a "typical Victorian doubter."

In Lincoln's younger years, he expressed belief in reason, in a remote God of cause and effect (his "determinism"), and scoffed at the idea of a Providence that takes an active part in the affairs of man. But evidence that he came to think otherwise is to be found in his "Meditation on the Divine Will" in which he says, "In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party [the North or the South]." Guelzo feels that Lincoln came to believe that God's purpose was the end of slavery and that it was precisely because of this belief that Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

But Lincoln would never become a person of strong religious conviction. The thread of his troubled thinking on the nature of God is difficult to follow in this book and is often broken completely as Lincoln the politician takes over. But Guelzo carefully leads us through Lincoln's times of doubt. He says of Lincoln's view of Providence, "there is pain and desertion and remoteness, but not outright skepticism in the mature Lincoln." (461) "Lincoln often wished 'that I was a more devout man than I am,' but the ruthless self-honesty of evangelical Protestantism had early-on denied him the consolation of worthiness...." (462)

Guelzo says, "The contrast between the skeptical and infidel Lincoln of the pre-war days who spoke of God as a remote and impersonal cause of a universal Niagara Falls, and the Lincoln who...sat somewhat unsurely before a cabinet of sophisticated and thick-skinned politicians, offering as his reason for the most radical gesture in American history [the Emancipation Proclamation] a private vow fulfilled in blood and smoke by the

hand of God, is almost too great to reconcile." (342) Indeed, there are moments in this book when the theme of Providence seems to be carried too far. If Guelzo feels that God spoke to Lincoln to tell him to free the slaves, does he feel that God also told Lincoln to slow down on suffrage? Guelzo deals with this issue by saying that the Emancipation Proclamation (which did not free all the slaves) was, though, the fatal blow to slavery after which all else would come.

Providence is not so obvious a player in 19th century civil liberties, nor is it so obvious when Guelzo says in regard to Grant's breaking of the Confederate siege of the Union army in Chattanooga, that "Through all the clouds, Providence had contrived once again to smile." (369) Guelzo forgets his own thesis that Lincoln's God was not on one side or the other but was strictly concerned with punishing both North and South for the sin of slavery. And when Lincoln says that it is "providential" that Congress is not in session when the war ends, he seems to be speaking with less religious fervor and more determination to fight the Radicals.

Guelzo himself states that there was a "basic political strategy" underlying the religious message of the Second Inaugural. "It was an appeal against the Radicals" offering authority "not even the Radicals were brazen enough to defy." (419-20)

In spite of the contradictions that seem to be present in his religious theme, Guelzo paints a portrait of Lincoln that is powerful and moving. Feeling that he himself is unworthy and not a candidate for redemption, Lincoln, who wishes he could believe more than he does, still manages to accomplish a kind of redemption of the country. Guelzo says, "The sheer magnitude of Lincoln's accomplishment as president has always tended to obscure the intellectual materials from which it was constructed. Lincoln had succeeded, under the most trying circumstances imaginable in the history of the republic, in holding together the Northern free states and the border slave states against a massive defection by the slave South, and then grinding the South into submission. At the same time, he managed to hold together his own party, and gradually sorted out the military leadership of the Union armies....As a result, the nature of the republic as a nation, not merely a loose association based on 'self-interest' was confirmed. Almost as a by-product, he oversaw the liberation of an entire race of enslaved people, and though he died without giving clear direction as to what American society now proposed to do with the freed people, the emancipating of them was the first and most forbidding achievement. And while the nation was convulsed in civil war, Lincoln managed to shift the political economy of the republic off the Jeffersonian track and onto the liberal track of wage labor and high development, where it would stay...for another seventy years...." Lincoln "presided over the greatest centralization of political authority ever seen in the American republic, from national finance to transcontinental railroads...." (454)

Continued on next page >

All of this, Guelzo believes, was made possible through the moral force within Lincoln, while the man, himself, struggled with his own religious philosophy. Guelzo concludes with Lincoln's words of 1846 that "probably it is to be my lot to go on in a twilight, feeling and reasoning my way through life, as questioning doubting Thomas did." These words seem to Guelzo to be "the lonely murmur of abandonment, deathlike in the leafless trees."

Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President puts Lincoln very remotely in the camp of the Old School Presbyterians, as does Ronald White,

Jr.'s *Lincoln's Greatest Speech* (reviewed in EX LIBRIS, VOL.27, NO.1, October 2002). But *Redeemer President* goes far beyond *Lincoln's Greatest Speech* in demonstrating the complexity and intellectuality of Lincoln's mind. Lincoln's thinking is too complex and too original to be laid at the feet of one Christian minister as White attempts to do. *Redeemer President* is an enormous and a beautiful accomplishment, a must for everyone who seriously wishes to understand Lincoln and 19th century America.

The following is a list of the R. Gerald McMurtry lectures presented at The Lincoln Museum. To order those available, send a check for \$5.00 for each copy to The Lincoln Museum, 200 E. Berry Street, Ft. Wayne, IN 46802.

1. 1978 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
Unity, Ethnicity, and Abraham Lincoln, by Richard N. Current

2. 1979 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
The Minor Affair: An Adventure in Forgery and Deception, by Don E. Fehrenbacher

3. 1980 AVAILABLE
Lincoln's Reconstruction: Neither Failure of Vision Nor Vision of Failure, by Harold M. Hyman

4. 1981 AVAILABLE
Lincoln and the Riddle of Death, by Robert V. Bruce

5. 1982 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
Builders of the Dream: Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr., by Stephen B. Oates

6. 1983 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
Preserving Lincoln for the Ages: Collectors, Collections, and Our Sixteenth President, by Ralph G. Newman

7. 1984 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
Lincoln and the Constitution: the Dictatorship Question Reconsidered, by Herman Belz

8. 1985 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
How Lincoln Won the War with Metaphors, by James M. McPherson

9. 1986 AVAILABLE
The Long Loom of Lincoln, by Frank E. Vandiver

10. 1987 AVAILABLE
House Divided: Lincoln and his Father, by John Y. Simon

11. 1988 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
"Not Much of Me": Abraham Lincoln as a Typical American, by Jean H. Baker

12. 1989 NOT AVAILABLE — out of print
Lincoln and the South in 1860, by Robert W. Johannsen

13. 1990 NOT AVAILABLE — unpublished
"War and Freedom and Abraham Lincoln", by John T. Hubbell

14. 1991 AVAILABLE
"This Grand Pertinacity": Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration of Independence, by Merrill D. Peterson

15. 1992 AVAILABLE
"The Better Angels of Our Nature": Lincoln, Propaganda and Public Opinion in the North During the American Civil War, by Phillip Shaw Paludan

1993-1994 no lecture

16. 1995 NOT AVAILABLE — unpublished
"Events Have Controlled Me": The Fatalism of Abraham Lincoln, by David Herbert Donald

17. 1996 AVAILABLE
The Mirror Image of Civil War Memory: Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis in Poplar Prints, by Harold Holzer

18. 1997 NOT AVAILABLE — unpublished
Lincoln the State Legislator, by Paul Simon

19. 1998 CURRENTLY UNPUBLISHED
Herndon's Dilemma: Abraham Lincoln and the Privacy Issue, by Douglas Wilson

20. 1999 CURRENTLY UNPUBLISHED
"He Will Be Good, But God Knows When", by William Lee Miller

21. 2000 CURRENTLY UNPUBLISHED
Edward Bates and Abraham Lincoln: The Attorney General and the Attorney President, by Frank Williams

22. 2001 NOT AVAILABLE — unpublished
Forced Into Glory, by Lerone Bennett

23. 2002 NOT AVAILABLE — unpublished
Michael R. Beschloss speaker

24. 2003
Honky Lincoln, by Gabor Boritt

25. 2004
The Emancipation Moment: Lincoln's Other "First of January", by Allen C. Guelzo

An interview with Carolyn Texley

Director of Collections comments on the 75th Anniversary Exhibition



2001 Director of Collections Carolyn Texley receiving the Gardner Studio chair in which Lincoln was photographed many times. Courtesy of the Journal Gazette, Fort Wayne, IN.

Q What was your concept for this exhibition?

A The Lincoln Museum has been an active participant in preserving Lincoln's legacy throughout the past 75 years. The concept of this exhibit was to review the Museum's contribution to the broader Abraham Lincoln community and to his legacy. At the same time, we wanted to show that founder Louis Warren's original concept of the function of the Museum, to preserve and interpret the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, has remained the same over seven decades. The Museum's facilities have grown and changed, but the mission remains the same. I hope that this message comes through in

this anniversary exhibit. Also, we wanted to show the breadth and depth of the collection by exhibiting as much of it as possible. Together with the permanent exhibit, we now have the largest portion of our collection on display in the history of the Museum, representing the cumulative effort of all who have been involved over the past 75 years.

Q Was it difficult to decide which material would be included?

A There were many things that we knew had to be displayed in order to represent the collection over the past 75 years. The final selection was guided by our desire to repre-

sent all of the aspects of the collection, the functions and history of the Museum.

The exhibit covers the chronological story of The Lincoln Museum, including Lincoln art and artifacts not used in recent exhibits.

Q Were conservation efforts needed in order to display some of the artifacts?

A There were three pieces sent off for professional conservation treatment: The Lincoln White House china dessert plate, the flag that hung in Ford's Theatre the

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Photograph of Lincoln with his son Tad. The chair in which the President is seated is the Gardner Studio chair now owned by the Museum. TLM # 114

night Lincoln was shot, and the banner that hung in the office of Edwin Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War. There were several other pieces that were framed, which is another method of protecting artifacts.

Q What percentage of your collection would normally be on display?

Flag restoration by Textile Conservation Services

Before



After



China plate front and back restoration by McKay Lodge Conservation Lab

Before



After



A We have most of our Lincoln family artifacts (90%) on display in the permanent exhibit, except for those items we've acquired since the exhibit opened in 1995. It was rewarding to be able to display our newer acquisitions. Our large collection of images, period newspapers and documents is represented very well in the permanent exhibit, but we can only display a small fraction at any one time. We've used them in other temporary exhibits to illustrate everything from the Lincoln Highway to the Lincoln assassination, and they're in constant use by our researchers. The standard of the museum industry is to exhibit no more than 40% of an entire collection at any given time. There are three reasons for this policy: for conservation of artifacts; for a rotation of exhibits to enhance audience appeal; and to keep material in reserve for use by researchers.

Q What does the temporary exhibition add for public viewing?

A I've included almost all of the remaining Lincoln family artifacts we own, with the exception of over 300 Lincoln family documents. I've tried to represent the breadth of the collection, but there isn't room for all of our art, Lincoln-era sheet music, political cartoons, documents and artifacts — or even all of the Lincoln family photograph album — to be on display in one exhibit. That's one of the reasons we create temporary exhibits: to put the collection in an interesting context and to illustrate the many aspects of the Lincoln story and legacy. Another important feature of the Museum is our book collection relating to Lincoln and his era. Although we have included some books in the exhibit, we obviously cannot display the 18,000 volumes in our research library.

Q Why does Lincoln's legacy continue to resonate today?

A I believe that each generation needs to find a context for Lincoln as part of finding the context for our continuing American experiment in democracy. The important national issues of slavery, racism and civil rights also relate to Lincoln's legacy in many ways, and Lincoln becomes a touchstone for understanding the American republic. He has always seemed to me to be one of our least self-involved leaders, and his life was sacrificed because of that total commitment to an ideal.