Lincoln LORE

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THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

At Ford's Theatre, Washington, on the night of Friday, April 14, 1865.

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Lincoln LORE

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Presented by Ronald C. White

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FRIENDS OF THE
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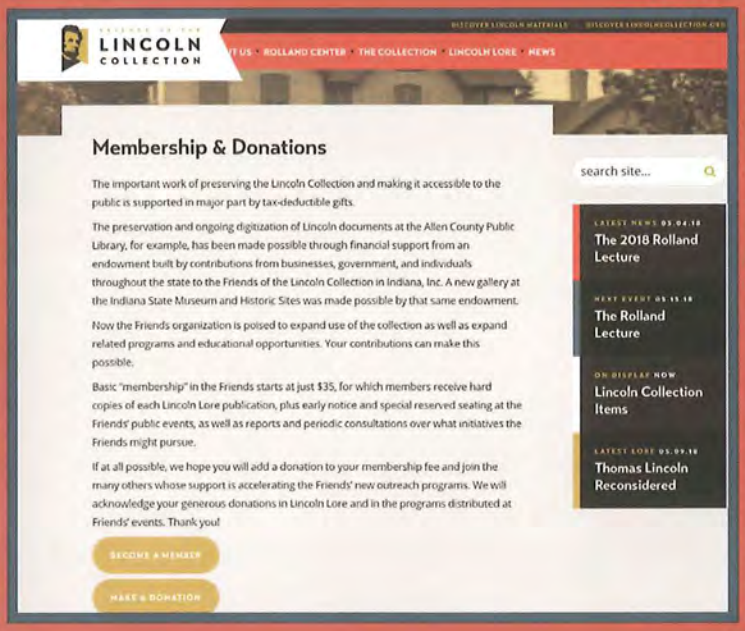
Connect with Lincoln Online!

The Friends of the Lincoln Collection in Indiana are true friends for the amazing, incomparable collection of Abraham Lincoln research materials found in the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection. This organization embodies the best in collaboration and selfless dedication. This most assuredly has been demonstrated by the organization raising nearly eight million dollars to keep the former Lincoln Museum collection in Indiana, underwriting the complete remodeling of an Indiana State Museum gallery, investing in a collection website where interested persons can view nearly thirty-four thousand digitized items, sponsoring several top-shelf lectures each year, and funding two Lincoln librarian positions at the Allen County Public Library.

Now the Friends of the Lincoln Collection's tradition of excellence continues through the very recent launch of their new organizational website, www.FriendsOfTheLincolnCollection.org. Before wondering whether the world needs another Lincoln oriented website, take a few minutes to explore this expanding and engaging space. This website links to the LincolnCollection.org offering as well as provides direct access by category to the significant number of Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection items that have been digitized. This site also highlights a number of Lincoln related programs offered for free each year at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The McMurtry and Rolland lectures feature some of the best Lincoln scholars and history professionals offering programs that explore the life and times of Abraham Lincoln.



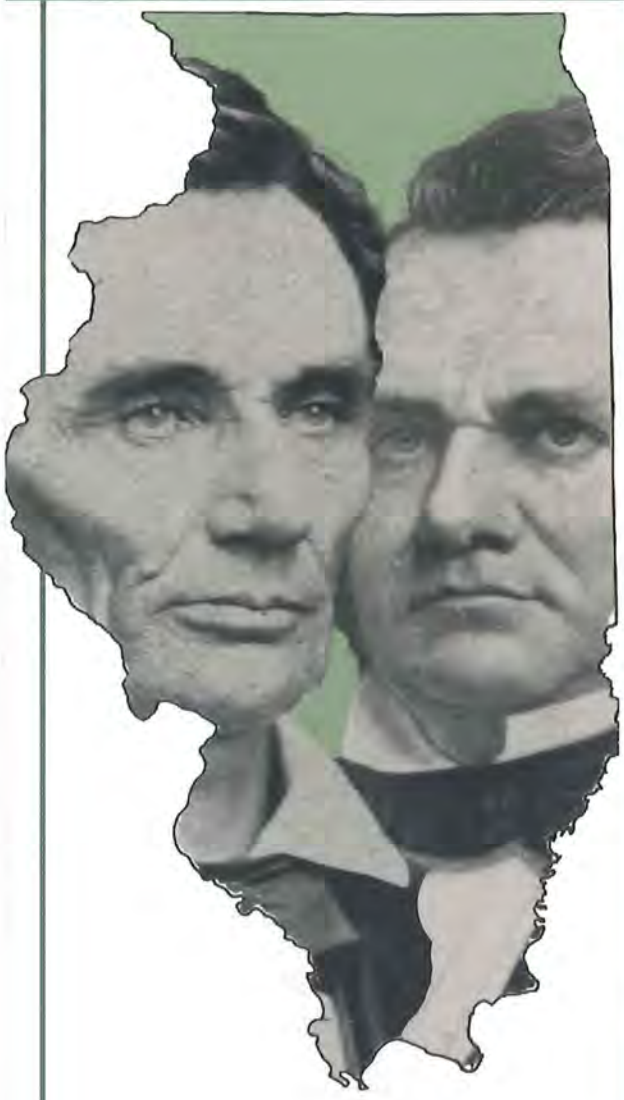
A keystone feature of this new Friends of the Lincoln Collection website is the nationally acclaimed publication, Lincoln Lore. This serial is among the must-reads for anyone wanting to expand knowledge of Lincoln and read what scholars are saying about our country's most famous president. The current issue of each Lincoln Lore is published dynamically on the site, with each article appearing as a separate searchable feature. Now more than ever, from student to scholar, one will find the content of this publication easily accessible and engaging.

The current issue of Lincoln Lore along with recent issues are also made available on this new Friends of the Lincoln Collection website as PDF documents to read online as well as to download. The archive of more than seven decades of Lincoln Lore publications will continue to grow over the coming months. The goal is to have all Lincoln Lore issues available to interested individuals directly from the website. This will be a major contribution to the Lincoln community.

The newly launched Friends of the Lincoln Collection website offers other items of interest. One can find lists of collection items that are being displayed in the Fine Book Room vault of the Allen County Public Library. Such lists provide one with a window into the collection, and perhaps even entice one to arrange for a guided Lincoln Collection tour. The site also sports links to online exhibits and many dozens of viewable Lincoln presentations made at the Allen County Public Library. There is much to see and learn at the new Friends of the Lincoln Collection website. Take a look, stay a while, and consider joining this remarkable Friends organization.

On the Cover

In this issue of Lincoln Lore, we are featuring objects from the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection. The Indiana State Museum has provided items centering around the Lincoln Assassination. The front cover is of A. Pharazyn's lithograph "The Assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, Washington, on the night of Friday, April 14, 1865, Philadelphia, circa 1865" (71.2009.081.1762).



Interview with Harold Holzer — on the — 160th Anniversary — of the — Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Sara Gabbard

Sara Gabbard: In 1858, was there already a precedent for debates between competing candidates for political office?

Harold Holzer: Not much of one, really. Certainly the 1830 Webster-Hayne debates over the tariff had long been famous nationwide, but these took place on the floor of the U. S. Senate in Washington, between two public officials, and before a kind of captive audience: fellow senators. As for Lincoln and Douglas, they had exchanged views face-to-face on the stump over the years, debating each other after a fashion, but the idea of participating in a sustained, organized series of "joint meetings" as a major happening seems to me unique to the time, place, and principals of the 1858 race for the U. S. Senate from Illinois. Keep in mind: this was a unique race for other reasons, too, and these factors made the debates possible, maybe even inevitable. There had been no previous senatorial debates for the simple reason that there had never before been senate candidates, or even senate campaigns as we now know them. In the 19th-century, senators were chosen not directly by voters but by state legislatures, which convened a few months after Election Day (technically the following calendar year) to choose senators when vacancies existed. Political parties did not "nominate" Senate standard-bearers; aspirants simply got considered when legislatures met. But having been burned by this maddening system a few years earlier (1855), when, after much shifting of legislative votes he lost a Senate seat he was widely expected to secure, Lincoln told fellow Republicans in 1858 that he would stand for Senate again only if designated as the party's official candidate at a real convention. His famous "House Divided Speech" actually came at the meeting that so nominated him as the party's "first and only choice" for the Senate. Even so, Lincoln never faced Douglas on the ballot that year; their debates would be largely ceremonial and symbolic, because the only popular vote that mattered in 1858 was the contest for legislative seats. Nevertheless, Lincoln took to the competition eagerly, seizing every opportunity he could find to confront

Douglas. Once the campaign got underway, Lincoln even tried to schedule himself around his opponent's speaking tours, his goal being to reply to Douglas in public later the same day, or the day after, Douglas's major appearances. Lincoln's persistence—which opponents ridiculed—is what, in a way, launched the concept of formal, face-to-face debates as a dignified and convenient alternative.

SG: Who suggested the 1858 debates? Were there negotiations as to time/place?

HH: The editors of the pro-Republican *Chicago Tribune* actually came up with the idea—almost to preserve their man Lincoln's dignity as he took increasing heat for pursuing the incumbent around the state. Lincoln then wrote a letter formally inviting Douglas to a series of joint appearances. Douglas, better known, better funded, and better scheduled, had nothing to gain and everything to lose by giving Lincoln a bigger platform. But he could find no way to escape the challenge without sacrificing his frontier machismo. It would be akin to declining a duel. Douglas had no choice but to accept. Complicated negotiations did get underway between the two camps. Lincoln wanted dozens of debates. Douglas consented to only nine—one in each of the state's congressional districts. And then he subtracted two districts because Lincoln had already, annoyingly as far as Douglas was concerned, responded to "The Little Giant's" orations in both Chicago and Springfield. So in the end, the "net" to which Douglas agreed amounted to just seven new joint meetings. It was a far cry from what Lincoln had wanted, but far better than nothing.

SG: Was there much discrepancy between newspaper reports of the events? Did coverage display political bias?

HH: Discrepancy is a mild word to describe it! Bias is much better. Lincoln's friends and allies owned the state's preeminent Republican papers, the *Chicago Tribune* and Springfield's *Illinois State Journal*. Democrats controlled the *Chicago Times* and the *Illinois State Register*—in fact, Douglas was an investor in the Chicago paper. It came as no surprise then, and should surprise no one now, that in the Republican coverage of the debates, Lincoln always seemed to win, always sounded fluid and prepared, while Douglas ranted and raved and came off as vulgar and despotic. The Democratic press, however, reported Lincoln as hapless, crude, and often dangerously radical. This divergence extended not only to the news and feature coverage (and opinion-piece editorials, of course), but to the printed transcripts of the debates themselves. I devoted an entire book to this theme 25 years ago, and more recently Douglas Wilson and Rodney Davis took it up in a book of their own. That is to say, I collected and published the long-ignored "reverse" transcripts of the debates: that is, Democratic transcripts of Republican Lincoln's speeches, and Republican transcripts of Democrat Douglas's. It's not a perfect science, but I calculate that these opposition transcripts bring us closest to the unrehearsed words these two titans unleashed on the debate trail than the versions reviewed, polished, and reprinted in sanitized form by friendly editors. So much so that the pro-Douglas *Chicago Times* complained that the rival *Tribune* transcriptions contained "whole paragraphs of which Lincoln's tongue was innocent;" in turn, the *Tribune* charged that the *Times* transcriptions contained "mutilations" of Lincoln's words designed "to mar the beauty of his most eloquent passages, and to make him talk like... a half-witted numbskull." These were the first political encounters ever "recorded" by stenographers and reprinted in the press—and the results did revolutionize both newspaper coverage of politics and politics itself. But the coverage, and even the transcripts, must be taken with a grain of salt because the press was an owned-and-operated part of the political machine and they not only reported unreliably on the events, they unreliably reprinted the transcripts! In their own time, the debate over which debate records to believe became almost as engrossing as the debates themselves.

Postcard illustration, ZPC-293

SG: Does it appear to you that each candidate planned to present different concepts, depending upon the location of the event? Did they make "adjustments" from one debate to the next?

HH: I may be in the minority here among historians, but I've always thought that this notion has been somewhat exaggerated. Lincoln was never really inconsistent about his views on the principal issue of the debates, and of the era: the issue of slavery. Wherever he spoke, he said he did not see a way to end slavery where it already existed, but adamantly opposed extending it westward into new American territories, eventually to be new states. Douglas in turn, no matter where he was appearing, argued proudly for his great, if controversial, legislative accomplishment: popular sovereignty as enshrined in the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act. It gave white voters in these new territories the right to hold referenda on whether or not to welcome slavery within their borders. Sure, the emphases and tone changed as the debaters moved from the overwhelmingly Republican, anti-slavery northern part of Illinois to the pro-status quo southern region known as "Egypt." But as I calculate it, only around the edges. Besides, the candidates could not have effectively varied their messages according to geography even if they really wanted to. After all, both Lincoln and Douglas knew that their arguments were being taken down by those stenographers, partisan or not. Thus they were debating, not only for local crowds, but for readers throughout the state. Had they been reckless enough to vary their views from town to town, they would quickly have been exposed as inconsistent frauds—and, believe it or not, consistency counted for a lot in the political culture of the 1850s. As Lincoln said at the Freeport debate: "[If] I should never be elected to any office, I trust I may go down with no stain of falsehood upon my reputation." I believe him; he lost the election with honor intact.

Stephen Douglas, 1858 OC-0552

SG: Did certain subjects appear in all or most of the debates?

HH: It was slavery, stupid (of course I'm paraphrasing Bill Clinton here, not impugning my friend, the editor of Lincoln Lore, heaven forbid). Yes, the debaters also battled about character, the responsibility of citizens (and legislators) to support a nation engaged in unpopular wars (in this case the late war with Mexico), and other corollary issues. They attacked each other personally. They exchanged "gotchas." They had a lot of time to expound on any manner of subthemes. Remember, their presentations were nothing like the ridiculous, one-minute-per-answer debates in vogue today. Each opening speaker had 60 minutes to talk; the rebuttal took 90 minutes, and then the first speaker returned for a final half-hour. These extraordinarily talented orators may have rambled once in a while (to fill time), but they invariably circled back to the big issues of freedom, citizenship, human rights, the Founders, the definition of American opportunity, and the possibility (or impossibility) of racial equality. But all of these themes radiated in a sense from the overarching problem of slavery—from all the evils the institution generated, and all the evils that those opposed to abolition feared its dissolution would ignite.

SG: Did reactions to the Debates in part provide some of the interest in Abraham Lincoln which would eventually lead to his Address at Cooper Union?

HH: Absolutely so. Transcripts of, and reports on, the Illinois debates appeared in newspapers all the way to the East Coast, New York included. One typical story reported that excitement in the West ran so deep that "the prairies are on fire." The notion of these titans confronting each other in public, no holds barred, captured the public imagination nationwide. The word-for-word reprints (as edited, of course) engaged the country in an ever-more urgent discussion of slavery. New York Republicans certainly knew about Lincoln's debate success, and that is precisely what motivated his hosts to invite him to speak in the city. James Briggs, the New Yorker who sent

Lincoln the actual invitation, while a Salmon Chase supporter, had earlier told Lincoln: "There is a deep interest felt here in the Illinois contest." And when the poet and newspaper editor William Cullen Bryant introduced Lincoln on the stage of the Cooper Union's Great Hall on February 27, 1860, he proved this point by reminding the crowd that Lincoln was "a gallant soldier of the political campaign of 1858," and a "great champion of the Republican cause in Illinois." These were direct references to the debates, and a reminder of how successfully they had introduced the previously little-known Lincoln to voters outside his home state. Cooper Union was the speech that made Lincoln president, as I've argued, but the Lincoln-Douglas debates were the events that made Lincoln a prime choice to speak at Cooper Union.

Abraham Lincoln, 1858 OC-1509

SG: Did Lincoln and/or Douglas mention their Debates in speeches and/or letters which followed?

HH: Oh, yes. First of all, it's important to note that while we still debate the debates, and who won them, the results were somewhat confusing at the time. The only Republican on the statewide ballot in Illinois that year got more votes than the only Democrat. But the Democrats won enough legislative contests to ensure that Douglas would get chosen for a third term when the legislature met in the winter. So Douglas beat Lincoln. But crushed as he was, Lincoln continued the battle—that is, to control the history and memory of the debates. It was Lincoln who decided to collect newspaper clippings of the transcripts and make them available for publication as a book. Of course he chose the Republican-edited versions of his own remarks. Douglas howled that he was given no chance to re-examine the transcripts for accuracy, while Lincoln made a few further, handwritten editorial changes that survive in the original scrapbook now in the Library of Congress. Lincoln continued to refer to the debates well into the 1860 campaign against Douglas (and others) for the presidency, for when routinely refusing invitations to rallies and new speaking engagements, he urged his hosts to read the debates to get the best idea of his views.

SG: Is there any evidence that Abraham Lincoln realized how important the Debates would be, both to his own career and to students of history in the future?

HH: I think the evidence is in the care he took to create that scrapbook and dispatch a trusted aide, John Nicolay, to carry them to a publisher and get them into print again in more permanent form. I think the proof is in his frequent references to the debates, and to the stories of his giving out books as gifts to visitors who arrived in Springfield during the 1860 campaign, as well as the 1860-1861 interregnum, determined to find out Lincoln's views. He insisted he would say nothing new; that his positions were on record in the debates, and that they stood the test of time (for the next two years, anyway). His ideas matured over time, of course. His most regrettable debate performance, at Charleston, in which he reiterated what amount to white supremacist views (to be sure not uncommon among mainstream politicians of the day), morphed into something much subtler and more humane during the Civil War. Yes, the Lincoln-Douglas debates launched Abraham Lincoln into the national spotlight, and identified him as a first-class political performer worthy of consideration for even greater things than the U. S. Senate. And while Lincoln himself was wise enough to take advantage of their popularity, he was even wiser to move past them as conditions changed, new opportunities appeared, and his capacity for political and moral growth took hold. The debates may have represented Lincoln's apogee as a tough campaigner and frontier orator, but they represented only a passing glimpse into his always growing beliefs and ideals.

Harold Holzer is Jonathan F. Fanton Director of Roosevelt House Public Policy Institute at Hunter College. His next book is Monument Man, a biography of the Lincoln Memorial Sculptor Daniel Chester French.

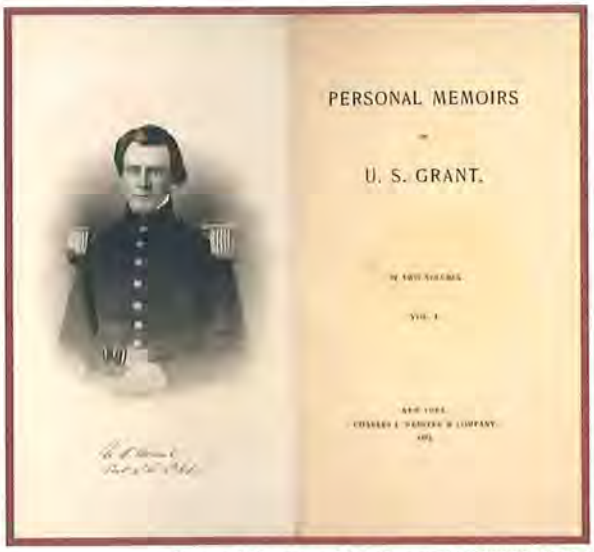
An Interview with Ronald C. White,

Author of American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant

OC-1406

Sara Gabbard: Did you find your extensive background in the study of Abraham Lincoln a help in your research on Grant, or was it a distraction?

Ron White: At one level, writing three books on Lincoln helped. I came to believe Lincoln and Grant formed a mutual admiration society. At another level, it did not help. Because Grant was an important figure in my Lincoln biography, I started out believing I knew the man. It was not long before I had to make a personal confession: I did not know Grant. Yes, I knew what he did—command the Union armies that won the Civil War—but I did not know who he was. And I was sure most Americans also did not know the man.



Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, 712009008406360

SG: Did you find influences in Grant's childhood that might have contributed to his eventual successes?

RW: Some of my first readers warned me about spending too much time on the young Grant. Biographies are popular today, but many move quickly over the early life of their subject. I took my cue from Grant himself who wrote: "I read but few lives of great men because biographies do not, as a rule, tell enough about the formative period of life. What I want to know is what a man did as a boy."

SG: What was his experience at West Point?

RW: In a similar fashion, previous biographies, to my mind, spent too little time with Grant at West Point. I spent one week at West Point attempting to understand his time there. Grant finished 21st out of 39 in his 1843 graduating class. This rank has contributed to the characterization that he was an intellectual light weight. In his Personal Memoirs Grant apologized: "I spent most of my time reading novels." He tells us what novels he read. So, I spent considerable time reading what Grant read. Novels in Grant's day were often quite didactic: "Young reader, you should..." I came to believe that the authors of these novels became tutors for the shy boy from Ohio who was not much interested in some of the traditional science and engineering classes at West Point.

SG: How would you describe, for better or for worse, the time he spent in California?

RW: Posted to Oregon, and then California, forced to leave Julia behind, he fell into loneliness and depression and drinking. On the day he was raised to the rank of Captain, the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, received Grant's letter of resignation. He wanted to return to Julia and to his two sons, one of whom he had never seen.

SG: Please give a description and provenance for the Grant Collection at Mississippi State.

RW: I had the benefit of using the complete Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, only completed in 2017. But these 32 volumes comprise only 20% of what is at the Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library. I made five trips to the library and benefitted from the counsel and guidance of Executive Director John Marszalek and his marvelous staff.

SG: You and I once shared a mutual sadness that the option of using only electronic resources for historical research is not the same as actually "holding the papers in one's hand." Please speak to this issue.

RW: I do worry about the new reality of historians working mainly online from their offices at a university instead of traveling to archives and to where their subjects lived, worked, and fought.

SG: I have always been fascinated by the eventual friendship between Grant and Mark Twain. Please comment.

RW: Twain called himself "Grant intoxicated." Grant did not intend to write his memoirs. He believed memoirs—including William Tecumseh Sherman's Memoirs—were self-serving and used to settle scores. Only when he was diagnosed with cancer, and wished to provide for Julia after his death, did he agree to do so. He almost signed a contract with the Century Magazine when Twain called on Grant and persuaded him to let Twain's new company publish them. Twain saw Grant's promise as a writer when others did not. Twain did not write Grant's memoirs as some have charged. Twain published the memoirs after Grant's death and they earned $450,000 for Julia.

Grant in 1882, OC-1410

SG: Please describe Grant's post-presidential-financial-woes.

RW: There were no presidential pensions in Grant's day. Grant's second son, Buck, became a partner with Ferdinand War, a young Wall Street whiz. The new firm appeared to be doing well and Grant put all his money with Grant and Ward. Ward turned out to be a crook involved in a Ponzi scheme. Grant lost all his money on one terrible day in 1884. Ward went to jail.

Grant at Cold Harbor, LN-0658

SG: What was Grant's attitude about the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments?

RW: Although Grant's father, Jesse, was strongly anti-slavery, Ulysses did not involve himself in this issue until his empathy was aroused by African-Americans coming into Union lines when Grant campaigned in the deep South. As a Civil War general Grant was deferential to civilian authority and non-political. His political education began after the end of the war when he lived in Washington and served both as General of the Army, and briefly as Secretary of War. He strongly supported these three Reconstruction amendments.

SG: In your research for this book, what new material most surprised you?

RW: I came to believe that Grant was an introvert—a term not in use in his day—who usually did not reveal his feelings in letters or speeches. Except to Julia. She kept all his letters. These letters became a goldmine in my attempt to understand the inner character of the man.

SG: As a military man, what were Grant's greatest strengths?

RW: Before the Civil War, the largest American army, just 14,000 men, had been commanded by Winfield Scott in the Mexican-American War. Grant had a least two great strengths. First, he had the ability to command large armies. After Lincoln gave Grant command of all the Union armies in 1864, Ulysses coordinated five armies. Second, Grant's determination, what Lincoln called Grant's "pertinacity." Usually Civil War armies would fight for several days and then pause to refit. Grant, with a larger army, determined to keep up his unrelenting attack on Robert E. Lee. Because of this book I have entered a friendship with General David Petraeus. We have done three events together. General Petraeus tells audiences that Grant is America's greatest general. He read Grant in preparing to lead the "Surge" in Iraq. He commends Grant's determination.

SG: What kind of reputation did he have with his troops? With his officers?

RW: Grant was a soldier's general. He generally wore a private's uniform. In the Mexican-American War he watched closely the two leading American generals: Winfield Scott, old "fuss and feathers," and Zachary Taylor. He much preferred Taylor for his approachability to the common soldier. Taylor became his model. He worked well with officers because he listened and never micro-managed. In the battle for Chattanooga Grant had responsibility for the whole of East Tennessee. Ambrose Burnside, who had suffered a humiliating defeat at Fredericksburg, and was now mocked by newspapers as "Burnside the Incapable," was tasked with defending Knoxville. I was impressed with how Grant approached Burnside without prejudgment which heartened both Burnside and his staff.

SG: What were his comments about Robert E. Lee? About the Treaty of Appomattox?

RW: Grant is respectful towards Lee,

but his Memoirs offers greater praise for Confederate General "Old Joe" Johnston. The character of Grant is revealed at Appomattox. First, he forbade his soldiers from doing anything to demean the defeated Confederate

President Grant, LN-0613

soldiers. "The war is over: the rebels are our countrymen again." Second, he offered a magnanimous peace treaty which allowed the defeated soldiers to keep their horses that they might take them to their homes for spring planting.

SG: Probably not a fair question, but please give a brief description of Grant's presidency.

RW: I approached Grant's presidency with no prejudgments, but aware of the popular characterization: Grant was a great general and a poor president. I came to believe the scandals in Grant's second term had obscured all that Grant accomplished in both terms. Here let me suggest just three of his accomplishments. He was first American president to attempt to deal with the immorality of our policies toward the American Indian. Second, with a high volume of anti-British feeling in the air, he put in place a treaty with Great Britain negotiated through international arbitration that became the foundation of our relationship with our closest international partner. Third, and most importantly, just as his Republican party stepped back,

Julia Dent Grant, OC-0612

he stepped forward to use the power of the federal government to protect the rights of African-Americans, especially the right to vote, against the terrorist attacks of the Ku Klux Klan and the other white leagues.

SG: From what I have read, it appears that Julia Grant was an exceptional woman. Please comment.

RW: I quickly came to believe that Julia had been minimalized and marginalized in the Grant story. With more education than was typically offered to girls in her time, she entered into a remarkable marriage and partnership. If Grant was an introvert, she was an extrovert who, after the scars left by Mary Lincoln's enemies list, welcomed people to a hospitable White House.

SG: Please describe your position at the Huntington Library. What is your next scholarly project?

RW: I am a Fellow at the Huntington Library. I am privileged to work in this remarkable library with its huge Civil War collection. My next project is a biography of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. Rediscovered through the novel Killer Angels, the Ken Burns Civil War Documentary, and the movie Gettysburg, Chamberlain is well known to Civil War buffs and unknown in the public. If he has been returned to heroic stature, Little Round Top now being the most visited place at Gettysburg, the temptation has been to miss the ambiguities and contradictions in his remarkable life.

Ronald C. White is a Fellow at the Huntington Library and a Senior Fellow of the Trinity Forum in Washington, D.C.

Grant Family, LN-0605

President Lincoln's Assassination

Documenting the Events

The shock of Abraham Lincoln's assassination is hard to feel from this remove. Coming just a few days after the fall of Richmond and Lee's surrender at Appomattox, the unprecedented murder of the President created waves of grief and uncertainty. As people absorbed the information, speculating on what it might mean for the future, they acutely felt their part in history.

The Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection is a rich resource for exploring Lincoln's death and the nation's collective mourning. Prints, photographs and the illustrated weeklies that started shortly before the Civil War accustomed the public to seeing major events depicted even as the telegraph shortened time and distance. Ribbons, medallions, postcards, *cartes-de-visite*, sheet music and a multitude of other materials were produced and preserved in remarkable numbers. Many showed Lincoln as a martyr, having given his life to save the nation. Others made reference to his farewell address at Springfield, the Emancipation Proclamation, or the Second Inaugural delivered just weeks earlier, especially the words "with malice toward none, with charity for all". Items with a direct association to the President's death or the individual's participation in its commemoration were treasured, such as the banner from Ford's Theatre handed down from the family of Lincoln's secretary, John Nicolay.

Even as the President's funeral train headed west toward home, the Civil War's final battles and negotiations continued. His assassin was pursued and killed, preparations for the conspirators' trials began. Few items connect events as elegantly as the hand-painted memorial fan, with its account of the assassination on one side and Lincoln's apotheosis on the other, with military portraits arranged below. One of the rarest items is a drawing by artist and businessman Pierre Morand, who had sketched the Lincolns around Washington. Despite Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's prohibition against images of the President's body, in New York a photographer was allowed access, as was Morand (under what circumstances is not clear.) Stanton had the photographs confiscated but Morand's drawings were unknown until they were found, posthumously, among his papers.

E.B. and E.C. Kellogg, F.P. Whiting, Death of Abraham Lincoln, 1865, lithograph

Currier and Ives, The Body of the Martyr President, Abraham Lincoln, Lying in State at City Hall, New York, April 24th and 25th, 1865, lithograph

Abraham Lincoln memorial fan, probably made in Cuba, 1865

War Department Washing[illegible] [illegible]il 20, 1865.

$100,000 REWAR[illegible]

THE MURDERE[illegible]

Of our late beloved President, Abraha[illegible] Linc[illegible]

IS STILL AT LARGE.

$50,000 REWARD

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Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURRATT, one of Booth's Accomplices

$25,000 REWARD

LIBERAL REWARDS will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above-named criminals, or their accomplices.

All persons harboring or secreting the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murd[illegible] of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a Military Commission and the punishment of DEATH.

Let the stain of innocent blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers.

All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience charged with this solemn duty, and rest neither night nor day until it be accomplished.

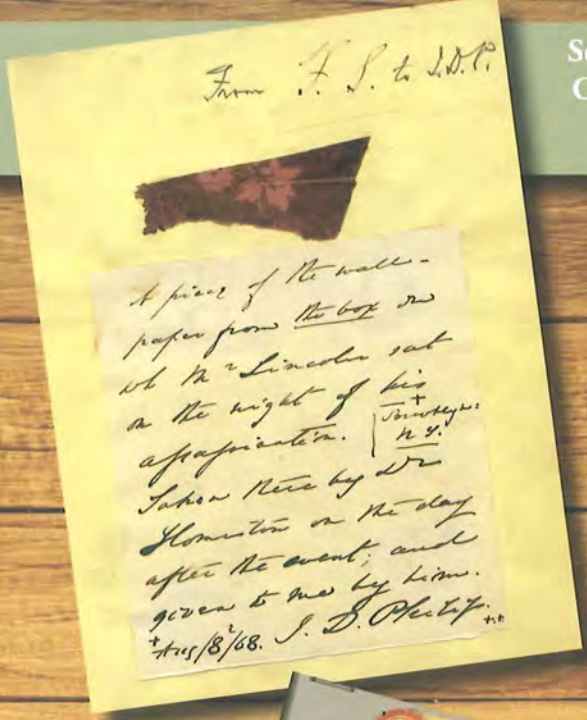
EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

$100,000 Reward: The Murderer . . . is Still at Large, broadside issued by the War Department, April 20, 1865

Pierre Morand, Illegal Last Portrait of Abraham Lincoln from the Flesh, City Hall, New York, April 25, 1865, pencil sketch

Ford's Theatre banner, hanging at the time of

Selected by: Susannah Koerber, Chief Curator and Research Officer at The Indiana State Museum

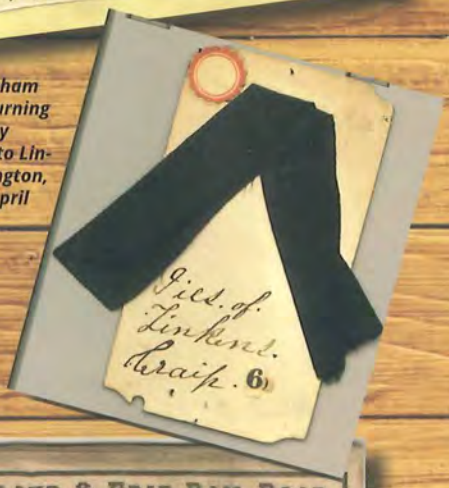


White rosebud from Abraham Lincoln's casket, given to Mrs. Harriet Beeler Hall, Indianapolis, April 30, 1865

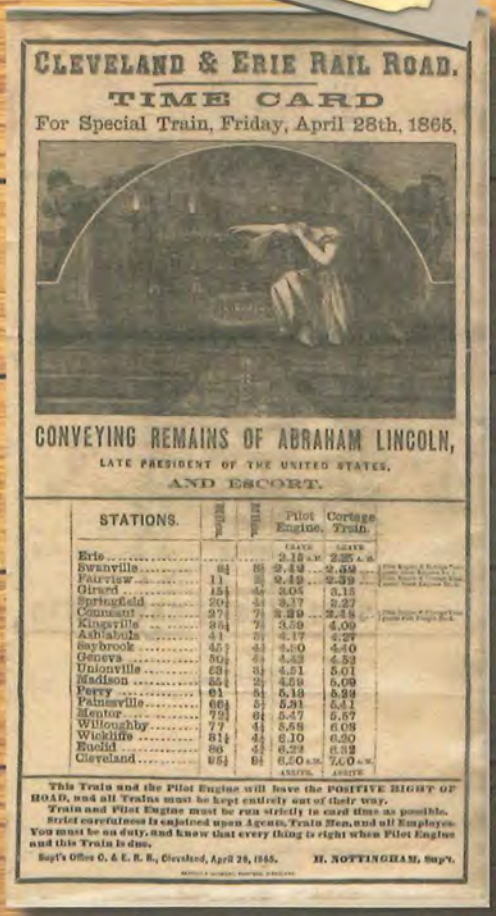
Governor Oliver P. Morton's bow tie, worn to Abraham Lincoln's funeral

Wallpaper fragments from Lincoln's box at Ford's Theatre

Piece of Abraham Lincoln's mourning crape worn by Elijah Bangs to Lincoln's Washington, DC funeral, April 19, 1865



Memorial flags, Albany Female Academy, Albany New York, 1861 and 1865


CLEVELAND & ERIE RAIL ROAD.

TIME CARD

For Special Train, Friday, April 28th, 1865.

CONVEYING REMAINS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

AND ESCORT.

STATIONS.	Miles.	Miles.	Pilot Engine.	Cortege Train.
			LEAVE	LEAVE
Erie			2.15 A.M.	2.25 A.M.
Swanville	8½	8½	2.42	2.52
Fairview	11	2½	2.49	2.59
Girard	15½	4½	3.05	3.15
Springfield	20½	5	3.17	3.27
Conneaut	27½	7½	3.29	3.39
Kingsville	36½	9	3.59	4.09
Ashtabula	41	4½	4.17	4.27
Saybrook	45½	4½	4.30	4.40
Geneva	50½	5	4.42	4.52
Unionville	53½	3	4.51	5.01
Madison	55½	2½	4.59	5.09
Perry	61	5½	5.19	5.29
Painesville	66½	5½	5.31	5.41
Mentor	72½	6	5.47	5.57
Willoughby	77	4½	5.58	6.08
Wickliffe	81½	4½	6.10	6.20
Euclid	86	4½	6.22	6.32
Cleveland	95½	9½	6.50 A.M. ARRIVE.	7.00 A.M. ARRIVE

This Train and the Pilot Engine will have the POSITIVE RIGHT OF ROAD, and all Trains must be kept entirely out of their way.

Train and Pilot Engine must be run strictly to card time as possible.

Strict carefulness is enjoined upon Agents, Train Men, and all Employes. You must be on duty, and know that every thing is right when Pilot Engine and this Train is due.

Supt's Office C. & E. R. R., Cleveland, April 26, 1865. H. NOTTINGHAM, Sup't.

Lincoln mourning ribbon, showing timetable for the funeral train on the Cleveland & Erie Rail Road, April 28, 1865

Participating in History

"The house in which President Lincoln breathed his last has been visited by thousands this morning [April 16], and if they do not tear down the house by inches I shall be very much surprised."

Albert Daggett, a young clerk in the Department of State, wrote his mother a pained, detailed letter immediately after the assassination. He was in Ford's Theatre that night and helped carry Lincoln to the Petersen House. After attesting to the hunger for any object connected to the President's death, he lists the ones he secured.

Daggett's letters are at the Allen County Public Library and pillowcase and towel fragments that he and his descendants saved are now at the Indiana State Museum, part of the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection's large number of relics—mourning crape, tassels and braid from the bier and funeral train, wallpaper, slivers of wood, strands of rope used to hang a conspirator, dried flowers, emblems worn to the funeral observances, passes and tickets—the fragile evidence of shared participation in tragedy and the making of history. That so many families cherished relics of their own lost loved ones added to the sorrow.

People saved mass-produced items and those that they carefully made themselves. A mourning ribbon in the form of a railroad timetable was simultaneously sentimental and practical. A pair of silk flags was annotated in an unknown hand from the Albany Female Academy in New York, one worn to greet Lincoln's train on the way to inauguration and the other to mourn as the funeral train returned him to Springfield.

This impulse to mark events—to show they were there—affected the powerful as well. Governor Oliver P. Morton's bowtie, worn to the funeral, is in the collection as are a variety of prints showing notables assembled around Lincoln's death bed. The people crammed into the tiny room swell to amazing numbers, depending on the print, sometimes helpfully annotated for the viewer.

What could be considered the very first object in the collection is a relic. The mother of Arthur Hall, a founder of Lincoln National Life Insurance, treasured the white rosebud she was permitted to take from Lincoln's casket at Indianapolis. This she gave to her son, who had named the company and would, in 1928, establish the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation.

The Long Twisting Road: Abraham Lincoln's Evolving World with the Foreign Born

Abraham Lincoln, 1864, LN-0235

Jason H. Silverman

Immigration? Abraham Lincoln? Absolutely. Lincoln lived in an era when immigration was as much a controversial matter as it is today. Between 1840 and 1860 four and a half million newcomers arrived, most of them from Ireland, the German states, and Scandinavian countries. Many more crossed back and forth across the border with Mexico, newly drawn in 1848. From an early age, Lincoln developed awareness and a tolerance for different peoples and their cultures. While no doubt a product of his time, Lincoln nevertheless refused to let his environment blind him to the strengths of diversity, and throughout his legal and political career he retained an affinity for immigrants, especially the Germans, Irish, Jews, and Scandinavians. Indeed, immigrants and their plight were never far from his thoughts or plans. His travels at a young age down the Mississippi River to the port of New Orleans exposed Lincoln to the sights, sounds, and tastes of a world hitherto he could only have dreamed about. More importantly, however, it established a foundation and sympathy for the rest of his life when it came to the foreign-born, as well as to the enslaved.

Lincoln's two flatboat voyages to New Orleans were exceptionally important in his development. They formed the longest journeys of his life; his first experiences in a major city; his only visits to the Deep South; his sole exposure to the region's brand of slavery and slave trading; his only time in the subtropics; and the closest he ever came to immersing himself in a foreign culture.

Lincoln's flatboat journeys exposed him, for weeks on end, to the vastness of the American landscape. No subsequent travels would ever match the length of those journeys. They immersed him in the relationship between transportation and economic development in the West. He understood and preached that a better transportation system would improve the economic life of Illinois, raise living standards for all and enhance property values. Lincoln's river journeys also illustrated to him that by controlling the unsettled domains in Illinois, the state could accelerate immigration. Residing in a sparsely populated region, it is understandable that wealth and population were practically synonymous for him. Immigrants would bring economic growth and all that it implied. Indeed, seeing America firsthand from a flatboat at a young age transfixed on Lincoln the core Whig social and economic philosophies such as free labor, transportation modernization, internal improvements, and most assuredly, the need to attract immigration. Like so many in the mid-nineteenth century, Lincoln's philosophy about immigrants was far more complicated than merely that which pertained to the free labor economy. Abraham Lincoln was a product of his times and his environment. And despite whatever economic advantages an immigrant might represent, many men of his era saw every ethnic group, every immigrant, whether Irish, Jewish, German, or Swedish, as monolithic. Yet Lincoln tended to perceive each individual and each group as distinctive in its own right. Whether it was the Germans or Jews who politically supported him, or the Irish who did not, his relationship with individuals of different ethnicities, as well as their groups, was as inconsistent as the man himself.

In 1858, in Bloomington, Illinois, Lincoln made one of his few remarks about the peoples of Asia, the nonwhite group with whom he had the least acquaintance and the least opportunity to think about. For one who had never been to Asia, or arguably for that matter, barely out of the United States, Lincoln prejudicially claimed that intellectual curiosity and scientific progress was the exclusive domain of the Western world. He recognized Asia as the birthplace of "the human family," and concluded that Asians and Latin Americans, like African Americans, were indeed human beings, but he

believed that Asia was an ancient, crumbling civilization whose time had long since passed and Latin America was an inferior land whose time had never come.

While neither respecting nor appreciating the cultures of Asia or of Latin America, Lincoln, like many nineteenth century nationalists, pandered to his audiences by emphasizing the attributes and virtues of the United States. At the expense of degrading other peoples, it was his intention to convince his fellow countrymen that their nation would be next on "the great stage of history," a most successful strategy to flatter voters during his ascent into national prominence.

When the Republican Party was formed in 1854, the newly created anti-immigrant Know Nothings drifted into the new party and wanted Republicans to adopt an anti-immigrant stand. Lincoln refused. When he ran for president, he opposed any change in the naturalization laws or any state legislation by which the rights of citizenship that had previously been accorded to immigrants from foreign lands would be abridged or impaired. He advocated that a full and efficient protection of the rights of all classes of citizens, whether native or naturalized, both at home and abroad, be guaranteed.

Lincoln possessed sympathy for "the many poor" as he called them since he, himself, had long been one. One such manifestation of his broad view of how best to serve the interests of "the many poor" was his attitude toward immigrants. He never shared the nativist leanings of the old Whigs. Certainly his attitude had a political ingredient to it, but it was also made up much more of future hopes than contemporary realities. Much more crucial were his central economic beliefs. On the one hand he bade "God speed" to the immigrants if they could improve their lot by leaving their homes and coming to America; on the other hand he identified, correctly for his time and place, the growth of population, native and foreign-born, with economic development. Lincoln saw immigrants as important, the most important, of any country's "natural resources."

The Civil War not only diverted thousands of Americans from civilian to military pursuits, it also drastically reduced immigration. At first the Lincoln administration tried to meet the difficulty through unofficial State Department efforts, and by aiding the work of state agents, with the president taking an active interest in the matter. But, by the end of 1863, Lincoln decided to do more and directly asked Congress for assistance. His Annual Message to Congress that year requested that they devise a system for encouraging immigration. It spoke of the flow of immigrants from the Old World as a "source of national wealth," and it pointed to the labor shortage in both agriculture and industry and to the "tens of thousands of persons, destitute of remunerative occupation" who desired to come to America but needed assistance to do so. The conclusion showed that in spite of slavery and the war, Lincoln could still be a perceptive observer of the American need for immigrant labor. Congress responded favorably to the presidential request by passing the first, last, and only law in American history to encourage immigration, appropriately dated July 4, 1864.

With the exception of a brief trip to Niagara Falls, Abraham Lincoln never left the United States. And yet no one would deny that today he is a global figure, arguably larger than life both within and without the United States, especially including the many countries of Latin America. During his lifetime, however, he met very few Mexicans, a nonwhite group with whom he had little acquaintance but about whom he had many opportunities to think. His relationship with Mexicans began quite inauspiciously, if not downright unpleasantly, before he altered his opinions and before his legacy became time honored.

During his one term as a Congressman, Lincoln's public opposition to the United States-Mexican War represented one of the few times he publicly took on the government's policies toward Hispanics and Latin America. As a Whig member of the Illinois delegation to the House of Representatives, he introduced in December 1847 a series of resolutions, known as the "Spot Resolutions," denouncing President James K. Polk's handling of the war. In his resolutions, freshman Congressman Lincoln analyzed Polk's messages seeking war with Mexico that claimed American blood had been shed on American soil. The House of Representatives, Lincoln declared, was "desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all the facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was so shed or was not at that time our own soil." Soon into the new year of 1848, Lincoln delivered a meticulously argued speech in Congress exposing what he saw as the vagueness of jurisdiction along the Texas-Mexico border. Both countries, he felt, had a legitimate claim to ownership, thus rendering Polk's declaration of war unconstitutional and contrary to international law. Lincoln apparently had high hopes for this speech, but was soon disappointed when the Democrats ignored his remarks and his fellow Whigs gave him only weak support. Lincoln's opposition rested upon the contention that Polk's handling of the crisis that precipitated the war represented a usurpation of war-making powers that the Constitution left exclusively to Congress.

Nevertheless, like most westerners, Lincoln had a low opinion of Latin American civilization and his references to Latinos were never flattering. In his debate with Stephen Douglas at Galesburg, Illinois, Lincoln attacked the concept of popular sovereignty—Douglas' notion that the people of a territory should decide the slavery issue for themselves—by asking a hypothetical question as to whether Douglas would apply the doctrine in an acquisition like Mexico where the inhabitants were "nonwhite." "When we shall get Mexico," Lincoln asserted, "I don't know whether the Judge [Douglas] will be in favor of the Mexican people that we get with it settling that question for themselves and all others; because we know the Judge has a great horror for mongrels, and I understand that the people of Mexico are most decidedly a race of mongrels." Lincoln continued by claiming that "I understand that there is not more than one person there out of eight who is pure white, and I suppose from the Judge's previous declaration that when we get Mexico or any considerable portion of it, that he will be in favor of these mongrels settling the question, which would bring him somewhat into collision with his horror of an inferior race."

Even if allowance is made for the fact that these comments by Lincoln occurred in an intense debate where serious race baiting was occurring, he still used derogatory comments about Hispanics in speeches where there was no apparent motive. In describing the Cubans, Lincoln pulled no punches. "Their butchery was, as it seemed to me," Lincoln said in 1852, "most unnecessary and inhuman. They were fighting against one of the worst governments in the world [the Spanish]; but their fault was, that the real people of Cuba had not asked for their assistance; were neither desirous of, nor fit for, civil liberty." Later in a patriotic speech extolling the innovation and brilliance of "Young America" with the "Old Fogy" countries, crediting Americans' technological success to their intellectual powers of observation and

experiment, Lincoln chided, "But for the difference in habit of observation, why did Yankees, almost instantly, discover gold in California, which had been trodden upon, and over-looked by Indians and Mexican greasers, for centuries?" Lincoln, generally speaking, was pessimistic about the possibility of white people accepting nonwhites as equals. Often he spoke in flattering praise of white Americans' technological and moral superiority while denigrating peoples of color, peoples with whom he had little actual contact. But Lincoln was a private person by nature and a political person by appearance. Thus, how much of this represents the inner heart and mind of Lincoln may be a different matter.

Assuming, however, that his public record reflects his private sentiments, Lincoln believed the nations of Latin America to be backward. Perhaps his residence played a part in his closed-mindedness toward Hispanics. His Springfield neighborhood, while diverse with many German, Irish, Portuguese, Scottish, and French immigrants, included virtually no Mexicans. Indeed, his lack of first-hand knowledge of Mexicans would remain that way until a fateful day in January 1861 as President-elect Lincoln prepared to embark on his journey to become the nation's sixteenth president.

"It is the wish of the President that you proceed to the place of residence of President-elect Lincoln and in the name of this government, make clear to him in an open manner, if the opportunity offers, the desire which animates President Juarez, of entering in to the most cordial relations with that government." With those words, twenty-four year old Matias Romero, in charge of the Mexican Legation in Washington, set out for Springfield, Illinois, on January 7, 1861, to meet, congratulate, and cajole the newly elected Abraham Lincoln. Romero's visit would begin an unlikely friendship with Lincoln that would enhance both their lives.

Matias Romero, Public Domain

Romero began his visit by providing Lincoln with a thorough briefing on the situation that existed in Mexico. The new Mexican president, Benito Juarez, had assumed leadership of a country that was not only devastated by civil strife, but one whose treasury was seriously depleted by the depredations of Santa Anna and the Reform War. It was believed by both Romero and Mexican leaders that Lincoln was predisposed toward friendship, as his Congressional record was well known and his political embarrassment caused by opposing the Polk administration's desire for war with Mexico was well documented.

Romero's visit to Lincoln was an especially significant and unique visit. By many accounts, this was the first time Lincoln conversed directly with a person of Mexican descent. Furthermore, though he was about to assume responsibility for American foreign policy, Lincoln had received not a single caller from the capitals of Europe between his election and inauguration. Lincoln's personal secretary, John Hay, was understandably gratified to observe Romero's display of "deep respect and consideration" for the president-elect. Indeed, Lincoln was taken with the young diplomat from the outset.

In contrast to the turbulent relationship between the United States and Mexico in the first half of the nineteenth century, Mexico genuinely looked forward to a Lincoln presidency. In fact, Romero, in his voluminous notes, diary, and correspondence was the first to note the similarities in personality, demeanor, intelligence and background between Lincoln and Mexican leader Benito Juarez. Indeed, shortly after Lincoln's election, Mexico had emerged from its own civil war. Mexico's new leadership wanted nothing more than economic cooperation with the United States and to be treated as a respected southern neighbor; something that would not have even been considered with Lincoln's pro-southern Democratic predecessors who were bent on the annexation of significant portions of the Mexican nation. Now, with the election of Lincoln's Republicans on a platform of free-soil and free-labor, Mexico's new leadership counted on the Lincoln administration to respect Mexican territorial borders.

Sensing Lincoln was not well-informed about the situation in Mexico, Romero explained fully the objects of the party of reform. "I told President Lincoln," Romero wrote in his report to the Minister of the Exterior, "that the constitutional government desires to maintain the most intimate and friendly relations with the United States, to whose citizens it proposes to dispense complete protection and to concede every form of facilities toward developing commercial and other interests of both republics. Mexico wants to adopt the same principles of liberty and progress followed here," Romero continued, "[and Lincoln's] administration with regard to Mexico is expected to be truly fraternal and not guided by the egotistic and anti-humanitarian principles which the Democratic administrations had pursued in respect to Mexico, principles that resulted in pillaging the Mexican Republic of its territory in order to extend slavery."

Benito Juarez, LC-USZ62-7875

Ever the lawyer, Lincoln questioned his visitor very closely on the conditions in his country and was especially interested in the status of the peons, a group which Lincoln feared, lived in a state worse than that of the slaves on southern plantations. He pressed Romero on whether the abuses of the Indians working in the hacienda systems were "general and widespread in the Republic and [were] authorized by law." Lincoln was also concerned whether the conditions of the hacienda system were exaggerated by the press in the United States as he had read some very troubling descriptions of mistreatment there. "I explained in detail how such abuses were committed," Romero wrote, "[and] he expressed great satisfaction in learning that such practices were contrary to the laws of the Republic and that, when Mexico has a solidly established government, it will attempt to correct these abuses."

As he had done with his two young secretaries, John Hay and John G. Nicolay, Lincoln took almost a fatherly posture with Romero. Lincoln found Romero to be intense, yet quite polished in manners and charming in demeanor. While it is likely that Romero did not

understand all of Lincoln's downhome stories and yarns, the young diplomat was apparently amused by Lincoln's frequent laughing at his own stories. When their initial visit ended, with old-worldly courtesy, Romero vowed "to return to see Lincoln again to take leave of him".

Romero was true to his word. Two days later he returned to Lincoln's home to bid him farewell. This time it was a less intimate setting because there were a number of other visitors there and Lincoln was very preoccupied. Nevertheless, Lincoln made it a point when he was able to introduce Romero to the others there as his new friend from Mexico, a gesture most appreciated by Romero. In Romero's opinion, the two visits with Lincoln had been rewarding and would prove crucial in advancing the interests of Mexico. Even though Romero had concluded that Lincoln was not particularly well informed about the situation in Mexico, he was impressed that the president-elect was a receptive listener who asked probing and significant questions. Romero was confident that Lincoln's administration would be friendly, as the sentiments which Lincoln had expressed came from a man whom he judged to be a "sensible, honorable man, and his words carried the stamp of sincerity and not of pompous phrases, empty of meaning, which, when used by the people educated in the school of false politics, have the habit of offering much and giving little."

Soon both Lincoln and Romero were in the nation's capital and their friendship was renewed among the darkening clouds of war in the United States. Lincoln once again found Romero to be particularly gracious and personable. As he had quickly done in Springfield, Lincoln treated Romero as "one of his boys," a truly remarkable development given that Lincoln, as a westerner, had once spoken so disparagingly about the Mexican people. Perhaps even more significant, however, the Lincoln family befriended Romero. Mary Todd Lincoln, the difficult and mercurial soon-to-be First Lady felt the same way about Romero as her husband. What particularly endeared Romero to the President was gratitude; Romero, with good-natured grace, frequently escorted Mrs. Lincoln on her many shopping trips to the Washington fashion stores. Doubtless it was a duty which Lincoln was extremely happy to relinquish. But Mrs. Lincoln also had many conversations with Romero during which she shared his anxiety over France having an army in Mexico and the danger of it allying with the Confederacy. Based on their mutual concerns, she frequently urged President Lincoln to support Mexico. Then, too, when Romero had the funds he hosted dinner parties and other social events at the Mexican embassy and frequently invited the Lincoln's oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln. After accepting one such invitation Robert jokingly wrote to Romero, "I hope I may be able to come off unscathed by your double attractions—ladies and the table." Romero had indeed become almost a part of the extended Lincoln family.

Mary Todd Lincoln, LFA-0078

Robert Lincoln, LFA-0093

By early February, the president-elect informed Romero that he was deeply troubled about reports of a French-led operation in Mexico. Lincoln told Romero that he would treat Mexico "with sentiments of the highest consideration and of true sympathy," and he kept his word. As President, Lincoln made the immediate appointment of former United States Senator Thomas Corwin, the renowned orator and vocal opponent of the Mexican-American War, as ambassador to Mexico. Lincoln also approved the terms of a loan to Mexico that Corwin recommended, the first ever proposed to a foreign nation, but one that Congress eventually rejected.

Union loyalists feared that the French operation might be a prelude to full-scale intervention in the Civil War. The Lincoln administration indirectly invoked the Monroe Doctrine whenever they could to prevent French maneuvering in Mexico from becoming "a pretext for getting into the American waters a large force, ready to act in liberating cotton when the time comes."

Romero reinforced Lincoln's views on hemispheric independence. Visiting Lincoln in the White House, Romero declared that the principles of the Monroe Doctrine "seem to be written for the present occasion." As consumed as Lincoln was with the Civil War, because of his affection for Romero, and much to the chagrin of the long line waiting to see him, he took the time to sit down and listen to the young man. Lincoln listened "with marked attention and without interrupting" Romero. When he did speak Lincoln told his friend that he and his Cabinet were "deeply aware of the importance and significance of the matter. . . .They had dedicated their fullest attention to this . . . occupying themselves with it in preference to all other important problems." Lincoln made clear that his purpose "was to try to prevent the armed intervention of France and England in Mexico, or failing in that, to defer it as long as possible." But with the war going poorly for the North, Lincoln was able to offer no practical proposal for accomplishing that. An American invasion of Mexico was out of the question.

In the coming months Romero visited Lincoln more often, both personally and in his position as Mexican Charge d'Affaires. No visit was more poignant than after Lincoln lost his eleven year old son Willie to typhoid fever in February 1862. Both parents were devastated. When the president resumed his regular schedule, he again met with Romero, but had little good news to share with him. The war remained perilous for the North and each defeat made Lincoln, who was already emotionally weakened from mourning his son, more disconsolate.

In Mexico, meanwhile, Napoleon's forces were finally making their own progress. In June 1863, French troops broke through the remaining Mexican defenses and poured into Mexico City. For Lincoln, the French occupation of Mexico City could not have come at a worse

Thomas Corwin, OC-0508

time. Lee's Confederate forces were inching closer to the Federal capital and Lincoln was growing more despondent daily according to most around him, looking "exhausted, care-worn, spiritless, and extinct." Romero visited the White House during this time and agreed with that description. Lincoln had "drooping eyelids, looking almost swollen; dark bags beneath his eyes; deep marks about the large and expressive mouth; and flaccid muscles of his jaws." Indeed, even with his own homeland in civil turmoil, Romero feared for Lincoln's health and well-being.

Nevertheless, Lincoln's reluctance to intervene in Mexico while he was fighting a Civil War at home began to frustrate Romero, who by 1864 grew increasingly impatient with his friend of four years. The president and his Secretary of State, William Seward, held a firm line against the war hawks in Congress, the State Department, and elsewhere. They were supported by prominent Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner who wrote hawkish California Senator James A. McDougall, "Sir, have we not war enough already on our hands, without needlessly and wantonly provoking another?" Sumner managed to kill McDougall's resolution calling for Napoleon's expulsion from Mexico, "and that failing this, . . . 'it will become the duty of the Congress of the United States of America to declare war against the government of France,'" complaining that there was "madness in the proposition." With it becoming painfully apparent to Romero that Lincoln was not going to take on Napoleon, the Mexican envoy complained to his superiors that "[Lincoln's and Sumner's] fear of France makes [them] as condescending with that nation as Seward."

Romero's friendship with Lincoln would be put to the test during the late summer of 1864. With many observers, including Lincoln himself, believing that he had little chance of reelection, his erstwhile friends and admirers began to turn against him. Romero, out of frustration with Lincoln's inactivity on the Mexican crisis, met with James McDougall who had been aggressively advocating all summer in the Senate for a harder line on Mexico. McDougall told Romero that the president's reelection would be a "calamity" for Mexico and it was "necessary to avoid this very deplorable prospect at any price." Once friends with the president, McDougall now complained to Romero about Lincoln's "very objectionable conduct of United States foreign affairs, most especially in regard to Mexico." Romero, torn between his warm friendship with Lincoln and his determination to rid his homeland of its invaders, found himself now eager for a new American administration that might forcefully challenge Maximilian's regime. In a moment of haste he would regret, Romero agreed to help McDougall compile opposition research in a dossier that would enable McDougall and the Congressional Mexico hawks to "vigorously attack the government on the subject. . . . [and] prevent Lincoln's reelection [by] directing all their effort to this task."

James McDougall, LN-0844

Stories of Lincoln's electoral demise were premature, however, and the president, aided by significant and timely military victories by General William T. Sherman, easily secured a second term. Sadly, Romero did not have the time or opportunity to make amends with his old friend. Within five months of his reelection, and less than a week after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, Lincoln was dead.

Only after Lincoln's death, did Romero see that despite being consumed by Civil War, Lincoln had not completely neglected his friend's requests. Speaking with Ulysses Grant during one of the memorial services, Romero learned from the general that, as one of his last acts, Lincoln signed "an exequatur recognizing Jose A. Gody as Mexican Consul in San Francisco." Indeed, with the war finally winding down the president appeared to be moving in the direction that Romero had desired all along. Grant told him that although he and Lincoln were "tired of war, his major desire is to fight in Mexico against the French, that the Monroe Doctrine has to be defended at any price, and that the French ought to leave Mexico before the United States demands it imperatively." Grant believed that Lincoln was moving toward that opinion and planned on acting in this regard before his life was cut short by an assassin's bullet at Ford's Theatre.

Lincoln's inability to intervene openly in favor of the Juarez government did not prevent him, however, from ignoring the abundance of arms smuggled across the Mexican border. After Lincoln's death, some 3,000 Americans, mostly Union veterans, joined the effort of Mexicans who were trying to overthrow the French-imposed empire. One group of volunteers for Juarez, called the American Legion of Honor, was organized as an elite military company. Its more than 100 officers were commissioned by President Juarez, and legionnaires fought in the final battles leading to the downfall of Maximilian and his empire.

Romero would live forty-three years after his friend's death and would continue to lobby for Mexico with several of Lincoln's successors. However, he would never again form the almost father-son relationship that he had developed with Lincoln. In some letters to superiors in Mexico Romero described Lincoln as "immortal," and, as Romero aged and the world became an even more complicated place, he fondly reminisced about being treated so kindly by Abraham Lincoln, a man as complicated as he was kind.

Jason Silverman is Ellison Capers Palmer, Jr. Professor of History Emeritus at Winthrop University.

Lincoln's Strangest Document:

The "Blind Memorandum" of August 23, 1864

Abraham Lincoln and Cabinet, LN-2651

Allen C. Guelzo

Abraham Lincoln's mature style as a writer and speaker was always terse, with little wastage of words. He loathed blowhards, and remarked to a legal protégé in Illinois that one Chicago merchant who had turned politician "can compress the most words in the fewest ideas of any man I ever knew."[1] Sometimes, however, the terseness could border on the cryptic, and no document of Lincoln's is quite so cryptic, or quite so impenetrable, as the sixty words which comprise what Mark Neely, in his Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia, simply described as the "blind memorandum" of August 23, 1864.[2] It reads:

Executive Mansion
Washington, Aug. 23, 1864.

This morning, as for some days past, it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected. Then it will be my duty to so cooperate with the ~~Government~~ President-elect, as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration; as he will have secured his election on such ground that he can not possibly save it afterwards.

On at least one level, the "blind memorandum" seems to be quite straight-forward:

-First, Lincoln has come to the conclusion that he will not be re-elected to the presidency in the November, 1864, national election

-Second, he will plan to use the three months between the lost election and the inauguration of the new president (on March 4, 1865) to put on as much steam as possible to win the war; and

-Third, this window of opportunity would only exist until March 4, 1865, because the new president – and no one doubted on August 23rd that the soon-to-assemble Democratic national party convention would nominate George B. McClellan as its candidate would have been elected on a peace platform that would, once he actually became president, make it impossible (or at least unlikely) that the war would be continued, much less won.

This was not a terribly optimistic assessment of Lincoln's political fortunes, especially coming from a president who had frequently expressed his determination to carry the war forward to a successful reconstruction of the Union, and without legalized slavery. Leonard Swett, who carried out a number of private missions for Lincoln during the war, remembered that Lincoln *"kept a kind of account book of how things were progressing for three, or four months, and whenever I would get nervous and think things were going wrong, he would get out his estimates and show how everything on the great scale of action the resolutions of Legislatures, the instructions of delegates, and things of that character, was going exactly -- as he expected."* [3]

Only a year before, in a public letter he wrote for a state-wide Republican "mass-meeting" in Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln had seized on the recent twin victories of Gettysburg and Vicksburg as evidence that "the signs look better" and that "peace does not appear so distant as it did."[4] And only days before the August 23rd memorandum, Lincoln had appeared to Wisconsin Governor Alexander Randall and Judge Joseph T. Mills to be "a man of deep convictions & an unutterable yearning for the success of the Union cause," and convinced that he "should be damned in time & in eternity" if he backslid from the emancipation cause.[5] When Ulysses Grant quizzed him in the spring of 1865 whether he had "at any time" doubted "the final success of the cause," Lincoln's "prompt and emphatic" reply was Never for a moment, and he "leaned forward in his camp-chair and enforced his words by a vigorous gesture of his right hand."[6]

But Lincoln always had a realistic respect for contingency. There was, Lincoln told Grant, "a limit to the sinews of war, and a time might be reached when the spirits and resources of the people would become exhausted."[7] And then there was always the nagging metaphysical question of whether the Union cause was also God's cause. Even in 1861, when Orville Hickman Browning (an old Lincoln friend who had been appointed to fill the U.S. Senate seat vacated by the death of Stephen A. Douglas) told Lincoln that "we can't hope for the blessing of God on the efforts of our armies, until we strike a decisive blow at the institution of slavery," Lincoln countered with the possibility of God having a different view of things. "Browning," Lincoln replied, "suppose God is against us in our view on the subject of slavery in this country, and our method of dealing with it?" [8]

In the most immediate political sense, the "blind memorandum" also reflects an element of realism in Lincoln's assessment of what had happened – and not happened –over the spring and summer of 1864, when most of the contingencies looked like they had gone disastrously awry.

-Grant's Overland Campaign, which had jumped-off with high expectations that it would finish the war in 1864, had instead turned into a series of costly head-to-head battles across northern Virginia, ending in nothing more decisive than a siege of the Confederate capital at Richmond.

-The co-ordinated campaigns Grant had entrusted to William T. Sherman (in Georgia), Franz Sigel (in the Shenandoah Valley), Ben Butler (on the James River) and Nathaniel Banks (against Mobile, Alabama) had produced even less: Sherman had tick-tacked across northern Georgia and was now locked in another apparently-pointless siege, of Atlanta; Sigel's campaign in the Shenandoah Valley had been blunted and then reversed as a Confederate raid under Jubal Early stormed down the Valley, crossed into Maryland, and in July even threatened the outskirts of Washington; Ben Butler landed his Army of the James at Bermuda Hundred and proceeded to threaten Richmond, only to be driven back into the Bermuda Hundred peninsula "like a bottle tightly corked;" and Nathaniel Banks took his own counsel and launched a botched operation up Louisiana's Red River from which his command escaped by the skin of its teeth.

Gideon Welles, LN-1745

- The federal conscription law, signed by Lincoln in March 1863, had triggered a wave of urban riots in the North (which frequently turned into racial pogroms), and three new draft calls in February, March and July of 1864 stimulated so much flight to Canada that a Toronto newspaper reported that "our towns and villages, not only on the frontier, but inland, are crowded with motley groups of fugitives from the draft."[9]

-Even within Lincoln's own Republican Party, Radicals who were unhappy with the leniency of the Reconstruction plan he had announced in December were challenging him, first with a rival plan which he pocket-vetoed in July, and then with a 'dump-Lincoln' insurgency which called its own convention in Cleveland and nominated a rival presidential candidate, John Charles Frémont.[10] At the same time, a 'conservative unionist' faction at the other end of the Republican party also considered mounting a challenge to Lincoln, claiming that he had changed "the character of the war from the single object of upholding the Government to that of a direct interference with the domestic institutions of the States."[11]

"We have," wrote Noah Brooks with considerable understatement, "a forbidding picture to contemplate."[12] No wonder, after such a cascade of bad news, that Lincoln irritably informed New York politician Schuyler Hamilton that "You think I don't know I am going to be beaten, but I do, and unless some great change takes place, badly beaten.... The people promised themselves when General Grant started out that he would take Richmond in June. He didn't take it, and they blame me...."[13]

Ultimately, however, the "blind memorandum" also represents a darker aspect of Lincoln's psyche: his weakness for depression, not unmixed with self-pity, and his expectation, under stress, that the likeliest results were usually the worst ones. "I have hours of depression," Lincoln admitted to Iowa congressman Josiah B. Grinnell, "You flaxen men with broad faces are born with cheer and don't know a cloud from a star. I am of another temperament."[14]

These factors seem to suggest that the "blind memorandum" should be read simply as a confession of despair, from a man with plenty of reason to feel despairing. But immediately behind them crowd a series of questions which render the memorandum even more curious. Begin with the audience for which he intended this little piece of political drama: his cabinet, which on August 23rd was composed of William Henry Seward (State), Edwin M. Stanton (War), William Pitt Fessenden (Treasury, having just replaced Salmon Chase the month before), Gideon Welles (Navy), Edward Bates (Attorney-General, although only until the end of the year), Montgomery Blair (Postmaster-General), and John Palmer Usher (Interior).

We know that the "blind memorandum" was intended as an item of cabinet business on August 23rd, although that knowledge comes surprisingly long after the fact. Of the two great diary-keepers in the Cabinet, Edward Bates has no entry at all for August 23rd and the published edition of Gideon Welles' diary for that day has only a lengthy rant about official Washington's lack of recognition for the accomplishments of the Navy and of David Farragut in particular. No mention of the "blind memorandum" appears in the diary or correspondence of Lincoln's secretarial staffers, John Hay and John G. Nicolay, and in fact no first-person description of the "blind memorandum" appeared at all until 1877, when Gideon Welles, in an article written for the *Galaxy*, described how Lincoln, "borne down with the anxiety and labor of recruiting, reinforcing, and supplying the army," met him as he arrived for the regular Tuesday cabinet meeting on August 23rd with "a sealed envelope," and

a request that I would write my name across the back of it. One or two members of the Cabinet had already done so. In handing it to me he remarked that he would not then inform me of the contents of the paper enclosed, had no explanation to make, but that he had a purpose, and at some future day I should be informed of it, and be present when the seal was broken.[15]

Sure enough, the reverse of the "blind memorandum" contains the signatures of all seven cabinet secretaries, Welles fourth in order after Seward, Fessenden and Stanton, and dated in Lincoln's hand again.

Lincoln was as good as his word. On November 11, 1864 – three days after what turned out to be a triumphant re-election – Lincoln again began a cabinet meeting with the "blind memorandum" in hand, and this time with John Hay's diary as a witness:

At the meeting of the Cabinet today, the President took out a paper from his desk and said, "Gentlemen do you remember last summer I asked you all to sign your names on the back of a paper of which I did not show you the inside? This is it. Now, Mr Hay, see if you can get this open without tearing it!": He had pasted it up in so singular [a] style that it required some cutting to get it open. He then read as follows...[16]

From that moment, the "blind memorandum" suddenly became a novelty, and as Hay recounted to Nicolay in a letter in 1878 (after the publication of Gideon Welles' article in the *Galaxy*), members of the Cabinet began camoring for copies, starting with Edward Bates, followed by Welles, "then everybody." Hay told Nicolay that he "cussed silently" at these requests, but in fact Hay made a copy for himself and even had the Cabinet secretaries endorse it as they had the original.[17]

But far from answering any questions about the meaning of the "blind memorandum," the peculiar mode of its two-stage presentation to the cabinet only deepens the mystery. Why, in the first place, did Lincoln think in August that a memorandum about his prospective defeat in the upcoming election should be presented to the cabinet, and why, when he presented it, did he then refuse to let them see the contents (hence, the "blind" part of the memorandum)? It has been suggested that Lincoln feared the document might be leaked; but in that case, why should he have written it at all? Nor does any of this explain why (in the second place) he wanted the cabinet to endorse it, as though they were witnessing his last will and testament. If witnesses were all he wanted, Nicolay and Hay would surely have done as well as anyone.

The waters grow considerably muddier when we turn to asking what the "blind memorandum" actually proposed as Lincoln's course of action in the event of his defeat. The memorandum states simply that he would "so co-operate with the President-elect, as to save the Union between the election and the inauguration." Yet, the explanation Lincoln offered

to his cabinet on November 11th makes it clear that this is exactly what he did *not* expect would happen. "I resolved," he explained (according to Hay's diary),

In the case of the election of General McClellan, being certain that he would be the Candidate, that I would see him and talk matters over with him. I would say, "General, the election has demonstrated that you are stronger, have more influence with the American people than I. Now let us together, you with your influence and I with all the executive power of the Government, try to save the country. You raise as many troops as you possibly can for this final trial, and I will devote all my energies to assisting and finishing the war."

Given the rocky road that Lincoln and McClellan had traveled in 1862, the idea of co-operation between them seems almost risible. But McClellan remained enormously popular with the Army of the Potomac (less than a year before, Secretary of War Stanton had had to squelch a movement among the Army of the Potomac's senior officers to create a "memorial" to McClellan), and the likelihood of his nomination to oppose Lincoln had been a virtual given since the fall of 1863, when McClellan had publicly endorsed George Woodward, the Democratic candidate in the crucial governor's election in Pennsylvania.

In the spring of 1864, Lincoln had suggested out-flanking McClellan's political ambitions by re-calling him to a major command – "a military place in which he could be most useful," as Montgomery Blair described it – and Lincoln used Francis Preston Blair as an emissary to McClellan in New York. What exactly was offered is unknown: perhaps appointment as a glorified chief-of-staff under Grant as general-in-chief, perhaps even displacing George Meade at the head of the Army of the Potomac.[18] And in a secret high-level meeting at Fortress Monroe, the subject of McClellan again came up between Lincoln and Grant yet again in July.[19]

Lincoln-Johnson card by Prang, LN-2701

McClellan, however, ignored these suggestions: he understood all too well that this ploy was intended to prevent "my name to be used as a candidate for the Presidency." And, in fact, Lincoln expected to be ignored again, because on November 11th, Secretary of State Seward interrupted Lincoln to protest that even if Lincoln humbled himself sufficiently to invite McClellan to co-manage what would have been left of Lincoln's term in office, McClellan would find some way to dither out of Lincoln's grasp: "The General would answer you, '*Yes, Yes*'; and the next day when you saw him again & pressed these views upon him he would say 'Yes—yes' & so on forever and would have done nothing at all." Lincoln's response was short and dismissive. "At least," he replied, "I should have done my duty and have stood clear before my own conscience."[20]

But this only begs the question of why Lincoln's conscience should have needed McClellan, of all people, as its salve. Why should Lincoln not simply have said that (as president of the United States) he remained president until March 4, 1865, and would prosecute the war with renewed zeal, entirely on his own, without involving McClellan (from whom he expected no co-operation anyway)? For that matter, why did he even need to say *that* much, since no one would have been in the least surprised if Lincoln had kept the machinery of war in full force until his last hour in the White House? And why should he need the witness of seven cabinet members to show that he had thought that way in August?

The fundamental clue to unraveling Lincoln's skein of thinking occurs in the last sentence of the "blind memorandum": *You raise as many troops as you possibly can for this final trial, and I will devote all my energies to assisting and finishing the war*. McClellan, in other words, was needed as a magnet for recruitment and, especially in the summer of 1864, re-enlistment of the three-year Volunteers whose terms of service were ending; and indeed, if Lincoln had gone down to defeat at the polls on November 8th, the task of both recruitment and conscription would probably have been rendered difficult, if not impossible, and with it any hope of a successful conclusion to the war. An announcement of McClellan's willingness to co-operate in some interim co-presidency would sustain enlistment, keep up conscription, and most important, ensure that the veterans of the Army would renew their terms of service when asked to by Little Mac.[21]


Clement Vallandigham, LN-1997

But wooing McClellan into some form of temporary interregnum between November and March might succeed in achieving a second goal, as well, and that would be splitting McClellan from the larger web of his Democratic Party backers. After all, Lincoln's Republicans had renamed themselves in 1864 as the National Union Party with precisely the aim of wooing War Democrats to their banner, and Lincoln had even accepted as his vice-president exactly such a Democrat in Andrew Johnson. Co-opting McClellan would not depart very far from that strategy. It has been almost routine, reflecting on the conflict between Lincoln and McClellan in 1862, to imagine that these two were forever irreconcilable, and that they represented two polar ends of the political spectrum.

But McClellan, whatever his other faults, was a Unionist – which is to say that he understood "the original object of the war" to be "the preservation of the Union, its Constitution & its laws," and was "convinced that the Union of the States should never be abandoned." Much as he criticized "a course which unnecessarily embitters the inimical feeling between the two sections," he told Francis Preston Blair that he also would "deprecate a policy which far from tending to that end tends in the contrary direction," and still ends up in disunion. McClellan was also, in the end, a War Democrat. He roundly condemned Ohio Democrat George Washington Morgan's call on August 4th for "an armistice," spluttering that "these fools will ruin the country."[22] And when he finally was nominated by the Democratic national convention in Chicago on August 31st, he labored through six drafts of an acceptance letter which eventually declared that he "cannot realize that the existence of more than one Government over the region which once owned our Flag is compatible with the peace, the power & the happiness of the people."[23]

This contrasted, with embarrassing sharpness, with the prevailing temper of McClellan's party. The Chicago convention turned into a bacchanalia of anti-war fervor. The principal voices belonged to the Copperheads – the Peace Democrats, Clement Vallandigham, Alexander Long

and Benjamin Gwinn Harris -- while Samuel S. Cox, the Democratic minority leader in the House, was heckled with shouts of "Get down, you War Democrat!" and "Vallandigham! Vallandigham!" The party platform included a specific repudiation (written by Vallandigham) of the war and a call for an immediate armistice:

after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, during which, under the pretense of a military necessity, or war power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, . . . the public welfare demands that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities with a view to an ultimate convention of the States, or other peaceable means to the end that at the earliest practicable moment peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal union of the States.

The chair of the convention, New York's Horatio Seymour, had come to Chicago precisely to prevent the Peace Democrats from running the show, but in the face of the Peace Democrats' vehemence, Seymour studiously avoided criticizing them. Not even McClellan was exempt from catcalls: Alexander Long attacked McClellan as "this weak tool of Lincoln's," and Benjamin Harris lustily asked, "Will you vote for such a man? I never will!"[24]

George McClellan, OC-0802

Could a president-elect McClellan be peeled away from the loons of his own party, especially when invited by Lincoln to take up a military man's hand and join in saving the Union, and especially over the four months when he would not have Peace Democrats hounding him from cabinet seats or from newly-won seats in Congress? The Peace Democrats were noisy, but not as numerous as their noise suggested. Lincoln, in the same situation in 1860, had been begged by frantic Democrats and Unionist Whigs to issue some statement qualifying the Republican platform in order to head off secession, even to the point of abandoning his opposition to popular sovereignty in the territories.[25] Why not McClellan, too? After March 4th, McClellan's options would shrink, since he would be surrounded by a cabinet which would have to include Peace Democrats, and he would be compelled to conform to the dictates of a party which *will have secured his election on such ground that he can not possibly save it* [the Union] *afterwards.*

Given the stakes, it was certainly worth Lincoln's time to think about a strategy for unmooring McClellan from the Copperheads long enough to finish the war; but it was not worth thinking about it in public where the idea would dishearten his own party faithful. Still, it would demonstrate the sincerity of the offer if it could be shown that Lincoln had been contemplating this offer for a considerable period of time *before* the election, and not merely as a last-second ploy to hamstring McClellan's victory. Hence, the resort to a memorandum, describing the offer; hence also, the desire not to reveal its contents, but to have the cabinet, as the senior officials of the administration and the people who would have to participate in this experiment, endorse the "blind memorandum" as proof of its genuineness.

This would certainly have been something of a constitutional anomaly, or at least a departure from anything that looked like conventional practice in presidential transitions. The Constitution dictated only that "Congress may determine the...Day" on which presidential voting should occur (not until January, 1845, did Congress even stipulate that "the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November" would be the uniform day for presidential elections) and the 12th Amendment laid down March 4th as the conclusion of a presidential term.[26]

Apart from that, nothing was said about what relationship, if any, the outgoing president and president-elect should have, and in the most notorious cases – John Adams, sitting up til midnight on March 3rd, signing judicial commissions, and John Quincy Adams leaving town so as to avoid the spectacle of Andrew Jackson's inauguration – the less said between the two was often the better. On the other hand, Martin Van Buren had graciously offered to move out of the White House two weeks before William Henry Harrison's inauguration in order to accommodate the old Whig general, and James Knox Polk yielded the presidency to Zachary Taylor in 1849 riding "beside General Taylor in the carriage that conveyed them to the capitol" and "rejoicing, meanwhile, that he was himself relieved from the cares and anxieties of public life."[27]

But there was no precedent for the kind of co-operative interim Lincoln described in the "blind memorandum" – for meeting with McClellan or "assisting" him -- thus no incentive on McClellan's part to join it. In the end, as he admitted on November 11th, Lincoln regarded the

McClellan-Pendleton card by Prang, LN-2702

likelihood of McClellan grasping a co-operative hand to finish-up the war as remote, although this was not because McClellan (as Seward complained) was an inveterate ditherer. Lincoln offered McClellan a partnership, but not the sacrifice of principle Lincoln had been asked to make in 1860. The "blind memorandum" presented McClellan and the Democratic Party with no pay-off – no willingness to consider an armistice if Lincoln's little *entente* with McClellan failed to keep the armies in the field; no offers of compromise on tariffs, banks, railroads and other issues so dear to the Democratic heart; and, above all else, no step backwards on emancipation. Much as McClellan was willing to "resort to the dread arbitrament of war...for the restoration of the Union," he was as silent as the Sphinx on the survival and extension of slavery, the status of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the rendition of contrabands and fugitives which Lincoln had declared he would be "damned in time & eternity" if he would allow.[28]

We cannot see the "blind memorandum" more mistakenly than if we take it, as Gideon Welles did in 1877, as a statement of Lincoln's despair, or as merely another example of Lincoln's penchant for burying layers of meaning under short, Delphic phrases. The "blind memorandum" was actually a document of determination that, even in the worst case, Lincoln intended to move forward toward victory, even if it took an unconventional route. It was also a canny determination, pointed toward exploiting the rift within George McClellan's own party. And, one might say, it was also a humble determination, since in the "blind memorandum" Lincoln announced a willingness, as he had once said, "to hold McClellan's horse if he will only bring us success." [29]

Despite McClellan's outrageous behavior toward Lincoln, passing the boundaries of insubordination and bordering in 1862 on treason, Lincoln "always felt kindly toward McClellan, and desired to befriend him as far as political necessities permitted," and in this dire circumstance was even willing to share the laurels of a prospective victory. At the same time, that humility had its limits: the "blind memorandum" envisions Lincoln staying in the presidential race and losing, but not Lincoln stepping aside

in the face of certain defeat to allow a different candidate to run in his place. Surprisingly, for a man who often described himself as "an old Henry Clay Whig," Lincoln was willing to explore a constitutional and political ambiguity which might well have had enormous consequences for presidential transitions in the future. But, as Lincoln had half-feared and half-expected, the "blind memorandum" and its proposal came to naught, not so much by McClellan's response as because of the news of victories at Mobile Bay and elsewhere, and even more momentous victories shortly to be won in September and October by William T. Sherman and Philip Sheridan, and then followed by Lincoln's re-election on November 8th. And in any event, he would be secure in the knowledge that he had "done my duty and have stood clear before my own conscience" - something which, for any politician, is no small accomplishment.

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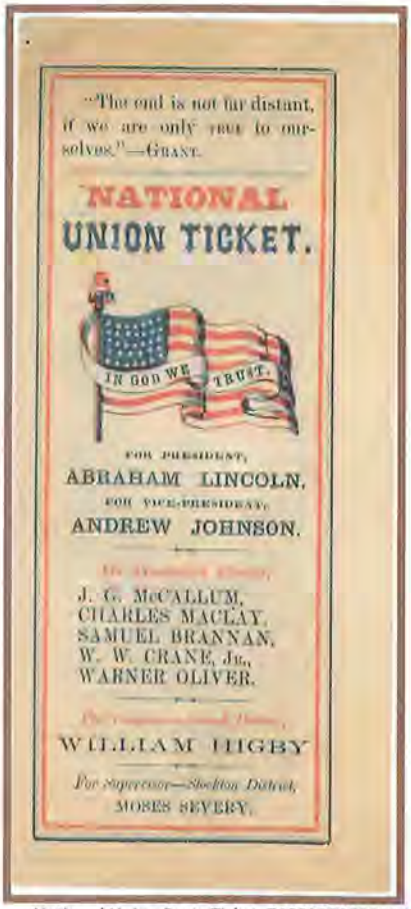

National Union Party Ticket, 71200908500008

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An Interview with Hon. Frank J. Williams on the Concept of Just War

Five unidentified soldiers, LN-2353

Sara Gabbard

Sara Gabbard: How far back in history can you trace the concept of Just War?

Frank Williams: In the first millennium, Christians in the Roman Empire, who originally rejected any form of warfare in accordance with their beliefs, ultimately adopted a "Just War" rationale to the use of force against nations to reconcile their beliefs with the needs of the Empire. This rationale identified circumstances in which individuals could resort to force based on a state's justness of the cause and the purity of motives in employing force. While this Just War tradition focused on regulating the reasons to go to war, it also had effects for the conduct of hostilities, at least when the opposing forces were also Christians. When a war was conducted against non-Christians, these effects disappeared. This conflict would result in an increase, rather than decrease, in brutality. The conduct during the Crusades is an example of this.

As modern Western European nation-states emerged in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and war was fought between nations rather than between leaders, the Just War tradition receded in importance in favor of the use of war alone as an instrument of State policy. Similarly, religion as a basis for limitations on war fighting also receded in importance, and instead scholars identified a "natural law" basis for the applicable rules of international law. Among the leading scholars in this area was Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), whose work, on the *Law of War and Peace*, is considered a landmark in the development of the modern Law of Armed Conflict. Grotius, "the father of international law," articulated many of the same principles that applied under the Just War tradition, but based them on his perceptions of natural law, rather than religious law.

Hugo Grotius, LC-USZ62-125664

Conduct in war, in turn, was justified when it was necessary for success in a Just War. The paradox, however, was that there could only be one just side in a war. The violent acts of the unjustified side were unlawful. Rather than legitimate acts of war, there were illegal acts of violence - assault and murder, trespass, and theft. For the armies of the righteous, by contrast, necessity authorized terrible acts of violence. In Just Wars, armies could lawfully take the goods of the enemy and enslave them. The actions of a Just Warrior were constrained only by the requirements and necessities of victory as limited by one's definition of Enlightenment principles, i.e., the victor could not try to exterminate its enemy.

When opposing armies were equally convinced of their righteousness, however, the medieval theory of Just War risked taking warfare into the realm of out-of-control destruction.

SG: Saint Thomas Aquinas mentions four requirements for a war to be considered "just." Please comment on each in the context of the American Civil War.

FW: The first issue is to determine that the reasons for war were just, thus, in Latin, "Jus Ad Bellum," or "just to war." Four criteria govern a Just War: (1) authority, (2) cause, (3) intention, and (4) no other alternative.

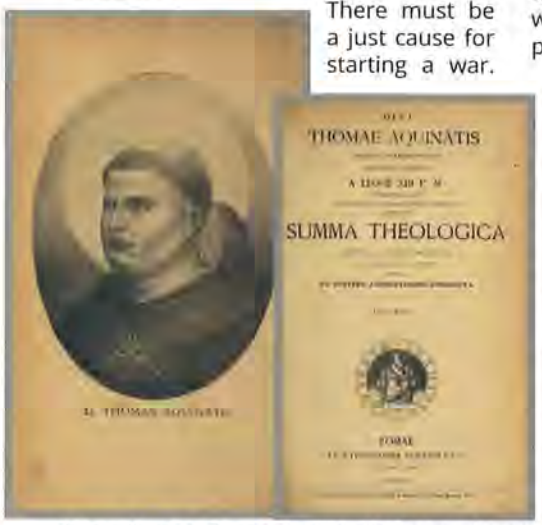
1. Authority

Did the powers starting hostilities have the authority? In *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas Aquinas insists that "in order for a war to be just" there has to be a "sovereign" with valid authority "by whose command the war is to be waged" because "it is not the business of a private person to declare war" nor "the business of a private person to summon together the people, which has to be done in wartime." The government of the United States meets this criterion while the government of the Confederacy did not. It is argued that the government of the Confederacy had authority from the states that had seceded from the U.S. and elected to join the Confederate States of America, and, as such, were valid governing bodies. However, the Constitution of the United States, to which all of the states of the Confederacy agreed, gives the right "to raise and support Armies" only to the U.S. government.

As president-elect, Abraham Lincoln argued that the Constitution does not provide the means nor does it anticipate that any state or states will leave the Union. Abraham Lincoln, in his First Inaugural Address delivered on 4 March 1861, makes this point: It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever, it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

2. Cause

There must be a just cause for starting a war.



Thomas Aquinas, "Summa Theologica" by Thomae Aquintis

St. Augustine of Hippo, "The life and labours of St. Augustine. A historical sketch" by Philip Schaff

What were the reasons to initiate hostilities and what were the opponents' reasons for engaging in war? There were two for the Civil War: (1) slavery and (2) the U.S. government's interference with a state's self-government.

The South believed the cause of the Civil War was the interference on a state's right to self-government. It, to them, is a contest by the Confederacy against the tyranny of the United States government, as with the colonies against Great Britain during the War of American Independence.

The North, on the other hand, believed the war to be "a struggle to preserve the Union." Yet, by 1862, it recognized that the only way to preserve the Union was to solve the slavery issue and that it would be necessary to "reconstruct the Union without slavery." Clearly, the Civil War was a war about slavery.

So which side had a just cause for the initiation of hostilities? Saint Augustine, discussed this as "... one that avenges wrongs, when a nation or state has to be punished, for refusing to make amends for the wrongs inflicted by its subjects, or to restore what it has seized unjustly." Therefore, if slavery is "wrong," its sponsor should be punished. The Confederacy "unjustly" seceded from the Union to, in part, uphold the institution of slavery. The U.S. then met the criteria of Jus Ad Bellum and the Confederate States of America did not.

3. Intention

Did hostile powers have the correct intentions in commencing war? St. Thomas Aquinas believes that the powers "intend the advancement of good, or the avoidance of evil." There should only be a correction of wrongs on the opponent – not punishment. The Union prevails over the Confederacy for this element of Just War because freedom from bondage became a war aim of the U.S. along with reunion.

4. No other alternative

War has to be the final action and last alternative for the war to be just. Even St. Augustine believes that the nation that goes to war is doing so because "it is the wrongdoing of the opposing party which compels the wise man to wage just wars." Looking at the Civil War, it is clear that it was the U.S. that was required to go to war by force of necessity. All efforts at compromise failed, there was no chance of mediation, and the turbulent 1850s, with: the end of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by passing the Kansas-Nebraska Act permitting the extension of slavery; the *Dred Scott* case in the Supreme Court that indicated that the black man has no right to be honored by whites; John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859; and failure of the 1860 Peace Conference – all made a "just" war inevitable.

5. Summary

The U.S. had the "right to war" in the Civil War and the Confederate States of America did not. The Northern government was the lawful sovereign and the Confederate states were in rebellion. That is how Lincoln treated them, as did his administration. As for just cause, the U.S. wanted to preserve the Union and end the injustices of slavery. The C.S.A.'s insistence on continued slavery, founded on its economic base, was unjust for war.

SG: The Lincoln administration undertook to codify the laws of war consistent with the principles of a Just War. Please discuss.

FW: During the American Civil War, Professor Francis Lieber of Columbia College wrote a detailed code of the rules to be followed by Union forces during the conflict with the Confederacy at the urging of Chief of Staff Henry W. Halleck and with Lincoln's support. The rules were intended to secure humane treatment of the population in occupied areas and prevent the already bloody conflict from devolving into unrestrained brutality. Commonly referred to as the "Lieber Code," *Lieber's Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field* were promulgated by President Lincoln as General Order 100 in 1863, and were followed by the U.S. Army well into the

Twentieth Century. As the following excerpt shows, the Lieber Code articulates key principles of the law of war, such as necessity and distinction and are reflective of customary international law. The Lieber Code included the following:

14. Military necessity, as understood by modern civilized nations, consists in the necessity of those measures which are indispensable for securing the ends of the war, and which are lawful according to the modern law and usages of war.

15. Military necessity admits of all direct destruction of life or limb of armed enemies, and of other persons whose destruction is incidentally unavoidable in the armed contest of the war; it allows of the capturing of every armed enemy, and every enemy of importance to the hostile government, or of peculiar danger to the captor; it allows of all destruction of property, and obstruction of the ways and channels of traffic, travel, or communication, and of all withholding of sustenance or means of life from the enemy; of the appropriation of whatever an enemy's country affords necessary for the subsistence and safety of the army, and of such deception as does not involve the breaking of good faith either positively pledged, regarding agreements entered into during the war, or supposed by the modern law of war to exist. Men who take up arms against one another in public war do not cease on this account to be moral beings, responsible to one another and to God.

16. Military necessity does not admit of cruelty – that is, the infliction of suffering for the sake of suffering or for revenge, nor of maiming or wounding except in fight, nor of torture to extort confessions. It does not admit of the use of poison in any way, nor of the wanton devastation of a district. It admits of deception, but disclaims acts of perfidy; and, in general, military necessity does not include any act of hostility which makes the return to peace unnecessarily difficult.

20. Public war is a state of armed hostility between sovereign nations or governments. It is a law and requisite of civilized existence that men live in political, continuous societies, forming organized units, called states or nations, whose constituents bear, enjoy, suffer, advance and retrograde together, in peace and war.

21. The citizen or native of a hostile country is thus an enemy, as one of the constituents of the hostile state or nation, and as such is subjected to the hardships of the war.

22. Nevertheless, as civilization has advanced during the last centuries, so has likewise steadily advanced, especially in war on land, the distinction between the private individual belonging to a hostile country and the hostile country itself, with its men in arms. The principle has been more and more acknowledged that the unarmed citizen is to be spared in person, property, and honor as much

Dr. Francis Lieber, LC-DIG-cwpbh-01400

as the exigencies of war will admit.

23. Private citizens are no longer murdered, enslaved, or carried off to distant parts, and the inoffensive individual is as little disturbed in his private relations as the commander of the hostile troops can afford to grant in the overruling demands of a vigorous war.

Although the Lieber Code was intended only for the U.S. Army, it inspired Germany to adopt it in 1870, and it influenced the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907.

SG: An interesting thought arises from each of these requirements. Who decides such concepts as legitimacy of the sovereign, "just cause," and "rightful intention?"

FW: It appears that the Monarch or other leaders of a belligerent nation decide the question of "just cause" and "rightful intention." John Witte in his *Lincoln's Code* gives as example the rising level of violence by 1781 in the American Revolution. This caused James Madison to agree with Thomas Jefferson to increase the level of violence of a "Just War." The indiscriminate attacks by the British on the towns of New London and Groton, and in the South, made Madison bemoan the "barbarity with which the enemy has conducted the war... The British had acted "like desperate bands of robbers" instead of like a nation at war. The British burned private property and seized slaves, horses, and tobacco. They had, according to Madison, committed "every outrage which humanity could suffer."

In the War of Independence, the consequences of departing from the Enlightenment principles could have been horrific. Indeed if Madison's retaliation policy had been adopted, the draconian measures that would have followed could only be imagined. Witte cites the suppression by George II thirty years before the American Revolution against a rebellion in Scotland led by Charles Stuart, heir to the deposed Stuart line of Monarchs. The violence of 1745 was far more draconian than those of the British in South Carolina. Rebels caught with arms would be shot upon capture and many executions were accompanied by disemboweling the victims.

But the boxing-in of General Charles Cornwallis, with a British army of over 7,000 soldiers in Virginia, the dynamic in 1781 changed at a time when the American Revolution seemed to be ending in the colonists' defeat. General George Washington rushed to Virginia when the French navy under Admiral de Grasse arrived in the Chesapeake with 3,000 men. Cornwallis was then trapped between the Continental Army and the French fleet. Washington had pulled the American War of Independence back from the jaws of destruction.

But what of the requirement that the belligerent - the American colonies – be a recognized entity, rather than a band of guerillas with no organized government? This changed when Great Britain authorized Continental Army prisoners to be treated as prisoners of war – an indicia of a belligerent nation.

SG: Can there still be heroes if a war is considered to be unjust?

FW: I answer this with a qualified "yes." Take those perceived heroes – at least for the South and the Confederacy and one, despite the contemporary controversy over Confederate monuments, finds strong feelings for Robert E. Lee, Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson, partisan ranger Colonel John Mosby, Generals James Longstreet, Joseph

Johnston and others. These are heroes from seceded states, which functioned as the Confederate States of America conducting an unjust war.

The fact is, anyone is a hero who has been widely, persistently over long periods, and enthusiastically regarded as heroic by a reasonable person, or even an unreasonable one. There is also an element of idiosyncrasy as a legitimate part of hero worship as we have seen in the myth of the "lost cause."

Hero movements can be frequent, continuous, and full of peaks and valleys. British Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, remarked:

Contemporary judgments were illusory; look at Lincoln's case, how in his lifetime he was thought to be a clumsy lumbering countryman, blundering along without knowing where he was going. Since his death his significance has grown steadily. [Woodrow] Wilson, on the other hand, was for a short spell looked up to like a god, and his fame will gradually shrink. Lincoln is Wisdom, and Wilson is Knowledge.

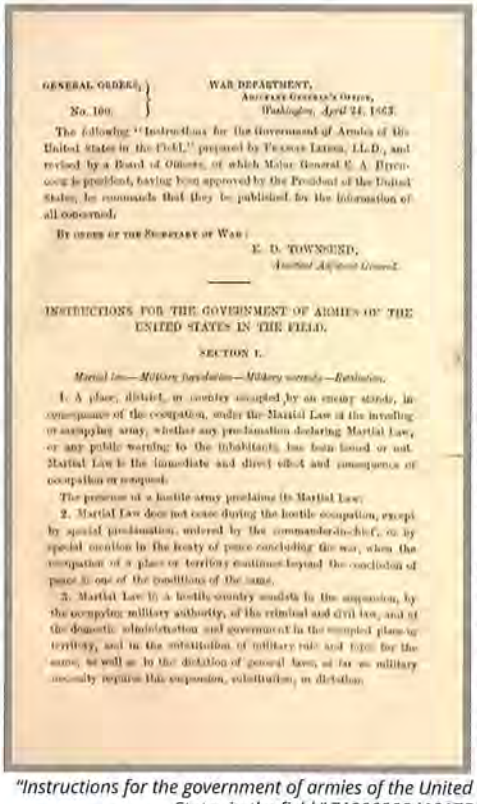
Heroes in an unjust conflict still evoke wonder or admiration or respect or in some cases sympathy. I think the nub of the issue here is to judge by example and not so much by definition.

The South found a hero in Robert E. Lee. He was a noble and virtuous man, like Abraham Lincoln. But the contrast in their motivations was significant. The two men had quite different ideas about the individual states. Lee was a true hero – despite commanding the Army of Northern Virginia, a herculean effort for an unjust belligerent. He insisted on making possible for others the freedom of thought and action he sought for himself.

SG: Please use the above mentioned concepts to argue that the Civil War was "just" or "unjust," from the standpoint of both Union and Confederate points of view.

FW: Without exactly articulating it, Abraham Lincoln had come to his decision for emancipation by comprehending what the Enlightenment meant for a Just War. "The will of God prevails." "In a great contest," Lincoln wrote in one of his "Fragments" – later to be included in his Second Inaugural Address – "each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God." But of course the contending sides could not both be right. "Both *may* be, and one *must* be wrong," Lincoln wrote to himself, because "God cannot be *for*, and *against* the same thing at the same time." The great problem, he concluded, was that people could never know for sure whether God had chosen their side or the other. In just a few words, Lincoln had articulated the concept underlying the Enlightenment rules for civilized warfare. Human beings could never know for sure that they comprehended God's justice. The concept of legal limits on war was an indication that both sides believed they were in the right. Did not war itself require certainty about the justice? Lincoln continued, "I am almost ready to say this is probably true – that God wills this contest." By now Lincoln had decided on emancipation.

In his decision on emancipation, Lincoln had chosen a just side of the contest. In language that was Lincoln's own, his proclamation announced that on January 1, 1863, all people held as slaves within a state in rebellion against the United States would be "forever free." The armed forces of the United States, the president resolved, would thenceforward "recognize and maintain the freedom" of the former slaves and would "do no act or acts to repress" the freed people "in any efforts that may make for their actual freedom." He also invited free African-Americans to contribute to the war effort by enlisting in the armed forces.



GENERAL ORDERS, No. 100.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, Washington, April 24, 1863.

The following "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field," prepared by FRANCIS LIEBER, LL.D., and revised by a Board of Officers, of which Major General E. A. Hitchcock is president, having been approved by the President of the United States, he commands that they be published for the information of all concerned.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. D. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant General.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE FIELD.

SECTION I.

Martial law—Military jurisdiction—Military necessity—Retaliation.

1. A place, district, or country occupied by an enemy stands, in consequence of the occupation, under the Martial Law of the invading or occupying army, whether any proclamation declaring Martial Law, or any public warning to the inhabitants, has been issued or not. Martial Law is the immediate and direct effect and consequence of occupation or conquest.

The presence of a hostile army proclaims its Martial Law.

2. Martial Law does not cease during the hostile occupation, except by special proclamation, ordered by the commander-in-chief, or by special mention in the treaty of peace concluding the war, when the occupation of a place or territory continues beyond the conclusion of peace as one of the conditions of the same.

3. Martial Law in a hostile country consists in the suspension, by the occupying military authority, of the criminal and civil law, and of the domestic administration and government in the occupied place or territory, and in the substitution of military rule and force for the same, as well as in the dictation of general laws, as far as military necessity requires this suspension, substitution, or dictation.

"Instructions for the government of armies of the United States in the field," 71200908410175

SG: For readers who are interested in this topic, can you recommend a few books?

FW: *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (Harry Stout); *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Mark Noll); *This Republic of Suffering* (Drew Gilpin Faust); *Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History* (John Fabian Witt); and *Lincoln on Trial: Southern Civilians and the Law of War* (Burrus Carnahan).

Epilogue

"If there is one thing...that will not vary, if there is one firm rock on which we can rely, it is that to make our way through the next crisis will require deliberations on the nature of Just Wars: deliberations like those Lincoln engaged in during the summer and fall of 1862 as he prepared for Emancipation and set the stage for the code that followed. The laws of war require commitment to act on our best notions of justice in a world beset by violence and danger. Sometimes that commitment will require the use of force, not withstanding all war's perils. But when we do use force, we will have to balance our ideas of justice with humility about our ends.

...Lincoln...in his Second Inaugural Address ...promised to win the war but confessed the sins of the North nonetheless. Lincoln's General Orders No. 100 aimed to establish a framework for making decisions in wartime that would make salient both of war's twin imperatives: resolve and humility. All too often Americans have failed to live up to the example Lincoln set. How could we not? But what is equally striking – what is remarkable and enduring – is that men and women have worked ever since to preserve the framework he helped to establish." (*Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History* (John Fabian Witt) p. 373.)

Frank J. Williams is the founding Chair of The Lincoln Forum and the retired Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court. He teaches at the U.S. Naval War College and serves as a mediator and arbitrator. In 2003, he was appointed a judge of the U.S. Court of Military Commissions to hear appeals from enemy combatants detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.