

Lincoln LORE

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Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of the
LINCOLN HISTORICAL RESEARCH
FOUNDATION
Louis A. Warren - Editor

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Nearly twenty-five years ago, Mr. Arthur F. Hall was granted permission by Robert Lincoln to use a portrait of his father, Abraham Lincoln, as the insignia of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of which Mr. Hall is now president.

In appreciation of this favor, and as an expression of gratitude for the use of so illustrious a name, the Company from time to time has made definite contributions to the memory of Lincoln. Its most recent effort has been the establishment of the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation, which it wholly maintains.

The bulletin in hand aspires to serve as a medium through which some of the findings of this foundation may be released. It will try to anticipate the needs of authors and students of Lincoln's life; collectors and librarians who are gathering Lincolniana; and editors of newspapers, magazines, and house organs who find frequent need of short Lincoln items for their publications.

These broadsides hope to serve as a supplement to the excellent publications now being issued by The Abraham Lincoln Association, with headquarters at Springfield, Illinois. The President, and the Chairman of the Executive Committee of The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, as well as the Director of the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation, are all members and loyal supporters of this association.

Some of the Lincoln items, which one may expect to find in these columns, are suggested by the following captions: New Book Lists, Book Reviews, Citations to Magazine and Newspaper Articles, Bibliographies on Phases of Lincoln's Life, Suggestions for Programs, Historical Discussions, Genealogical Contributions, Poems, Sayings and Stories of Lincoln, Queries, etc.

We trust that we may have the sympathetic interest of all admirers of Abraham Lincoln in this effort to honor the memory of "The Man for the Ages."

APRIL FIFTEENTH

The first issue of Lincoln Lore bears the exact date of the month of Lincoln's death. It is timely that the subject matter should consist of items which touch upon Lincoln's assassination.

LINCOLN'S WEARING APPAREL

One of the most valued treasures presented to the Chicago Historical Society is a coat which affidavits attest is the garment worn by Abraham Lincoln on the night of his assassination. Five years ago, there came to light in Philadelphia several pieces of wearing apparel said to have been worn by Lincoln on the fateful night. The items displayed were: "An old black suit, the collar stained with the life blood of the martyred President, the trousers wrinkled, a badly torn overcoat, and a faded silk stock. The clothes were sold for \$6,500."

A few weeks ago there were exhibited in New York City the gloves and handkerchief which Lincoln is said to have had with him on the night of April 14, 1865.

There appeared an article in the "Superintendent and Foreman" in 1895, setting forth the story of how a man in Lynn, Massachusetts, had come in possession of the socks and boots Lincoln wore at the time of the assassination. It is claimed they were left in the room where Lincoln died. William Clark, the tenant, turned them over to his friend from Lynn, to whom he was indebted. The blue worsted socks were destroyed by moths many years ago. As late as 1895 the No. 12 boots were in good condition. If the hat that Lincoln wore that night could be located, we would have nearly his complete wardrobe and one extra coat.

QUERY

Is there any authority for the statement that shortly after the death of President Lincoln the Jewelers' Association of America met in convention and decided that all clock faces used for advertising purposes should be set at the hour of Lincoln's death? Most of the signs bearing the likeness of clocks, some of which still stand before jewelry stores, mark the hour at 8:20. Lincoln died at 7:22 a. m., April 15, 1865, according to the notes of Dr. Abbott, who kept accurate data about the President's condition throughout the night.

LINCOLN'S LAST WRITING

For many years it has been understood that Lincoln's last writing was on a card and inscribed as follows: "April 14, 1865. Allow Mr. Ashmun & friend to come in at 9 a. m. tomorrow. A Lincoln." Mr. Emanuel Hertz, Lincoln collector, believes he has discovered a later writing in the form of a pardon to which Lincoln put his signature. This valuable document reads: "Let the prisoner be released on taking the oath of Dec. 8, 1863. A. Lincoln. April 14, 1865."

AT LINCOLN'S BEDSIDE

There have been many lists made of those present at the bedside of Abraham Lincoln during the final hours of his life, and various paintings have been attempted to portray the death scene with the distinguished guests present. While the following list may not include all of those who entered the chamber in the Peterson House, to which Lincoln was removed after the assassination, it gives the names of those generally mentioned. Mrs. Lincoln, and her son, Robert T. Lincoln, were in and out of the room many times during the night.

All of Mr. Lincoln's cabinet were present with the exception of Secretary Seward, who was also a victim of the same plot, and who was at that time in a dangerous condition at his own home. Stanton, Welles, Usher, McCullah, Speed and Dennison were all there.

The Generals present were: Halleck, Meigs, Farnsworth, Augur and Todd.

These physicians were in attendance: Barnes, Crane, Stone, Abbott, Hall, Gatch, Leiberman and Taft.

There were also several other officials and friends of President Lincoln there: Secretary Hay, Speaker Colfax, Rev. Dr. Gurley, Senator Sumner, Governor Oglesby, Ex-Governor Farwell, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Field, Judge Carter, Judge Otto, R. F. Andrews, and Justice Chase.

A Mr. Kenny and a Miss Kenny, as well as Miss Harris, were in an adjacent room most of the evening; and, possibly during the night they were admitted for a moment to the death chamber. Some writers have held that Vice-President Johnston was also present at one time; but, this fact is not generally accepted.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF LINCOLN'S DEATH

The first person to announce that Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated was Miss Clara Harris, daughter of Mr. Ira Harris, the New York Senator. She and Major Rathburn were guests of President and Mrs. Lincoln at Ford's Theatre on Friday evening, April 14, 1865. Two days later, she subscribed to an affidavit before A. B. Olin, Justice of the Supreme Court, in which she set forth her observations of the tragedy. She said that she heard the discharge of a pistol and turned about to see Major Rathburn spring from his seat and grapple with the intruder. The assassin broke away and leaped to the stage, as Major Rathburn shouted "stop that man." A moment later someone from the stage asked, what was the matter, or what is it, and Miss Harris replied: "The President is shot."

Lincoln LORE

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Table of Contents

- 3** An Interview with John Marszalek
6 "Just the Wood out of which Washginton Presidents are Carved" by Alan Guelzo
14 From The Collection: Lincoln Lore by Emily Rapoza
16 An Interview with Al Zacher
18 An Interview with George Saunders by Craig Klugman
22 Lincoln's Magician by Jason Silverman

Upcoming Events

FOR MORE EVENTS, VISIT WWW.FRIENDSOFTHELINCOLNCOLLECTION.ORG



MEET HARRIET TUBMAN

Presented by Kathryn Harris
Sunday, April 28, 2019, 2:00 p.m.
Meeting Rooms A-B
Allen County Public Library, Main Library
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Free and Open to the Public
For more information, visit www.LincolnCollection.org



2019 ROLLAND LECTURE

Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Conversation on Presidential Leadership
Presented by Harold Holzer and Craig Symonds
Thursday, May 16, 2019, 7:00 pm
Theater
Allen County Public Library, Main Library
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Free and Open to the Public
For more information, visit www.LincolnCollection.org



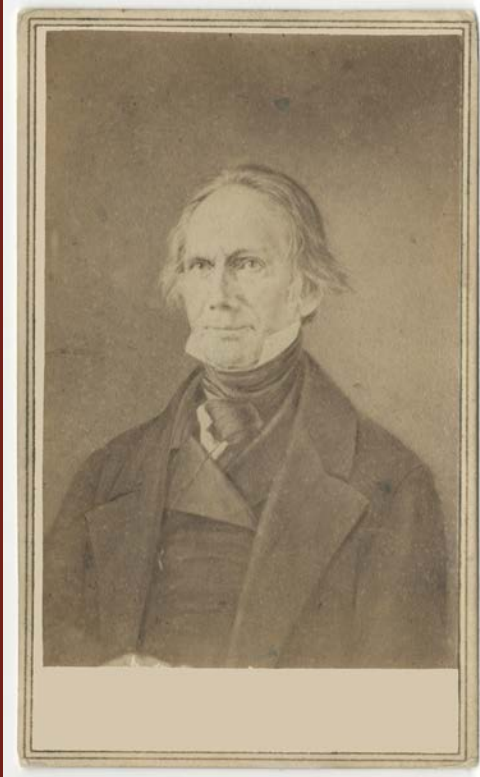
2019 LINCOLN FORUM

Speakers include: Gary Gallagher, Elizabeth Varon, Joan Waugh, and Jonathan White
November 16-18, 2019
Gettysburg, PA
For more information, visit www.LincolnForum.org

On the Cover



Lincoln Lore celebrates 90 years of publication in 2019. Shown on the cover is Lincoln Lore #1, April 15, 1929, Editor: Louis Warren. To see more, see "From the Collection" on pages 14-15.



Henry Clay, OC-0498

An Interview with John Marszalek

on

Henry Clay, Lincoln's "Beau Ideal" of a Statesmen

Sara Gabbard

Sara Gabbard: Please explain Clay's early legal representation of Aaron Burr. Did the relationship cause him later regret?

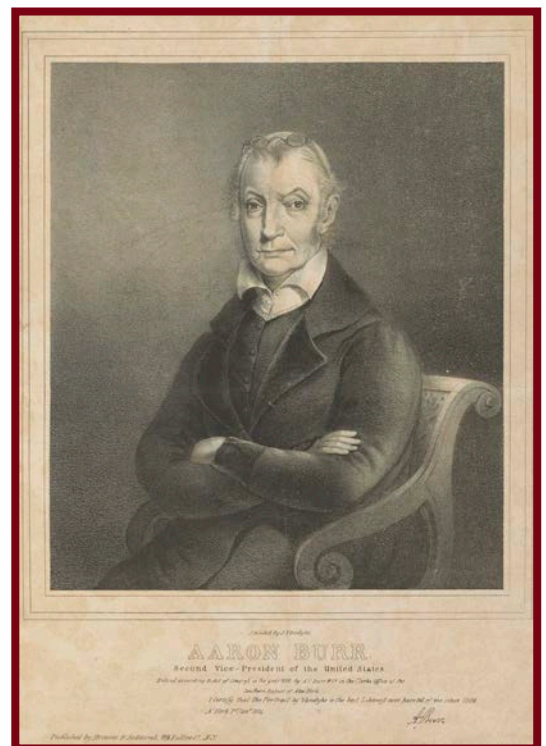
John Marszalek: In the early 19th century, Henry Clay and Aaron Burr were both young up-and-comers in American politics. Yet, Clay became one of the most famous of all 19th century Americans, while Burr never lived down the accusations that he unfairly killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel and later tried to incite a conspiracy against the stability of the United States. Clay was seen as the symbol of the Union, while Burr has come down in history as someone who tried to destroy it.

In late 1804 Burr resigned his place as Thomas Jefferson's vice president because he worried about being found guilty of murder for killing Hamilton in a July 11 duel. This occurrence and his ability to alienate a wide variety of people caused him to travel to the West, rather than remain in the East. People in the West liked him, so they readily listened to him talk about the "grand expedition" of splitting off the West from the rest of the United States.

Burr had met Henry Clay in Lexington, Kentucky, and the latter agreed to defend him in court. A newspaper owned by Supreme Court Justice John Marshall accused Burr, even Clay, and a large number of other Democratic Republicans in the West of treason. Henry Clay then decided not to defend Burr because he had just been elected by his state to the US Senate. But then he accepted Burr's offer to pay him more to stay on, and he even signed an oath swearing his innocence. Clay stayed on.

When Clay traveled to Washington and found that Jefferson's supporters hated Burr as much as the Federalists did, he began to worry. Then President Thomas Jefferson showed him a letter which he said proved Burr's guilt, and Clay believed him. He now saw Burr as being guilty as charged. He never forgave Burr for what he was now convinced was Burr's lie. In 1815, the two men accidentally met, but Clay, still angry, refused to shake hands with his former client. They never met again. Clay's legal involvement with Burr resulted in his being implicated in the controversy when he later ran for the presidency.

Henry Clay, one of American's great politicians, paid the price for his refusal to see the danger his political connection with Burr would cause him.



Aaron Burr, Second Vice-President of the United States (engraving, c1836, Library of Congress) LC-DIG-pga-04519

SG: What was Clay's role at the Treaty of Ghent?

JM: Henry Clay earned the nickname "War Hawk" for his leadership of those congressmen of similar philosophy hoping to lead the United States into the "War of 1812." When the war came to an end, however, he, along with four other Americans: Albert Gallatin, John Quincy Adams, Jonathan Russell and James A. Bayard, was named to the peace commission. Along with British commissioners, these Americans brought the War of 1812 to an end: actually to the "status quo ante-bellum." As a war hawk, Clay had pushed for the desires of the West. At Ghent he forthrightly opposed John Quincy Adams and Eastern interests and refused to go along with giving England the right to navigate the Mississippi River in return for fishing rights for easterners. He also opposed giving England any rights to deal with the Indians in the West.

SG: Clay's relationships with so many national leaders offers almost a mini-US history class: Please comment on his experiences with and feelings about (the following).

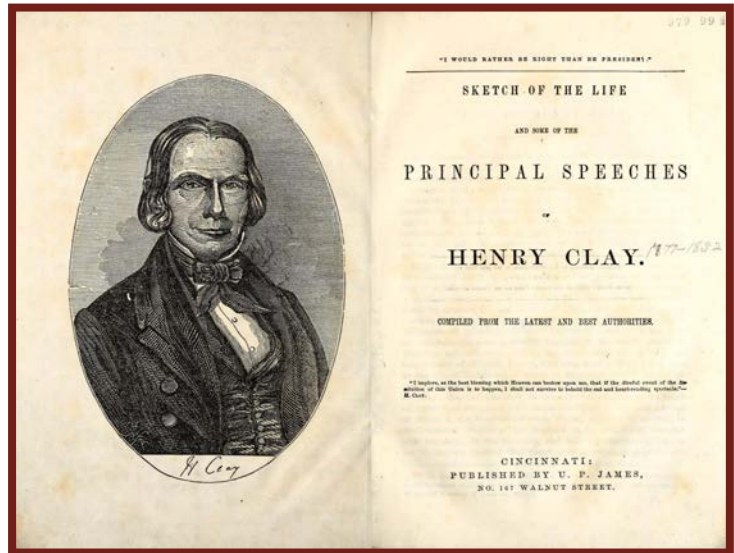
JM: John Quincy Adams – Henry Clay served on the Treaty of Ghent negotiations commission and stood in opposition to John Quincy Adams' defense of easterners. Later, however, during

whom he would battle for almost the rest of his life, called the agreement "the corrupt bargain," and hung it around Clay's neck for the rest of his political career.

John C. Calhoun – John C. Calhoun was another war hawk, but coming from South Carolina he was hardly the nationalist that Clay was. The result was that, although they were allegedly in the same party, the two men were in constant conflict. Clay and Calhoun contested the so-called "tariff of abominations" by fighting over the right of nullification. Their different beliefs resulted in their opposition to one another, yet their mutual opposition to Andrew Jackson remained even stronger.

Andrew Jackson – Like Henry Clay, Andrew Jackson was one of the leading figures of the early 19th century. Actually, Jackson was more successful because he was twice elected president of the United States, while Clay ran three times and lost each time. Clay was a great orator, philosophical rather than straightforward, and a leading member of the House of Representatives and US Senate. Jackson was a famed military leader and appealed to the masses of Americans. Jackson was a great opponent of the Bank of the United States, while Clay supported the concept as part of his American System. Clay was the "Great Pacificator," while Jackson took forthright stands on a variety of the era's issues. Jackson and Clay were both important contemporaries, but they were poles apart in their attitudes.

James Madison – The major difference between James Madison and Henry Clay was their completely opposite stands on the desirability of war between the United States and Great Britain. Madison opposed war, while Clay called for it. During the war itself, the two men stood shoulder to shoulder, determined to defend the nation they both sup-



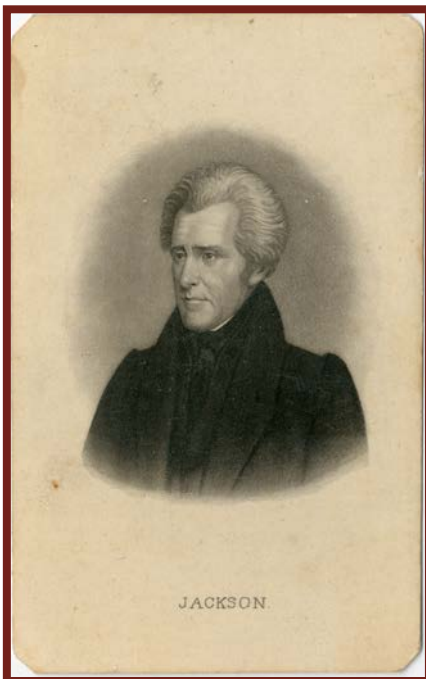
Sketch of the Life and Some of the Principal Speeches of Henry Clay (1854) 71200908409894

ported, although in different ways.

James Monroe – Henry Clay had many claims to fame; one of the most important was his support for what came to be called "the American System." Clay espoused federally financed internal improvements like canals and roads, a high protective tariff, and later a Bank of the United States. In addition, Clay wanted to make the United States the leader of the nations in the western hemisphere, i.e. Latin America. As a Democratic Republican, Monroe opposed a federal role in American economic life and opposed an American role in Latin America.

John Randolph – In 1826, John Randolph was on the floor of the US Senate and called President John Quincy Adams and his secretary of state Henry Clay, a "puritan with the black leg." What made this comment so awful was that "black leg" was a fatal disease which affected livestock. Clay was insulted and forgetting that Senators could say awful things on the floor of that body without fear of being called to account, challenged Randolph. The Virginian remembered the exception, but refused to tell Clay about it. He decided instead that he would not fire at his antagonist. This meant that Clay would certainly kill Randolph. When the two men fired on one another, Clay missed (accidentally) and Randolph (on purpose). It now came time for the second shot, and Randolph simply fired in the air. Clay then stopped the duel, and the two men left the field of honor unscathed and friendly again.

SG: What do you consider to be Clay's great accomplishment(s) as Speaker of the House?



Andrew Johnson LN-0750

JM: Henry Clay played a major role in changing the power of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives from simply deciding what bills came up at what time, and, instead, increasing the Speaker's political power. The result was that the Speaker of the House became much more powerful than the majority leader in the Senate. What the Speaker did was to look at the bills that were pending and assign them to specific committees, the members whom he had himself appointed. He also controlled the time for debate and made sure that he retained the right of the speaker himself to speak whenever he wished, by turning the House into a committee of the whole. Significantly he made all such changes in a way that did not seem to alienate the members and they went along with him. It was no accident that he was Speaker of the House for a total of ten years, the longest tenure of any 19th century Speaker.

SG: The topic of slavery obviously cast a giant shadow over the era of Clay's political life. What were his feelings on the subject?

JM: Henry Clay did not approve of slavery, although he owned slaves himself. He opposed abolition because he saw it as a danger to the continuation of the Union, but he found slavery to be abhorrent. So, he found himself in the throes of a dilemma. He tolerated the institution in order to preserve the Union. His method of getting around this problem was to support the concept of colonization. The best way to end slavery and preserve the Union, he believed, was through his leadership of the American Colonization Society. Purchase freedom for American slaves and then send them back to Africa where they might live a decent life. In fact, colonization did not work, but Clay saw no other way to handle the matter.

SG: Henry Clay was determined to become President. Why did he fail? At what time was he closest to achieving his goal?

JM: Henry Clay ran for the presidency in 1824, 1832, and 1844. He failed each time. He said in 1839 that "I would rather be right than president," but, in fact, he did want very badly to hold the nation's highest office. He was the

country's leading Whig and nationalist. He strongly supported his American System. This was, indeed, one of his problems: he took firm stands in favor of a strong central government, at a time when Andrew Jackson was extremely popular and a believer in state rights. Clay was called "Harry of the West," but his nationalistic positions were more eastern than western. So, Jackson became the candidate of the West, and bypassed Clay. In 1844 Clay came the closest to victory, but he uncharacteristically made a political faux pas when he wrote the so-called "Raleigh Letter" opposing the annexation of Texas because it might result in war with Mexico. Then he wrote two "Alabama Letters" seemingly changing his mind on Texas annexation. This flip-flop probably resulted in James K. Polk's narrow victory. After this, Clay never ran for president again. He died in 1852.

SG: Probably not a fair question, but please give your overall assessment of the life and career of Henry Clay.

JM: Henry Clay was indeed one of the most significant politicians in all of American history. Consider his career: he was born in 1777 in Virginia during the American Revolution. He moved West to Kentucky and was one of the most significant attorneys of his era. He was a War Hawk, and a commissioner during the Ghent Treaty negoti-

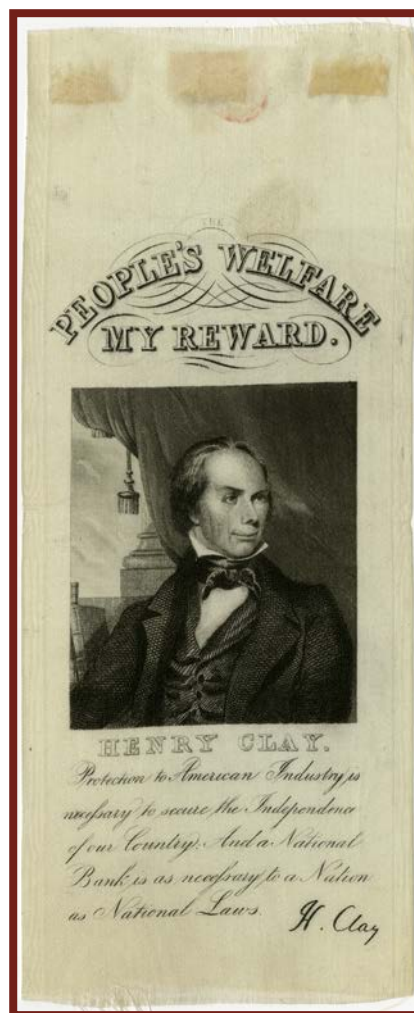
ations after the War of 1812; he was a powerful orator, and, established the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives as a national leader. He became a hero in Latin America, gained the nickname "The Great Pacificator" for his work on the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise Tariff of 1833, and the Compromise of 1850. He ran

for presidential office three times. And, perhaps, most importantly, he had a tremendous influence on the man usually considered the greatest president in American history: Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln came from a Whig political background, so he naturally placed Clay on the highest pedestal. At one time, he called Clay "My Beau ideal of a Statesman." Another time, he said that he "almost worshipped Henry Clay." Lincoln never met Clay personally, but he heard him speak at least once; he voted for him, and in 1844 he not only campaigned for him, but he served as his elector in Illinois. When Lincoln ran for office himself, he frequently quoted Clay in his speeches. In his famous debates with Stephen A. Douglas, he

quoted Clay 41 times. The most famous connection Lincoln had with Clay was his eulogy of the man in Springfield, Illinois, upon Clay's death in 1852. It was not his greatest speech, but its praise of Clay is obvious. He said: "our country is prosperous and powerful; but could it have been quite all it has been, and is, and is to be without Henry Clay?" He certainly did not think so.

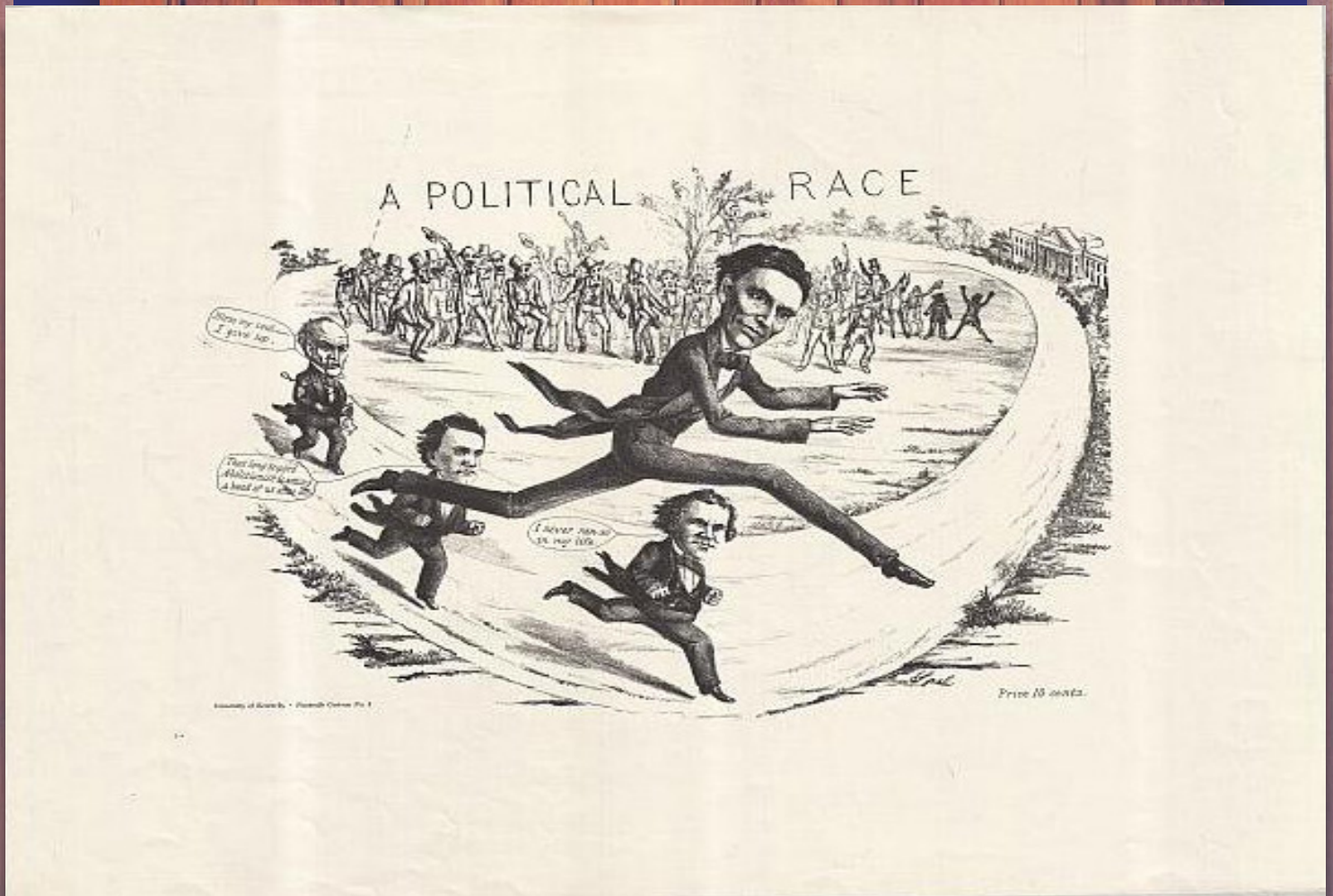
[John Marszalek is the Giles Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Mississippi State University]



"People's Welfare, My Reward"
71.2009.082.0206

“Just the Wood out of which Washington Presidents are Carved”:

Electing Lincoln in 1860



"A Political Race" published by Rickey, Mallory & Company,
Cincinnati, Ohio, 1860 71.2009.081.0869

The day after Abraham Lincoln came from behind in a well-populated field of potential candidates to win the Republican Party's nomination for president of the United States, an "annoyed and dejected" Thurlow Weed packed his bags and prepared "to shake the dust of the city" of Chicago "from my feet." Weed was the long-time editor of the *Albany Evening Journal* and the "master-hand" behind the throne of the man Weed had assumed would have been the Republicans' obvious choice for a presidential nomination, William Henry Seward. The convention's rejection of Seward "completely unnerved" Weed – "he even shed tears over the defeat of his old friend" – and he admitted to being so "unable to think or talk on the subject" that he planned to spend a week in Iowa, where he owned some property, before facing the necessity of returning to New York and explaining himself to Seward. But then came up the cards of David Davis and Leonard Swett, the two Illinois Republicans who had outmaneuvered Weed to secure the nomination for Lincoln. They "came to converse with me about the approaching canvass," hoping that this "most skillful political manager" and "past master of political intrigue and stratagem" could be persuaded to put his shoulder to Lincoln's wheel.

Weed did not hide the fact that he was "greatly disappointed" in Lincoln's nomination. But Davis and Swett suggested that Weed plan to return to New York through Springfield, Illinois, and meet Lincoln. The great intriguer was sufficiently intrigued to agree, and on May 24th Weed arrived in Springfield to consult with Davis, Swett, and Lincoln. Weed had only met Lincoln once before, and that had been so long ago – during Lincoln's campaign tour on behalf of Zachary Taylor's presidency in 1848 – that Weed had entirely forgotten it. The general impression Weed had of Lincoln up until that moment was uninspiring and provincial, but the resulting conversation surprised Weed: "We entered immediately upon...the prospects of success, assuming that all or nearly all the slave States would be against us. The issues had already been made, and could neither be changed nor modified; but there was much to be considered in regard to the manner of conducting the campaign, and in

relation to States that were safe without effort, to those which required attention, and to others that were sure to be vigorously contested; Viewing these questions in their various aspects, I found Mr. Lincoln sagacious and practical. He displayed throughout the conversation so much good sense, such intuitive knowledge of human nature, and such familiarity with the virtues and infirmities of politicians, that I became impressed very favorably with his fitness for the duties which he was not unlikely to be called upon to discharge....This conversation lasted some five hours," Weed remembered, and "inspired me with confidence in his capacity and integrity."

And no wonder: perceptively boiling a case down to its most basic elements had always been Lincoln's long suit, and together Weed and Lincoln had shrewdly identified the three elements which would become the strategic cornerstones of the 1860 presidential campaign:

First—Nearly all the slave states would be against us. Lincoln was a publicly committed opponent of the expansion of slavery, whether into the western territories or into the Caribbean and Latin America, and as such, it took no imagination at all to realize that few voters in the slave states would be casting ballots for him, and no slave states were likely to give him a single electoral vote. But the votes of the slave states would be sharply discounted by the folly of the Democratic Party, which met for its national convention in Charleston a month before

the Republican convention in Chicago and rancorously split at the seams. Northern Democrats were determined to nominate Lincoln's one-time nemesis from the 1858 U.S. Senate race in Illinois, the godparent of the Compromise of 1850, and the author of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Stephen A. Douglas. But Douglas's advocacy of the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" in the territories was insufficient to please slave-state Democrats. They mistrusted Douglas as a man who "turns his back on his promise, repudiates his words, and tells his people that... the people of the Territories can keep slaves out." The pro-slavery hard-liners stalked out of the Democratic national convention in protest and nominated their own presidential candidate, Kentucky's hero and the sitting vice president of the United States, John C. Breckinridge, while

the remainder of the nominating convention adjourned in confusion and planned for a second meeting in Baltimore.

But Breckinridge was unable to bring the old-line Whigs of Kentucky and Tennessee with him. Declaring a pox on both Democrats and Republicans, former border slave-state Whigs nominated John Bell of Tennessee as the presidential candidate

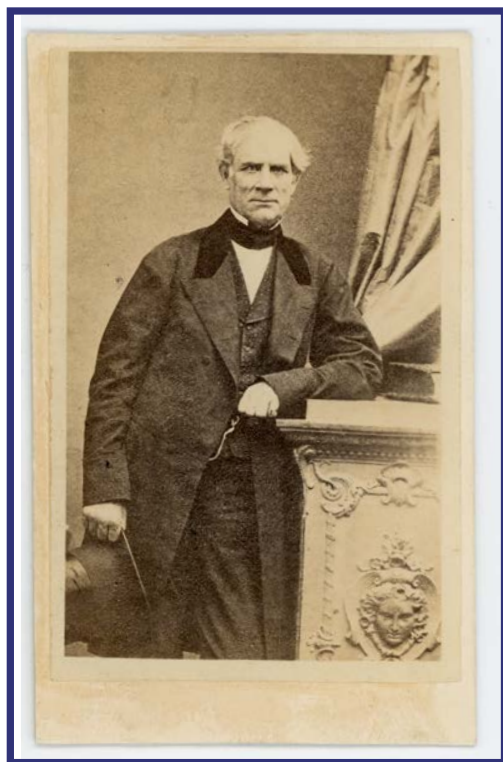
of the hastily contrived Constitutional Union Party – thus siphoning off still more slave-state voters from the national Democrats. Nor was there much likelihood that these self-divided factions would find any way to reconcile and rejoin forces before Election Day. "At Baltimore," warned a Democratic newspaper, "the secessionists will not



David Davis, LFA-0221

be permitted to enlist and repeat their disorganizing farce." Douglas Democrats would "yield no further capital to the sectional demagogues intent on a dissolution of the Union."

They all reminded Lincoln of "a good, sound churchman, whom we'll call Brown, who was on a committee to erect a bridge over a very dangerous and rapid river. Architect after architect failed, and at last Brown said he had a friend named Jones who had built several bridges and could build this. 'Let's have him in,' said the com-



Thurlow Weed OC-1862

mittee. In came Jones. 'Can you build this bridge, sir?' 'Yes,' replied Jones; 'I could build a bridge to the infernal regions, if necessary.' The sober committee were horrified, but when Jones retired, Brown thought it but fair to defend his friend. 'I know Jones so well,' said he, 'and he is so honest a man and so good an architect that, if he states soberly and positively that he can build a bridge to Hades, why, I believe it. But I have my doubts about the abutment on the infernal side.' So, when politicians said they could harmonize the northern and southern wings of the Democracy, why, I believed them. But I had my doubts about the abutment on the southern side." Lincoln might not get any votes from any of the

slave states; but the votes he didn't get would be squandered among three candidates – Douglas, Breckinridge, and Bell – without subtracting any free-state votes from the Republicans. *The New York Herald* lamented that if the Democratic split persisted "in this fashion to the end of the chapter," then "the election of Lincoln is as certain as that tomorrow's sun will rise."

Second—The issues had already been made. For the second time in its existence, the Republican national platform had published its opposition to giving "legal existence to slavery in any territory of the United States," even as it affirmed "inviolable...the right of each state to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively." What was more, Lincoln was on public record, as far back as the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 and even more obviously during the remarkable race he had run against Douglas for the U.S. Senate in 1858, as fully in harmony with that platform. There would be no catastrophic mid-course pivots, like Henry Clay's on the Texas issue in 1844, or Winfield Scott's clumsy appeal to immigrants voters and the "Irish brogue" he claimed to have "heard... before on many battle

fields" – although presumably not at the battle of Chapultepec, where thirty Irish 'San Patricios' were hanged as deserters on Scott's order.

Third—There was much to be considered...in relation to the States that were safe without effort, to those which required attention, and to others that were sure to be vigorously contested. The time had long passed when the slave states, simply by their popular majorities, could count on those majorities translating easily into majorities in the Electoral College. The population of the free states had increased by 72% since 1830, from 6.9 million (out of 12.8 million nationally) to 18.5 million, while the slave states'

populations had increased by 65%, or only 11 million. In 1830, this had been enough to ensure that the twelve slave states would cast 118 of the 286 electoral votes (or 41%) and would only need Democratic majorities in one or two Northern states to ensure victory. In 1860, the shoe was on the other foot, "the South...relatively diminishing in prestige and strength in the Union." The slave-state portion of the electoral pie had slipped to 35% and would command only 120 of the 303 total electoral votes at stake, while the free states would command 183. Victory would require only 152. Assuming that they would hold the states which had gone for Frémont in 1856 and that Lincoln's presence at the head of the ticket would guarantee Illinois's 11 electoral votes, then all Republicans had to do was to ensure that New York (with 35 electoral votes) and either Pennsylvania (with 27) or Ohio (with 23) went their way, and the election would be won.

For Lincoln's part, the new Republican nominee was vastly relieved by Weed's visit. "Weed was here," Lincoln told Illinois's Republican senator Lyman Trumbull, "and saw me; but he showed no signs whatever of the intriguer. He asked for nothing; and said N.Y. is safe." By the end of June, Lincoln's election already began to appear inevitable. "The prospect of Republican success now appears very flattering, so far as I can perceive," Lincoln wrote to his vice-presidential running mate, Hannibal Hamlin. "It looks as if the Chicago ticket will be elected," he wrote to Anson Henry on the Fourth of July. His early backer, Charles Ray of the *Chicago Tribune*, began urging him "to consider what shall be the quality and cut of your inaugural suit." Even Mary Lincoln "feels quite confident of her husband's election," and Robert Lincoln was being sarcastically christened as "the Prince of Rails."

The icing on the electoral cake was spread from a factor which might have been an embarrassment for an old politico like Thurlow Weed to have raised with Lincoln, but which turned out to be as much an asset for Lincoln as all the others: honesty. As if the divisive dispute over how perfectly pro-slavery the Democratic candidates could make themselves, the

outgoing Democratic administration of James Buchanan managed to taint them with one more liability, and that was the stench of official corruption. Isaac Toucey, Buchanan's secretary of the navy, was denounced for rigging bids on navy contracts in order to steer them to a single contractor, W.C.N. Swift of New Bedford, Massachusetts, who just happened to have been a major contributor to Buchanan's 1856 presidential campaign; New York City postmaster Isaac Vanderbeck Fowler absconded after being indicted for embezzling \$155,000; one of secretary of war John B. Floyd's relatives by marriage, Godard Bailey, skimmed \$870,000 from an annuity fund established as part of government treaties with Indian tribes, all the while working as a clerk in the Interior Department. Buchanan naively persisted in speaking of Toucey as "a gentleman of the old school, full of principle and honor," but Toucey, Floyd, and Fowler all stank in the nostrils of the country. It was inevitable that the Republican campaign would make "frugal government and honest administration...not less vital" an issue than "aggressive, all-grasping Slavery propagandism" and just as inevitable that "Abraham Lincoln will receive thousands of votes that never were Republican before."

Nevertheless, electing Lincoln was not going to be done without some hard political work. Lincoln's first major task was to secure the loyalty of the candidates he had elbowed aside and their followers. That would involve placating New Yorkers (starting with Thurlow Weed) who had expected Seward to be the nominee, Ohioans who had backed Ohio U.S. senator Salmon P. Chase, and Pennsylvanians who had hoped against hope for their own favorite son, Simon Cameron. If they chose to sulk in their tents and Lincoln lost those states to Democrats, the whittling away in the Electoral College might lower the Republican electoral vote count to the point where the election would end up in the House of Representatives, as it had in the disastrous election of 1824. "The speeches of Cameron and the Blairs are singularly cold," smirked the New York Herald, "while in this State the Seward men act as if they desired to encompass Lincoln's defeat." Two days after meeting Weed, Lincoln went to work on Salmon Chase, appealing

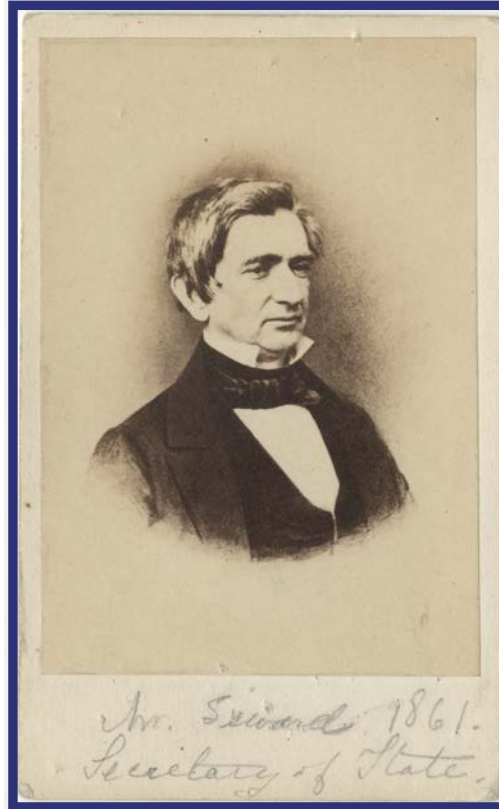
to the stiff-necked Ohioan who had earned the reputation of being "the attorney general of fugitive slaves" for his famous defense in that to join "those distinguished and able men" who were "already in high position to do service in the common cause." On June 18th, he turned to securing the German vote by assuring the prominent German Republican, the émigré Carl Schurz, that despite "your having supported Gov. Seward, in preference to myself in the convention, [it] is not even remembered by me for any practical purpose.... I go not back to the convention, to make distinctions among its members."

Pacifying

Seward, however, would require more than a friendly chat with Thurlow Weed. The ambitious and melodramatic U.S. senator from New York had made no secret of his expectation of becoming the 1860 Republican nominee, and when the word came that the convention had gone for Lincoln instead, Seward was almost inconsolable. If he had been keeping a diary, he later told Charles Francis Adams, it would have been filled "with all my cursing and swearing on the 19th of May last." He gallantly replied to a letter from the Republican National Committee with the promise that he would give the party "a sincere and earnest support." But to his wife, he confided that he dreaded his return to the Senate, since he would now appear there as "a leader deposed by my own party, in the hour of organization for decisive battle." Lincoln gingerly suggested to Seward that they meet,

although the suggestion specified that Seward come to Springfield, not Lincoln to Auburn, New York. This, Seward agreed to do, but the meeting would end up being included as a stop on a speaking tour Seward would undertake in the fall. That way, neither Republican would be seen as coming cap-in-hand to the other.

Even so, Seward showed little eagerness to endorse Lincoln. Along his route, Seward praised Lincoln as the Republicans' "great and glorious leader." He stopped "in Springfield scarcely fifteen minutes, and for about ten of those fifteen was engaged in talking to the crowd, and for the other five in introducing his traveling party to the President-to-be, with whom he at no time conversed unheard by at least a dozen listeners." He pledged that "the



William H. Seward OC-0930

State of New York will give a generous, cheerful and effective support to your neighbor, Abraham Lincoln," but he pulled shy of making any personal pledges. Seward could not entirely conceal the "disfavor, if not...contempt" he felt for "a man who, without any special merit of his own, was taken from the subordinate ranks of the party and promoted over his head."

If appeals to party loyalty were not enough balm to heal disappointed Republican souls, patronage might be. In an era before the professionalization of the civil service, the president had complete hire-and-fire authority over every government job in the executive branch, from the cabinet down to the lowliest postmaster. Patronage was the glue that held the political parties together, and these appointments were understood frankly as the principal method of rewarding faith-

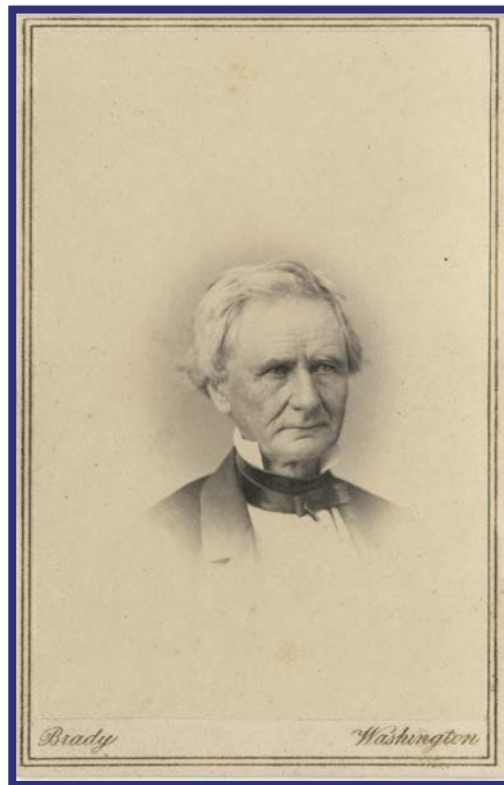
ful political service. Altogether, 1,639 government appointments were within Lincoln's direct gift, and he would make the most of them, dumping 1,479 incumbents from the Buchanan administration; and an even wider net of patronage appointments fanned out indirectly from the Post Office and the Treasury Department, including 33,000 postmasters and clerks, 4,500 mail agents and contractors, 2,800 customs agents. Unwilling to jeopardize his "honest Abe" image, Lincoln insisted that patronage in a Lincoln administration would be fairly divided. Lincoln announced that he "neither is nor will be, in advance of the election, committed to any man, clique, or faction." The "part of duty, and wisdom" is "to deal fairly with all. He thinks he will need the assistance of all; and that, even if he had friends to reward, or enemies to punish, as he has not, he could not afford to dispense with the best talent, nor to outrage the popular will in any locality."

However, lofty declarations of impartiality had never before stood in the path of self-interest rightly understood, nor did they in this case. Salmon Chase would get the nod as secretary of the treasury, Simon Cameron would become secretary of war, and Seward would move in as secretary of state. The next tier of appointments would be carefully divided between the partisans of Chase, Cameron, and Seward. Abram Wakeman, a prominent ally of Thurlow Weed, would get the lucrative appointment as postmaster of New York City; Cameron's brother James would win a commission as colonel of the 79th New York, while his son Brua would become a military paymaster; Hiram Barney, an ally of Chase, would win the even-more-lucrative post of collector for the Port of New York, and Chase's brother, Edward, would become U.S. marshal for the Northern District of New York.

Lincoln made no similar attempt to appease unhappy Democrats, and it probably wouldn't have been worth it if he'd tried. The Breckinridge Democrats might have loathed Stephen A. Douglas, but they regarded Lincoln as a "Black Republican" who had "openly proclaimed a war of extermination

against the leading institutions of the Southern States." The fire-eating Charleston Mercury described Lincoln as a "horrid-looking wretch... sooty and scoundrelly in aspect; a cross between the nutmeg dealer, the horse-swapper, and the nightman." A Georgia satirist pilloried Lincoln in rhyme: "His cheekbones were high and his visage was rough, / Like a middling of bacon, all wrinkled and tough; / His nose was as long, and as ugly and big / As the snout of a half-starved Illinois pig; / He was long in the legs and long in the face, / A Longfellow born of a long-legged race...."

But Northern Democrats, even as they gritted their teeth at the pros-



Simon Cameron OC-0482

pect of Douglas's defeat, were no more inclined than their Southern counterparts to countenance a Lincoln presidency. They had not forgotten the stark, moralistic terms in which Lincoln had cast opposition to slavery in his debates with Douglas in 1858 and in the Cooper Union speech earlier that year. The *New York Herald* took the lead, denouncing the Republicans as "saturated with abolitionism of the most rabid kind" and Lincoln "as an extreme abolitionist of the revolutionary type" who would "liberate

all the slaves in the Southern States by habeas corpus, using the whole power of the army and navy in carrying out his grand scheme." New York Democrat Samuel J. Tilden warned Gotham Democrats, "Elect Lincoln, and we invite those perils which we cannot measure... Defeat Lincoln, and all our great interests and hopes are, unquestionably, safe." August Belmont, New York's Democratic financial wizard, feared that "the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidential chair must prove the forerunner of a dissolution of this Confederacy amid all the horrors of civil strife and bloodshed." In Indiana, the Douglas Democrats exhorted the "Freemen of Indiana" not even to think of voting "for this man, Lincoln—a genus of the same type as the traitor, John Brown, who was hung at Charleston; an abolitionist of the reddest dye; and a wholesale disunionist!" Ohio's Clement Vallandigham was horrified that a divided Democratic party would lead to the election of a president "as revolutionary, disorganizing, subversive of the Government" as Lincoln.

By the same token, Lincoln made no gestures in the other direction, either, toward the absolute, no-concession abolitionists. Wendell Phillips, for whom nothing less than immediate and unconditional abolition was acceptable, attacked Lincoln's concentration solely on limiting the spread of slavery for making him nothing more than a "constitutional slave-hound." Lincoln was

"ready to hunt slaves so long as the Union, the party, and the white race seem to need it; and he is therefore just the wood out of which Washington Presidents are carved. If any think such charac-

ters useful and necessary now-a-days, let them. But that is no reason why I should call such persons honest men, any more than I should call geese eagles, because a goose once saved Rome."

Radical abolitionists held their own presidential nominating convention on August 29th in Syracuse, New York, adamantly refusing to vote "for a candidate like Abraham Lincoln, who stands ready to execute the accursed Fugitive Slave Law, to suppress

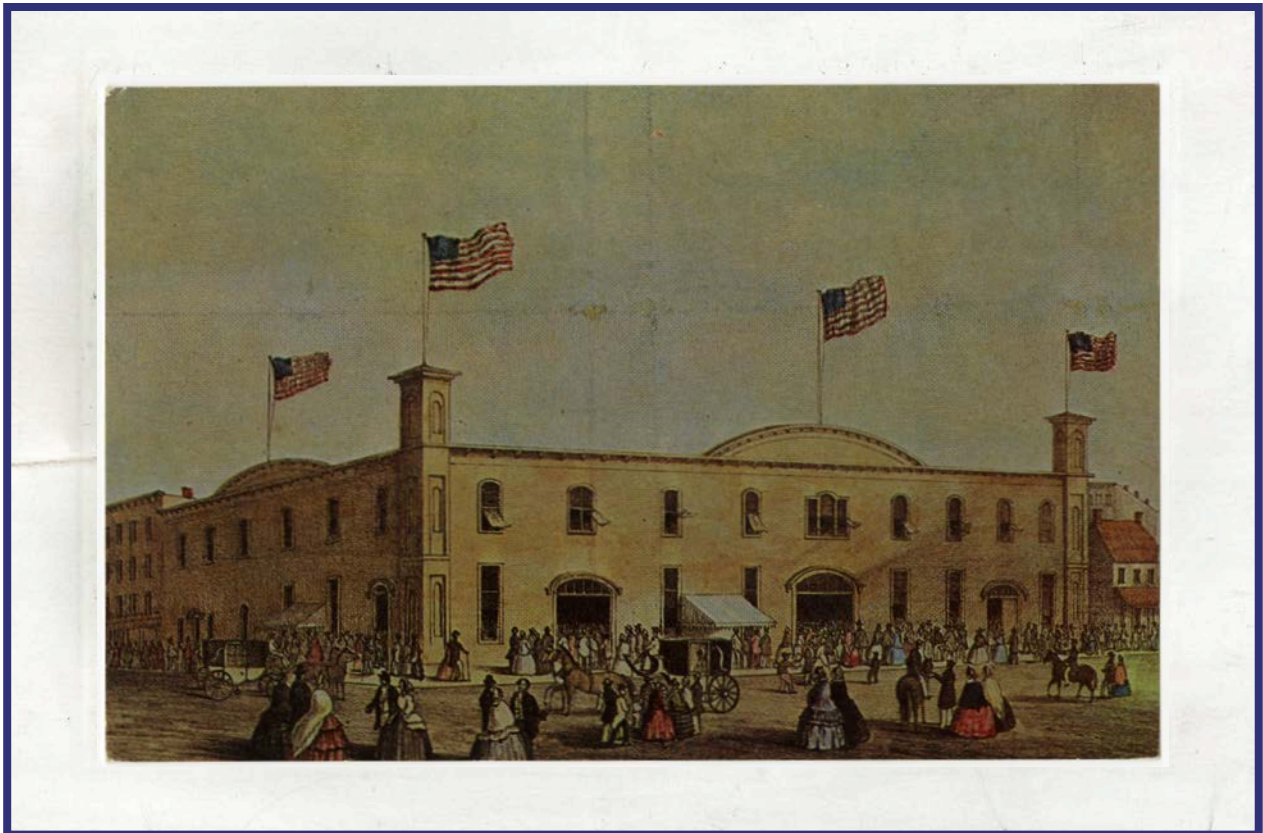
insurrections among slaves, to admit new slave States, and to support the ostracism, socially and politically, of the black man of the North” and nominating the veteran abolitionist Gerrit Smith. Abolitionists even argued among themselves over Lincoln: when Scottish-born abolitionist James Redpath announced after the Republican convention that “he should vote for Lincoln” because it “would benefit the slave,” this former ally of John Brown was roundly pummeled by the come-outer abolitionist, Stephen S. Foster, who was “astounded that such a man as Redpath should declare his willingness to vote for a man like Lincoln, who declared his willingness to be slave-driver general.”

Lincoln put less labor into reaching out to Northern Democrats or radical Abolitionists, and more into fending off efforts by others to put words into his mouth. “I would cheerfully answer your questions in regard to the Fugitive Slave law, were it not that I consider it would be both imprudent, and contrary to the reasonable expectation of friends for me to write, or speak anything upon doctrinal points now. Besides this, my published speeches contain nearly all I

could willingly say. Justice and fairness to all, is the utmost I have said, or will say,” he replied in August to an overly curious New York abolitionist (with the ominous name of T. Apolion Cheney). He was still repeating that formula in October: “Those who will not read, or heed, what I have already publicly said, would not read, or heed, a repetition of it,” Lincoln wrote, adding with a Biblical flourish which featured one Abraham quoting another Abraham through Luke, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” The governor of Illinois, John Wood, offered Lincoln space in the old State Capitol as an office, and shortly after Weed’s visit to Springfield, Lincoln hired John G. Nicolay, who clerked for Lincoln’s friend and the Illinois secretary of state, Ozias Hatch. He prepared for Nicolay a form letter stating that friends had beseeched him “to write nothing whatever upon any point of political doctrine. They say his positions were well known when he was nominated, and that he must not now embarrass the canvass by undertaking to shift or modify them.”

This was an unusually shut-mouthed strategy for a man whose rhetori-

cal powers against Douglas in 1858 had boosted him into the national limelight. But Lincoln was acting on orders from the Republican National Committee, who could see the prize dropping effortlessly into their hands and who wanted to do nothing to interfere with it. “I have observed that those candidates who are most cautious of making pledges, stating opinions or entering into arrangements of any sort for the future save themselves and their friends a great deal of trouble and have the best chance of success,” advised William Cullen Bryant. “Make no speeches, write no letters as a candidate, enter into no pledges, make no promises, nor even give any of those kind words which men are apt to interpret into promises.” All Lincoln needed to do was “do nothing at present but allow yourself to be elected.” Even when he was invited to speak at a national horse show in the presumably friendly environs of Springfield, Massachusetts, in August, George Fogg, the secretary of the Republican National Committee, nixed the idea. “I answer very frankly that I do not think it would ‘help,’” Fogg wrote. “Everything east I believe is well. The election is ours now. The triumph is ours.” And Lincoln stayed



*“The Republican Wigwam,” Chicago, Illinois, 1860, based on a sketch by E. Whitefield
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put in his own Springfield. When the Illinois Republican state convention met in Springfield on August 8th, Lincoln addressed a crowd that jammed around his doorway and sidewalk, his "remarks" amounted to 268 carefully opaque words. "It has been my purpose, since I have been placed in my present position, to make no speeches," Lincoln said. "I appear upon the ground here at this time only for the purpose of affording myself the best opportunity of seeing you, and enabling you to see me."

Lincoln needn't have worried that this silent campaign would damage his prospects. Although he remained in

gance could support. Fourteen campaign biographies were written and circulated; artists and photographers were commissioned to capture (and improve) Lincoln's likeness for mass distribution; and even one sculptor was hired to prepare campaign statuettes. Lincoln might refuse to make public appearances, but the national committee ensured that Republican organizers made the campaign dramatically visible through campaign newspapers, Lincoln clubs, and torchlight parades by Republican "Wide-Awakes."

The Wide-Awakes provide a dash of unusual electioneering color to the

Tribune estimated that "the number of speeches made during the...campaign has been quite equal to that of all that were made in the previous Presidential canvasses from 1789 to 1859 inclusive. We estimate that not less than ten thousand set speeches have been made in this State alone, and probably not less than fifty thousand within the limits of the Union." In Portland, Maine, an "evening torchlight procession" of Wide-Awakes "wore glazed black caps and cloaks, and presented a particularly somber appearance as they glided along beneath the glimmering flashes of their flambeaux," while "the Lincoln guard wore red glazed cloaks" and marched to the music of "a great number of



"Mohawk Wide Awakes and Band," November 1860 LN-1487

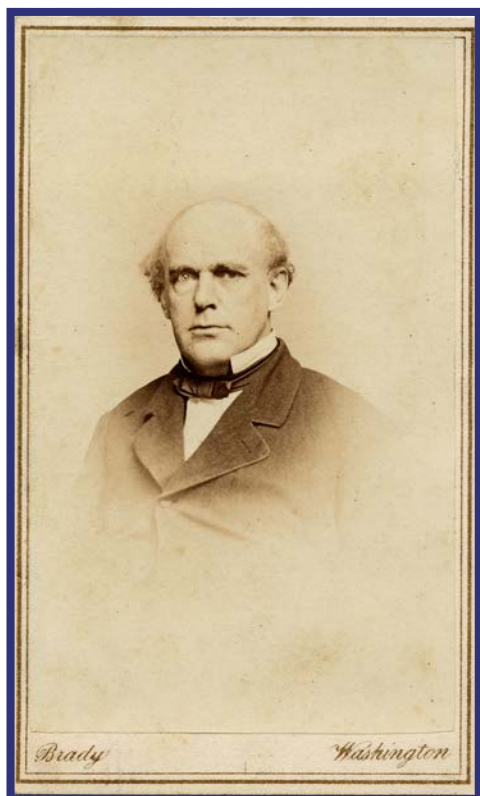
Springfield, he sent a variety of emissaries on personal embassies to represent him and garner responses. The Republican National Committee did more than its share of work in crafting a national image of a moderate, incorruptible, and (with some degree of fudging) substantially less homely candidate whom anyone upset with insider politics and slaveholder arro-

campaign of 1860. But they often disguise how calculating the Republicans were in snagging the attention and commitment of younger, first-time voters through groups like the Wide-Awakes and "Young Republican" clubs. The Young Men's Republican Union of New York City "circulated 3,961,000 pages of Republican documents," and the *New-York*

bands." In New York City, five different Republican clubs - including the "Irrepressible Wide Awake Battalion" and the "Republican Association of the 19th Ward" held meetings. Across the North, recalled Charles Francis Adams, "The campaign of 1860 was essentially a midnight demonstration—it was the 'Wide-awake' canvass of

rockets, illuminations and torch-light processions. Every night was marked by its tumult, shouting, marching and countermarching, the reverberation of explosives and the rush of rockets and Roman candles. The future was reflected on the skies. ...We knew nothing of the South, had no realizing sense of the intensity of feeling which there prevailed; we fully believed it would all end in gasconade."

Election days in the 19th century did not follow a synchronized schedule. Presidential votes were cast across the nation on November 6th, but a series of state legislative, gubernatorial,



Salmon P. Chase LFA-0208

and Congressional elections were being held in Maine, Ohio, and Pennsylvania beginning in September and acted as a bellwether for the direction of the November voting. On that basis alone, the Republican confidence in an electoral sweep was more than borne out: Republicans swept the six Congressional districts of Maine on September 10th and elected a Republican governor, 69,000 to 51,000. Pennsylvanians, who voted a month later, elected a Republican, Andrew Curtin, as governor by a 32,000-vote margin, gave crushing majorities to Republicans

in the state legislature, and elected Republicans in twenty of their twenty-five Congressional districts. Ohio elected a Republican state Supreme Court judge and handed thirteen of its twenty-one Congressional seats to Republicans; overall, Republican votes overwhelmed Democrats with 53% of all votes cast.

Lincoln was delighted with the "late splendid victories...which seem to foreshadow the certain success of the Republican cause in November." Which, of course, they did. On November 6, Lincoln carried the popular vote of all eighteen of the free states, including Oregon and California, which in turn, easily gave him 180 electoral votes – twenty-eight more than needed. No Lincoln votes were counted at all in nine Southern states (although this was better than Frémont's no-shows in 1856, when twelve states registered no Republican votes), but they hardly mattered.

John C. Breckinridge won eleven slave states, but this garnered him only 72 electoral votes. Douglas did much better in the popular vote, outdistancing Breckinridge by 61%. But Douglas still lagged far behind Lincoln – by almost half a million votes; moreover, the Douglas votes were so scattered across the country that they earned him only twelve electoral votes, placing him behind not only Breckinridge but even the faded John Bell. Lincoln won only 39.8% of the overall popular vote; but he did it in concentrations big enough to win him an easy majority in the Electoral College.

Only in California, where a change of 700 votes could have given the state to a Democrat, was the election even close, and California had only four electoral votes to contribute. In the states where Lincoln won, he mostly won by unchallengeable majorities: 57% in Connecticut, 58% in New York, 56.5% in Pennsylvania, 52% in Ohio, 57% in Michigan. Although it has often been a parlor game to wonder whether the change of one or another state's votes might have thrown the election into the House of Representatives, in the states that really mattered (like New York), Lincoln's popular majori-

ty was so great as to be unassailable, even if the Democratic and Constitutional Union candidates had forgotten their differences and made a common front. Besides, Douglas himself had pledged that "the election shall never go into the House; before it shall go into the House, I will throw it over to Lincoln."

"The contest has been so long and so exhaustive," wrote John Nicolay after the election frenzy had worn off, that in Lincoln's Springfield, the "people look and act as if they were almost too tired to feel at all interested in getting up a grand hurrah over the victory." At least, Nicolay reflected, the long struggle to contain slavery was over. "I myself can hardly realize that after having fought this Slavery question for six years past,...I am rejoicing at a triumph which...we hardly dared dream about." Salmon Chase agreed: "The great object of my wishes & labors for nineteen years is accomplished in the overthrow of the Slave Power," Chase wrote to Lincoln that day after the election.

Lincoln hoped the same realization would prevail in the South and ensure a peaceful inauguration five months hence. "The prevalent apprehensions, a week or two ago, of our lords of trade, that the People of the Southern States would insist on going naked in case of Lincoln's election," smirked the *New-York Tribune*, "have already been measurably dissipated." Even "Mr. Lincoln considers the feeling at the South to be limited to a very small number." They were, all of them, wrong. On the same day, the South Carolina legislature voted unanimously to schedule elections on December 6th for a state secession convention. A very different future was about to break upon the nation, but, as Charles Francis Adams wrote, "of the tremendous nature of that future, we then had no conception. We all dwelt in a fool's Paradise."

[Allen C. Guelzo is the Henry R. Luce III Professor of the Civil War Era and Director of the Civil War Era Studies Program at Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.]

For footnotes and additional notes, please visit www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org

From The Collection

Since 1929, *Lincoln Lore* has been a staple publication of the Lincoln world. Publication began on the sixty-fourth anniversary of President Lincoln's assassination and twenty-five years after Robert Lincoln granted permission for the commercial use of his father's image to Lincoln National Life Insurance Company in Fort Wayne, IN. Louis Warren, the first Director of the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, began a tradition that would continue to this day. The intention of *Lincoln Lore* was to document the findings of the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation, created under the direction of Arthur Hall, President of Lincoln National Life.

"It will try to anticipate the needs of authors and students of Lincoln's life; collectors and librarians who are gathering Lincolniana; and editors of newspapers, magazines, and house organs who find frequent need of short Lincoln items for their publications," wrote Warren, who also planned for *Lincoln Lore* to be a supplement to the publications of the Abraham Lincoln Association in Springfield, IL. Since that time, the scope of the publication has widened to the current policy of publishing articles by the foremost Lincoln scholars of today.

Lincoln Lore #1 Editor: Louis Warren



Louis Warren (L) and Gerald McMurry, #2868

Ian Rolland (L) and Mark Neely, #2866



Lincoln Lore #39 Editor: Louis Warren



Lincoln Lore #1421 Editor: Gerald McMurry

Emily Rapoza, Lincoln Librarian
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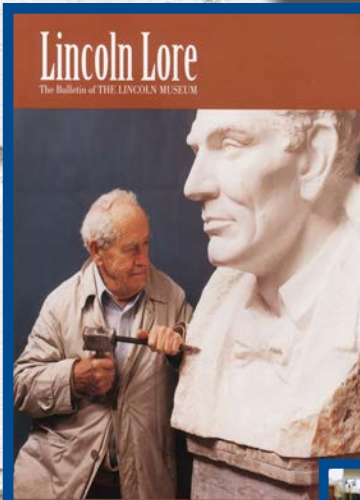
Gerald Prokopowicz, Photo: E. Prokopowicz



Lincoln Lore #1842 Editor: Gerald Prokopowicz

In its 90th year, it is important to look back on the many renditions of *Lincoln Lore* since its initial publication. What began as a weekly, single-leaf publication grew to a folded pamphlet, and then on to a fully designed magazine. Throughout its 90 years and more than 1,920 issues, *Lincoln Lore* has had 5 editors at its helm: Louis A. Warren (1929-1956), R. Gerald McMurtry (1956-1972), Mark E. Neely, Jr. (1973-1992), Gerald Prokopowicz (1995-2002), and currently, Sara Gabbard. *Lincoln Lore* has grown from a mailing list to subscribers only and now reaches thousands more with the expansion of the Lincoln Lore archive online.

Thanks to the vision and support of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana, *Lincoln Lore* past and current issues, are now available online at www.FriendsoftheLincolnCollection.org.



Lincoln Lore #1870 Editor: Sara Gabbard



Lincoln Lore #1921 Editor: Sara Gabbard



Sara Gabbard, Photo: E. Rapoza



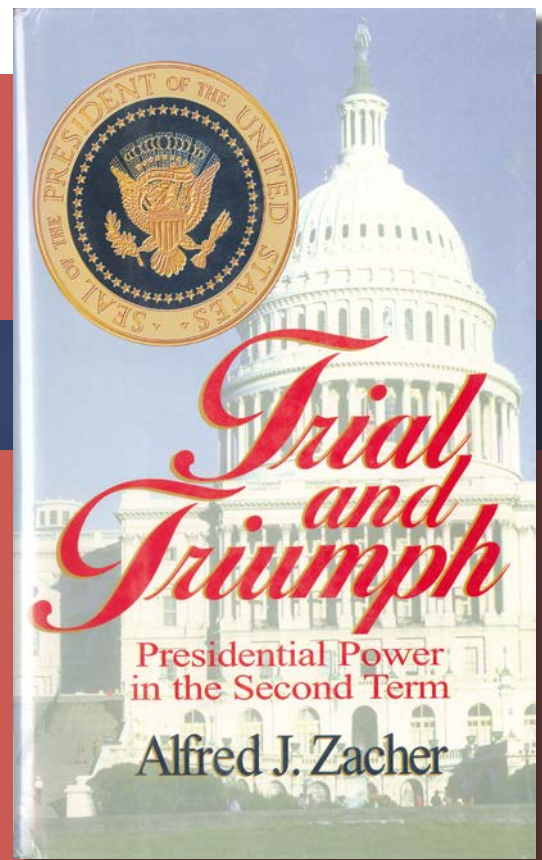
An Interview

with

Alfred J. Zacher

Sara Gabbard

Trial and Triumph: Presidential Power in the Second Term (Presidential Press, 1996)



Sara Gabbard: Which presidents do you believe showed the greatest leadership skills.

Al Zacher: Strong presidential leadership might be defined as the ability of a president to pursue major objectives to fulfillment. This requires perseverance, support of the public and of Congress if their approval is required. This is an understatement, but it provides a guideline to judging the leadership skills of a president. However, it does not mean to imply that the objectives are in the best long-term interests of the nation. Those presidents with strong leadership skills were: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson in his first term, James Madison in his second term, Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush.

SG: How do you keep track of all of the newly published books on history and determine which to read?

AZ: I carefully seek out new books by authors with recognized credentials that appear in the New York Times Book Review, in the "Saturday Review" section of the *Wall Street Journal* and in the *New York Review of Books*. Interestingly, magazines such as the Atlantic

and National Review will occasionally have an article on a book that is not widely covered. The reviews in Lincoln Lore have merit. I read many of these books that seem to present an insightful and/or broader perspective.

SG: Do you buy more books because you think that you SHOULD read them or because you WANT to read them?

AZ: I want to read any historical book that offers valued insights. But I avoid books that I believe fail to accurately present their subject. For example, I would not read books on Jefferson which rejected his relationship with Sally Hemmings. I believe those authors failed to understand Jefferson's character and nature, which was the basis for his decisions in all matters.

SG: I know that you are a great student of the U.S. presidency. Do you explore one man at a time, or do you "jump back and forth?" Do you reach a point at which you are satisfied that you "know" a president?

AZ: My book on the second term of our presidents has a chapter on each second term president, up to and including George W. Bush. I studied these presidents in the greatest detail by reading the few autobiographies

which existed and biographies. I included in my studies their speeches, letters, public documents, and diaries. I continued my research until I was satisfied that I understood: the inner nature of each, their strengths and shortcomings, and both their successes and failures.

SG: Do you believe that some presidents have been overrated? Underrated?

AZ: James Madison has not received the recognition he deserves in the annals of presidential history. He was the great contributor to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Federalist Papers. As president he was granted the opportunity to pursue their implementation. In his second term, he found the flexibility to implement Federalist concepts while retaining the power of the veto. And he stood alone in preserving Washington as the federal capital as the British destroyed most of the governmental buildings. The great admiration of Jefferson exists despite his failures in his second term. Jackson became hugely popular among much of the population by appearing as the fighter for their interests. However, that popularity aside, many of his significant decisions have later been judged to be unfavorable.

SG: In your opinion, which books written by Lincoln's contemporaries best stand the test of time?

AZ: The book that stands out is the one written by John G. Nicolay and John Hay. Herndon's so-called biography made some contributions, and a number of his quotes from others have particular value.

SG: Gordon Wood wrote a book titled *The Purpose of the Past: Reflections on the Uses of History*. Have Americans as a whole lost the belief that understanding history is important? If so, why?

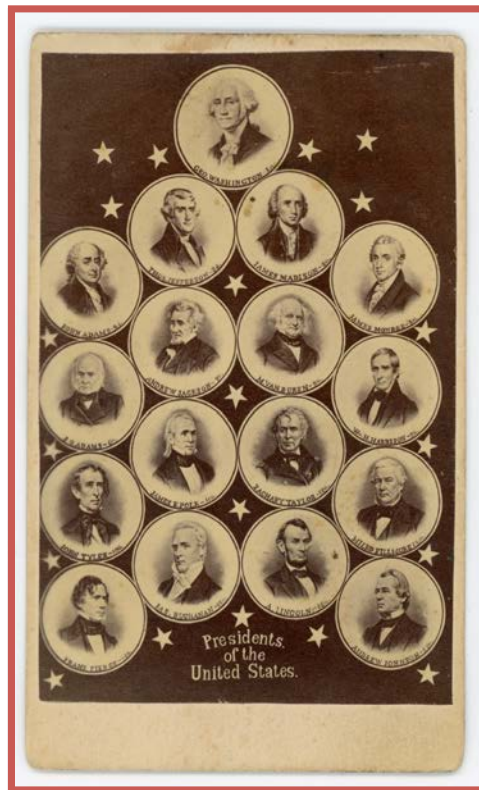
AZ: The widespread disappearance of history courses in colleges and universities, including many of the most prestigious, is a great tragedy. Sages through time have warned of the danger that ensues from ignoring the lessons of the past. However, it has to be noted with pride that some of our presidents seem to have taken lessons from the past as their guide. Among those who understood this and followed through with policy were Washington, Madison, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Franklin Roosevelt, and Truman. Among those who refused to learn from the past were Jackson and George W. Bush. Young people today are being denied the study of history by an academic view that seems to refuse to understand the damage it is causing.

SG: Abraham Lincoln so admired our Founding Fathers. Let's use Thomas Jefferson as an example. Have our feelings about him changed through the years?

AZ: Abraham Lincoln trusted his own judgment in the lessons he drew from the Founding Fathers whom he admired so greatly. He borrowed from each portions of their contributions that he believed fit his times. His support of improvement such as the railroads and land grant colleges were counter to the firmly held views of the Jeffersonian outlook, although he expressed great admiration for Jefferson.

SG: Your book, *Trial and Triumph: Presidential Power in the Second Term*, was critically acclaimed. How did you conceive of the concept of second terms as a focus?

AZ: In reading Henry Adams's *History of the United States during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, I discovered Adams's view that Jefferson had a troubled second term. I recalled vividly the unfavorable impact his attempt to pack the Supreme Court had on the second term of Franklin Roosevelt. And of course the resignation of Richard Nixon in his second term added to my decision to study presidents who had served a second term.



"Presidents of the United States" showing presidents from George Washington through Andrew Johnson, LN-1824

SG: Please comment on the impact of media on the presidency over time.

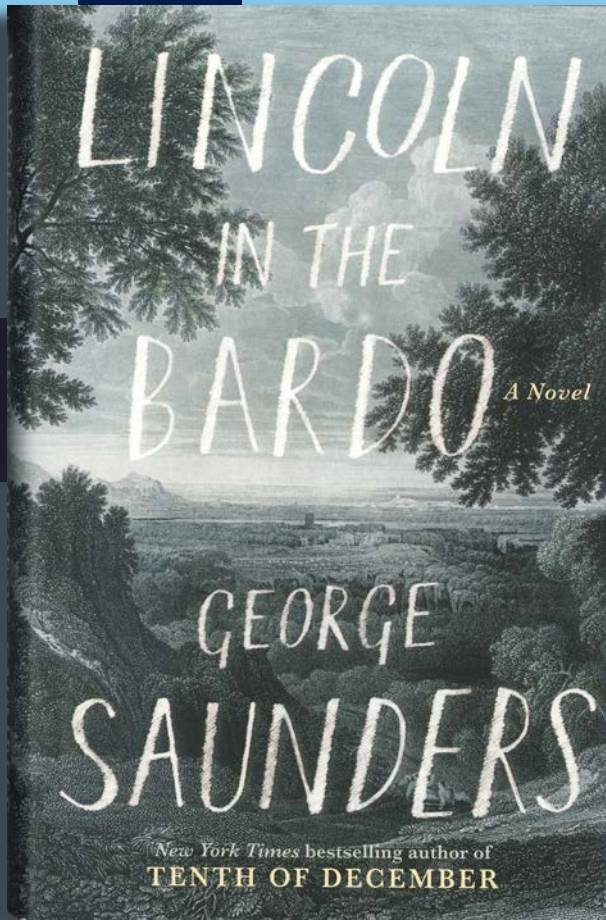
AZ: Surprisingly, presidents have had to manage the challenge of powerful and sometimes new media from the early moments of our republic. George Washington and the Federalists were bombarded with attacks published in the flourishing newspa-

pers that were in the infancy of this media. Many of the articles, both for and against the administration, were either unsigned or written by the Founders under assumed names. Many contained fake news, other made scurrilous accusations, such as referring to Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemmings. Abraham Lincoln invested in a German Language newspaper to influence that group. He worked closely with the editors of major newspapers to gain their support. Franklin Roosevelt attempted to dominate the newspaper media by maintaining a close relationship with reporters through his frequent press conferences.

However, the papers were owned by his opponents and regularly published editorials and articles in opposition to FDR. During the time when radio was in its infancy, his "fireside chat" radio broadcasts drew a very high percentage of listeners. In the meantime, radio personalities such as Father Coughlin had a sizeable radio audience listening to his virulent attacks on Roosevelt, Jews, and more. Television led Eisenhower and all presidents that followed to obtain as much exposure there as possible.

However, Donald Trump has set a new level of use of media by having had his own successful TV series, his use of Tweeting, and his frequent announcements, which bring him attention. Social media in its various formats offers a vast public an opportunity to broadcast their positions on all matters of interest to them. Any presidential candidate now faces a much broader onslaught from this new world of media. Time will tell us if democracy can weather the storm of such diverse and powerful media by allowing the two-party system to function as it always has. However, there is reason to believe that media is only one factor in the survival of democracy.

*[Alfred J. Zacher is the founder of The Zacher Company in Fort Wayne, IN. He serves as a Board member of Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana and for many years has chaired the annual McMurtry Lecture. He is the author of *Trial and Triumph: Presidential Power in the Second Term*.]*



Lincoln and the Bardo,
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An Interview with George Saunders, author of *Lincoln in the Bardo*

Craig Klugman

George Saunders' novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo*, is exhilarating and experimental. It was a *New York Times* and *USA Today* best seller, and it won the Man Booker Prize in 2017. It may make you cry in parts and laugh in some others. It will certainly make you think.

The novel is written in usually brief paragraphs from what are essentially ghosts in the cemetery where Willie Lincoln is laid to rest, but sometimes Saunders uses quotations from real histories and biographies. Because Abraham Lincoln makes some appearances in Saunders' novel (and seems to loom over every page), Lincoln Lore is publishing this interview with the author. (C.K.)

Craig Klugman: What is the Bardo?

George Saunders: "Bardo" is a Tibetan term that means, roughly, "transitional state." So we are in a bardo right now, namely the one between birth and death. The one referred to in the book's title starts at the moment of our death and goes to...whatever's next. There are wonderful books detailing what this ex-

perience is like (among them "The Tibetan Book of the Dead"), but I realized pretty early that verisimilitude wasn't necessarily the job. It felt to me that, since this was a novel, the main job was something like "be dramatic." So, to that end, "my" bardo ended up being a mash-up of the Tibetan tradition and the Catholic tradition and some ghost tradition as well. In other words, had I been truer to the "actual" bardo, I would have been less true to my job as a fiction writer, which is to make meaningful drama, and thereby force the story to tell big truths that are not necessarily historical or demonstrative of a certain religious system.

CK: What was the inspiration for the novel? Why Abraham Lincoln?

GS: It was a version of that thing young writers always dream about: that some "idea" will grab hold of you for inexplicable reasons and not let go until you write the book. In my case, the "idea" came out of an anecdote I heard a long time ago: Lincoln had been so heartbroken by the death

of his son, Willie, that he supposedly went into the crypt soon after the burial to somehow interact with the body – look at it, or speak to it, or hold it. This idea appeared, I heard, in some of the newspapers of the time. I carried that idea around for twenty-plus years, not feeling confident that I had the skill to write it – it seemed too straight, too un-ironic, not funny, etc. Then, finally, in 2012, I thought of how sad it would be if I kept avoiding this idea. That would be a concession, really, to my own apparent artistic limitations. Which is a great way to die on the vine as a writer. So I decided to launch in and even made a sort of contract with myself, that I would allow myself three years and then, if it proved a total disaster, walk away happy.

As far as "Why Abraham Lincoln?" – the involvement of Lincoln was one of the reasons I avoided the idea for so long. It just seemed impossible and potentially corny and sentimental. The operative question of the book became, "Good Lord, how do you

write about Lincoln without being imitative/mawkish/quaint?" Eventually, the dangers of writing about Lincoln became guard rails, sort of, or originality stimulants. My desire to steer clear of the corny and sentimental became a way to steer toward doing something new. It reminded me of that old joke:

Patient: It hurts when I do this.

Doctor: Don't do that.

Whenever my representation of Lincoln started feeling like it was veering toward being too stock or sentimental, I would just say to myself, "Don't do that." Which was another way of saying that Lincoln – the real-life Lincoln – remains very much a mystery to us, and what is stock, sentimental, etc., are just rounded-off, habitual ways of representing this

ning of the book. Did you research the nature of presidential parties? And Mary Todd Lincoln does not come off very well.

GS: The Lincolns decided to cut expenses by having three large receptions instead of several large state dinners. This was Mary's idea and it was a good and well-intentioned one, but that didn't stop the Lincolns from catching a lot of heat for hosting a celebration during this dire period of the war. And, during that party, the Lincoln boys, who were sick with typhoid, grew worse – and this was the beginning of Willie's decline, the guilt of which, of course, stayed with the Lincolns until the end. And they were also criticized, cruelly, for having a party while their son was upstairs dying – which wasn't accurate. He was sick, but a doctor had assured them

My research just consisted of reading every description of that party I could find and then typing them up and cutting them up and endlessly rearranging them to find out which combination gave off the most energy. Again, the goal was not so much to describe that party but to sort of enact PARTY on the page – to make a sort of Platonic party. One of the mysterious truths I've discovered by writing fiction is that simply seeking energy in a piece of prose (velocity, tight logic, a feeling of being compelled through it) actually, in the end, produces truth. Or, you might say, that energy IS truth – reading about something and having it come simultaneously and spontaneously alive in one's mind is a form of living in truth.

CK: Describe Willie Lincoln's funeral.



White House, LFA-0383

boundless person. So the goal became not "get Lincoln right" but "get him wrong in a new way, a way that feels original and unexpected enough to cause the reader to, even briefly, consider Lincoln anew."

CK: Please describe the White House party depicted at the begin-

ning of the party would do no harm and that he would recover. I also think that Mary Lincoln gets a bad rap pretty much everywhere you look. I'm sure she was difficult, but Lincoln seemed to really love her, was very protective of her, and man, the difficulties that poor woman endured. And she often gave him very good advice, too.

GS: Well, there was a service in the East Room and a shorter service out at Oak Hill, in the chapel (which still stands). It was very emotional and there was a particularly beautiful speech by the Reverend Phineas D. Gurley. The sense you get is that everyone present realized that a very

special child had been lost, and joined the President and Mrs. Lincoln in their grief.

But I should say that my research method was a little backwards – I would realize what I needed and go in search of it. So what I know about the funeral is exactly equal to the text fragments I accumulated about it, if that makes sense, and I would have to wait and see where they might be needed. For example, I found Gurley's speech and typed it out and was just, then, waiting for it to be necessary and effective somewhere. And, in the event, I actually split it up – some went in Chapter XVIII, a section of testimonials about Willie, and some went toward the end of the book, in the section describing the funeral.

So I guess what I'm saying is I don't know a lot about the funeral, other than what I represent in the book. It wasn't necessary for me to "master" the funeral and then decide what to write about it. Rather, I was trying to be sensitive to what the structure of the book needed and then supply whatever it needed, and if it seemed to be something from the funeral, I would do whatever reading was needed.

CK: Who was Isabelle Perkins?

GS: She is a young woman I invented. When I was visiting Oak Hill, I got interested in a row of houses across the street, from which a person would have had a view of both the guard-house and the chapel. I felt like it might be useful to have one more living human available, to comment and help locate the reader from time to time. (Lincoln is actually the only "real" living person who shows up in the fictive graveyard. I also invented a night watchman, Jack Manders. So Lincoln, Perkins, and Manders are the only "living" people in Oak Hill that night.) As I was writing Perkins, she started, as often happens, to tell me a particular life story. She was disabled

and bed-ridden and had no family but a brother, who was off on some sort of (selfish, we feel) adventure and had left her in the care of a nurse. So she had a lot of time on her hands and kept a detailed diary (from which I am "quoting") and spends a lot of time looking across the street at the cemetery. And, on the night in question, she sees Lincoln twice – as he enters and then again as he leaves.

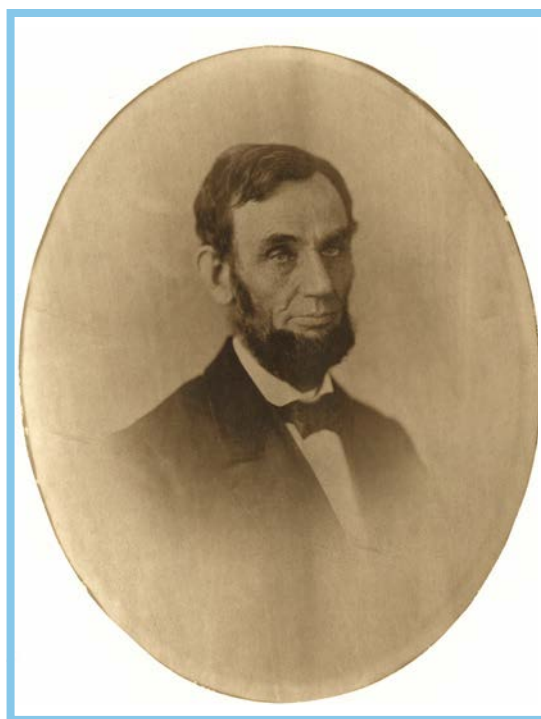
CK: Are others named in the Bardo real people or did you create their stories? Or are they a mixture? Did you prepare detailed back stories for them?

GS: The non-living beings are all invented (except for Willie Lincoln). I don't really prepare backstories off the page, except for birth and death dates. They sort of revealed their life stories as I wrote them and then, of course, the challenge was to "remember" what they had told you, as you came back to them again and again. (And to continue to expand their stories in the new sections.) My theory is that the writer's first job is to make interesting and believable text chunks. So, whatever was interesting in the moment as I made the prose – well, that became the character's life story. This prevents a very real problem that every fiction writer has to deal with, namely the problem of over-controlling the material. Asking "What ghost do I need right now?" has the effect of injecting the writer's (too simple) intentionality into the work and thereby making it didactic and tidy. Whereas, I found, if I just trusted my intuition to help me "make" a ghost at the needed moment, out of whatever language was available and interesting, then the

text felt more alive and organic. You sense that there should be a ghost off to the right, you start typing (i.e., internally narrating that ghost's voice) and...voila. There he/she is. And then you have to deal with him or her, i.e., you have to not forget what he or she just told you, and to continue to listen in the pages to come.

CK: Did your thoughts about Lincoln change while you researched the novel?

GS: Yes, but that was partly, of course, because I was injecting so much of myself into him. So he became more like me, and consequently, I found I liked and agreed with him more. (Ha ha, and yet not.) I did come to think that the historical Lincoln was someone who had a good dose of depression, on top of which he got a good dose of bad fortune and that this combination took him very low indeed at certain points – but that he may have had some extraordinary glimpses at wisdom while in that state. I think we've all had moments of feeling completely bottomed out, when all of our plans and good intentions have come to nothing, and, speaking for myself, those moments are full of honesty



Abraham Lincoln, OC-1540

and clarity – you have no bad ideas or dear agendas to protect anymore. You’re allowed to just see. One senses that Lincoln spent a lot of quiet, solitary time in that state, looking at the war and equality and mortality, and that, in the long run, the nation benefitted from this sadness-wisdom. Although I suspect it wasn’t always very enjoyable for him.

CK: How did you choose the actual books on Lincoln that you quote from? Which did you admire, and which, not so much?

GS: I admired, or at least was grateful for, every single one of them, because I could use everything. Even if a book was poorly written or had what seemed to me a weak idea of the center of it, I could potentially use it, since the idea was to simulate “America singing.” Bad theories, weak voices (good theories, strong voices) were all a part of it. In some ways it was like walking through a train station, recording on your phone: whatever was heard, was part of the portrait of “Train Station.” You took the good with the bad.

I chose the books by a process of voracious serendipity: any time I saw or heard about a Lincoln book or a Civil War book, I’d go to the index and see if Willie was mentioned or that party, and I’d write down whatever I found. I imagined my brain as a silo and the job was just: put as much as possible in there so that, at the moment of invention, I would have a solid basis. There were, of course, notes that I didn’t use. Structure was king; if I had a fact or a nice quote that didn’t somehow serve a larger purpose (move the story along, help inhabit a chapter that would move the story along) then it went into the Discard pile (where, sadly, it remains, to this day).

CK: Lincoln in the Bardo was your first novel. How did that happen?

GS: I’d never found material that

made me really, really want to extend it, or, to be more accurate, that I could extend naturally. Before, I would have to “try” to write a novel – slow things down, or write a bunch of stuff I really wasn’t interested in. (Ugh, the scene of X and Y’s wedding, snore.) This time I was actively trying to make it NOT a novel but the material kept insisting. It kept insisting in this way: I’d write a section, trim it down with the same kind of radical scissors I use on a story...and that section would suggest the next one. I wrote and wrote and got to about 60 pages and had only just begun (was, maybe, an hour into that eight-hour night).

I was, really, perfectly happy just writing short stories all those years – it’s such a difficult and beautiful form – and I’m back to writing them again now, blissfully. And I’m not sure this is even a novel, really – my wife is fond of pointing out how much white space there is in it. But I do feel that I found the right form to tell this story, and I’m happy that that form is sort of insane and, at the very least, can lay some claim to being original.

CK: Besides writing best-selling novels, what else do you do? Are you still teaching at Syracuse University?

GS: I am, and very happily so. We get about 600-700 applications a year for our fiction program and choose six to come. So our students are amazing. The nice thing is to be constantly reminded that talent is constant in the world. It might change flavor from generation to generation, but not in its presence or intensity.

Other than that, I occasionally make a trip to write a non-fiction piece. During the 2016 campaign I went to some Trump rallies and wrote a piece for *The New Yorker* about it. I love doing those kinds of things because they open up your mind and tend to deconstruct one’s (my!) lazy, middle-aged projections about the world.



Willie Lincoln, LFA-0484

Which, in turn, opens up the fiction, when I get back to it.

CK: What question do you wish we had asked about Lincoln?

GS: I wish you’d asked me for Lincoln’s thoughts on audacity, so I would have an excuse to tell you the following story that he used to tell:

In a town, there was this man who was known for being audacious – brave, bold, courageous, up for any challenge. One day he’s at a big party. Everybody’s dressed up, a very formal occasion, all the best people in town are there. And the host, knowing that this man was so Audacious, asked him to carve the turkey. The Audacious Man stands up, cuts the turkey – and lets out a tremendous fart. The room goes silent. What will the Audacious Man do? How can he possibly recover? The Audacious Man takes off his jacket, rolls up his sleeves, picks up the knife, says: “Now let’s see if I can cut this turkey without farting again.”

[Craig Klugman retired as editor of The Journal Gazette in Fort Wayne, IN. He is a Director of Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana.]

Lincoln's Magician:



Harry Cooke, courtesy of Mark Cannon

The Saga of Captain Horatio G. "Harry" Cooke

Jason H. Silverman

The author wishes to express his deep gratitude and appreciation to professional magicians par excellence, Dean Carnegie and Mark Cannon, for their crucial assistance with this article. They generously provided me with some very important primary sources and much needed materials for this article.

The name Horatio Green "Harry" Cooke is not one usually bandied about when speaking of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Indeed, you might be hard pressed to find him mentioned in any of the 17,000-and-counting volumes in the great pantheon of Lincoln literature. And yet his saga is a remarkable one and his relationship with Lincoln an untold story of bravery, dedication, prestidigitation and escape artistry. In the end, Cooke would become "Lincoln's Magician," a title he wore proudly throughout his long life.

Lincoln was no stranger to magic,

having as a youth entertained with rudimentary magic tricks anyone who would watch him. His fascination with magic continued into adulthood as he matured into a successful attorney and politician. Whenever he could slip away Lincoln would frequent magic shows. In fact, he liked magic so much that he returned four times to see the famous American-born conjuror "Wyman the Wizard," (whose real name was John Wyman) perform at the Odd Fellows Hall located almost exactly halfway between the Capitol and the White House.

Lincoln also saw the British magician Antonio Van Zandt, whose stage name was "Signor Blitz," perform several times. Taking a break from the burdens of war, Lincoln and his son Tad watched Blitz perform at a rehearsal for a July 4th parade near the Cottage on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home that Lincoln often used during the

summer months to escape the brutal Foggy Bottom heat of the Executive Mansion. While marching, Blitz pulled a bird from the hair of one of the girls on the parade route. This impromptu act stopped everyone in their tracks. So Blitz continued several dazzling slight-of-hand tricks, including whisking an egg from the mouth of ten-year-old Tad Lincoln.

A gentleman from the crowd formally introduced the President to the magician. Lincoln replied, "Why, of course, it's Signor Blitz, one of the most famous men in America." So impressed was Lincoln that he invited Blitz to visit the White House. There the magician made a bird appear in Lincoln's famous stovepipe hat. The bird had a note attached to its wing that read "Victory, General Grant," referring to the Battle of Vicksburg that Grant would soon win. Awed by this performance, Lincoln reportedly asked Blitz

how many children he had made happy in his career. "Thousands and tens of thousands," Blitz replied. "I fear that I have made thousands and tens of thousands unhappy," Lincoln morosely responded. "But it is for each of us to do our duty in the world and I am trying to do mine." What neither knew at the time was that the Union would soon win twin victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg which would turn the tide of the war.

Thus it is not surprising that, when Lincoln learned of young Horatio Cooke's formidable skills as a magician, the President was determined to meet him if for no other reason than to be entertained. Entertained he was; however, so much more would come from the relationship between the two.

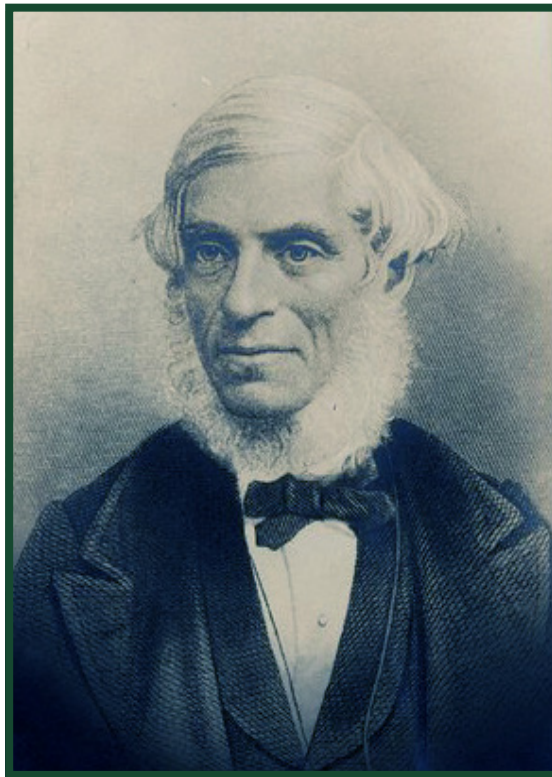
Cooke had been a precocious child, both studious and entertaining. Harry, as his friends knew him, quickly excelled in his studies despite the family moving around several times from Connecticut to Illinois before they landed in Iowa on the eve of the Civil War. Due to his excellent grasp of the English language, as well as his comfort in speaking before groups, the then seventeen-year-old Harry was hired as a teacher for a small rural school and planned on continuing his career in education. But events were about to occur that would forever change Harry's life.

As the threads of the Union were finally torn asunder and secession drew lines in the sand from which one must decide his loyalties, Harry found himself swept up in the drama. Once he turned eighteen in early 1862, Harry Cooke, now legally an adult, enlisted in the 28th Iowa Volunteer Infantry in nearby Marengo, Iowa, along with his brother, Nathan W. Cooke. Eight of his students followed Private Cooke and his brother into the army as well.

As his diary, letters, and scrapbook attest, Harry Cooke had learned to

write in beautiful Spencerian cursive handwriting. This ability, coupled with his expert marksmanship with a rifle, soon caught the attention of his superior officers. "Typewriters were not in general use at this time," Cooke recalled, "so my skill in penmanship was in great demand." So, too, was his ability with a rifle as he was quickly named an infantry sharp shooter.

But that certainly didn't keep Harry out of trouble. Civil War or not, Harry Cooke loved magic and escaping from camp and going AWOL just to see if he could get away with it. "Among



Antonio Van Zandt, courtesy of Dean Carnegie

my comrades I had the reputation of being clever in performing a number of 'tricks,' among which was rope tying feats, the knowledge of which was a strong factor later on in saving my life and [several] of my comrades," Harry proudly wrote. So it wasn't long after enlisting that Cooke found himself with his thumbs tied over a limb of a tree as punishment for yet again leaving camp unauthorized. As soon as the soldier who had secured him

turned his back, Harry performed what would be the first of a lifetime of magic tricks for an audience. "In a flash [I] had freed [my] thumb," Cooke recounted, "and made a mocking gesture at the back of the retiring officer," much to the amusement of all who observed. Harry Cooke's life-long career as an escape artist had begun.

The following spring, Cooke's Iowa regiment was sent first to Mississippi where he took part in Grant's siege of Vicksburg and then on to the beginning of the Red River campaign with General Nathaniel P. Banks. Cooke's job was to perform scouting assignments, skirmishing out ahead of the Union Army as an advance agent or spy.

It was at this time that Cooke, because of his penmanship and knowledge of the English language, was requested to do some correspondence work for General Ulysses Grant. "I first did the private correspondence for Gen. B.M. [Benjamin Mayberry] Prentiss at Helena, Ark.," Cooke wrote in his diary, "My writing being mostly on official documents, [and it] created a good deal of comment and inquiry as to who was the writer, until I became quite well known at the Executive Headquarters

in Washington." In fact, later Cooke would also write correspondence for Generals Rosecrans, Sherman, and Sheridan

But it was at escaping that young Private Cooke seemed truly to excel. Frequently he would prove to his superior officers that, as hard as they might try to restrain him, he would inevitably shock them by quickly freeing himself. Soon, the youngster began expanding his repertoire. He added a

number of magic tricks, studied rope tying, and other skills, and quickly established a reputation as quite the escape artist in his regiment. It wasn't long before his reputation spread much further than that.

In 1864, Cooke was transferred to the battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley to serve under General Phillip Sheridan. While en route, he was summoned to the office of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton in Washington, D.C. When Cooke entered the room, he met Generals William T. Sherman and Winfield S. Hancock, Secretary of War Stanton, the noted attorney and orator Robert Green Ingersoll, Senator Isham Harris of Tennessee, and, much to Cooke's shock, President Lincoln himself. In Cooke's diary, the stunned

we would make an investigation." They had heard of the young man's unusual ability to free himself from restraints and were curious to see him demonstrate his abilities.

Cooke was then tied up with fifty feet of rope by two generals and one senator and recounted what happened next in his diary. "When all was ready I asked Lincoln to walk ten feet away. Then I asked Lincoln to walk towards me. While Lincoln was walking the ten feet, I liberated myself and stood up, shaking hands with Lincoln when he was close enough." The President was both entertained and amazed, as were the others. Cooke continued, "Taking a [\$2] 'greenback' of the first issue of Federal currency from his pocket, Lincoln gave it to me [and put me] strictly in charge to keep it always, and also told me that he was going to keep an eye on me for something better as I grew older. 'Here my boy, keep this to remember Uncle Abe by. The Johnnies would have to go some to hold you if you should fall into their hands.'" Cooke later said that "remark seemed rather prophetic, and it was fulfilled afterwards." Harry kept that \$2 bill his entire life.

According to Cooke, at this point Lincoln immediately sat down and personally handwrote a letter appointing him on the spot a Federal Scout whose very dangerous job it was to penetrate the Confederate lines incognito and send back intelligence reports. After the appointment, he was detached from his enlistment with the Army, officially given the brevet-rank of Captain, and designated as "Chief of Lincoln Scouts." Cooke then handpicked six associate scouts, who affectionately went one better than Lincoln and always referred to him as "Major" Cooke. When he wore his military uniform, over his heart proudly resided a medal which stipulated "Lincoln Scout." Many of the Lincoln Special Scouts would later go on to become the first United

States Secret Servicemen or Pinkerton Agents.

Cooke's group of scouts accompanied General Sheridan on his Shenandoah campaign in the second week of September 1864. "There was a good deal of skirmishing during the next four weeks," Cooke recorded, "and my scouting party was kept very busy, but no regular battle was engaged again until the 19th day of October, when at Cedar Creek the enemy surprised our 'pickets' before daylight and got inside our 'lines' before we were aware of it."

The Confederate forces had overwhelmed the Federal lines there, compelling them to retreat in great disorder. Cooke was with Sheridan at Winchester when word arrived of the rout. Immediately Sheridan mounted his horse and made his famous ride down the Shenandoah Valley "Hell bent for leather," as Cooke described, from Winchester to Cedar Creek to stop the retreat and rally the Union forces. Harry Cooke and his six fellow scouts mounted up and started with him, but, according to Cooke, they were unable to keep up with the General's furious pace. Cooke lamented that he fell behind because his primary purpose as one of Lincoln's Scouts was to operate out of uniform and spy on the Confederate troops in advance of Sheridan's Cavalry.

Cooke records in his diary that because they couldn't keep up with Sheridan, "We were determined to take to the foothills; this was our undoing, for we ran into an ambush of [Confederate] guerillas, 12 of them [from John Singleton Mosby's famed Rangers]." "Before we could realize our situation," wrote Cooke, "we were surrounded and there was no alternative; we were in their power and threatened to be shot if we made any resistance." The great escape artist had become a POW and his skills would soon be put to the test. Unfortunately for Cooke and his men



Robert Green Ingersoll LN-0748

soldier wrote that Lincoln walked over to him, firmly shook his hand, and said, "Well lad, I am informed that you are rather tricky." Cooke replied that he was not aware that he had been "guilty of doing mean tricks." The President responded, "Well, I thought

at this time, Mosby was engaged in a savage take-no-prisoners personal war with Union General George Armstrong Custer. In the fall of 1864 word had spread that both generals were executing POWs on the spot.

Thus Cooke had good cause to be worried. In his diary, Cooke writes that Mosby's men took all of their money, all their possessions, and anything that looked of value; and, they were then forced to change clothes with their captors. "They took all of our letters from our sweethearts," wrote Cooke, "read them and commented on the contents. They took, also, my most prized possession, President Lincoln's letter appointing me a scout. I begged them to let me keep it but they only laughed, said I was a healthy looking scout and asked me when I was going to raise some whiskers."

For the next twenty-four hours Cooke and his fellow soldiers were marched up the Potomac River by Mosby's Rangers. "One of the gang, about 18," Cooke remembered, "rode up behind me and began cursing me. I told him he had me at a disadvantage and that he would dare not call me such names if we were on equal footing." This enraged the Confederate who shouted back at Harry, "D—n you! I'll show you." He then raised his gun and aimed at Harry firing three shots. "Fortunately he missed me," Cooke recounted, "I wanted to taunt him about his poor marksmanship but realized it would probably cost me my life if I did, so I remained silent."

Eventually they reached a farmhouse where Cooke soon learned that this was the home of the young Confederate who had fired at him earlier in the day. "We were sitting on a wood pile near the gate to the yard when [an] old man came out to look us over," Harry remembered. "I asked him if he thought he would know us if he saw us again. At that he struck me on the mouth and said 'I'll never see

you again, the boys will take care of you all right.' As our lives were in the hands of the bandits I dared not fight back so I had to content myself by telling him that we might meet again someday—and we did."

Soon after the incident occurred, Cooke and his fellow scouts were taken further up river where they camped for the night. "I learned," Cooke recalled, "that the guerillas expected to be joined the next day by more Mosby Raiders carrying additional prisoners." Cooke feared that all of the POWs would then be hanged or shot as spies in retaliation for the execution of Confederate POWs by General Wesley Merritt.

"They tied us to trees and camped in a half circle around us from bank to bank, leaving one of their number in the middle to guard us," Cooke recorded in his diary. "It was now up to me to get busy figuring out some means of escape. My being tied cut no figure with me, but for the others it was different. The guard was seated with his back against the tree about four feet from me. I had no chance to do anything before midnight and at that hour he roused another man to take his place and went to sleep himself."

Cooke correctly speculated that the new guard, still groggy from being awakened, was not yet fully aware yet of his surroundings. So he waited patiently and as the guard dozed back to sleep, the escape artist extraordinaire easily freed himself from his bindings and took the guard's rifle without even awakening him. "It was my plan to get his six shooters also," said Cooke, "which would give us 19 shots—as the carbine was good for seven—clean up the rest of the guerillas, seize their horses and escape."

Once he freed his companions, Cooke unsuccessfully tried to convince all of them to escape by way of the Potomac River. But half of them couldn't swim and they chose to escape by land

from Mosby's Rangers and certain execution. "Nothing remained [for the rest of us] but to swim the Potomac to safety on the Maryland side," Cooke concluded. They removed all of their clothes, "tied [their] trousers around [their] necks and plunged into the river leaving the rest of our clothing behind."

Swimming the river proved formidable as the currents were particularly strong. Fatigued from their river journey, Cooke and his men found that they still had the Harpers Ferry Canal to cross. The depth of the water proved fatal for one of Cooke's severely exhausted men who drowned attempting to navigate the deep canal. The loss of a comrade weighed heavily on Cooke who was now desperate to get back to Union lines.

Down to three men including himself, Cooke led the weary band through the woods which were crawling with guerilla fighters from Elijah V. White's 35th Battalion of Virginia Cavalry. "White's Guerillas," as they were called, concerned Cooke immensely since they were "reputed to be even worse than Mosby's men, as they generally killed their prisoners as soon as they got them." Cooke's harrowing description details the three men's difficulties. "We wandered in the woods four days with no clothing except our trousers and nothing to eat except birch bark. The fourth day as we were helping ourselves to corn in a field, six armed horsemen rode up and suddenly captured us. We thought they were guerillas as they were dressed in a sort of mixed uniform such as many guerillas wore and they believed us to be guerillas because we were wearing the trousers that Mosby's men had forced us to put on in place of our own."

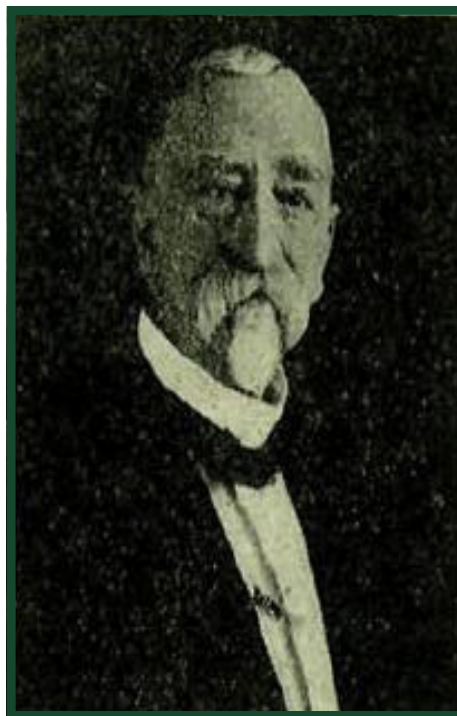
Cooke and his men, however, were informed that they were now the prisoners of a band of Federal Scouts! Shocked by this revelation, Cooke tried to explain that he was appoint-

ed Head of the Federal Scouts by the commander-in-chief himself. The leader of the group called Cooke a liar and Cooke said that he really "couldn't blame him, knowing that he was judging [us] from appearances." When Cooke asked him who his commanding officer was, he replied it was Major Sage Gallup of the 7th Illinois Cavalry who, as stunning coincidence would have it, happened to be a cousin of Cooke's whom he hadn't seen since childhood. At that revelation, Cooke and his men were taken before Major Gallup who confirmed Cooke's identity, who then, in turn, vouched for his men. They were then given food and new clothing, now twelve days after being initially captured, and they relaxed a bit until they were informed that they had been listed as killed in action. But Cooke spent no time dwelling on that morbid fact; too concerned about his men who had chosen to flee by land, Cooke requested of Major Gallup that they form a search party for them, which they proceeded to do with the help of thirty-three fresh troops provided by the Federal Scouts.

It wasn't long before Cooke and his colleagues came upon the farmhouse where he was slapped. Now facing a sizeable number of Federal troops in uniform, Cooke included, the farmer claimed he didn't recognize the soldiers he had abused just a few days before. Cooke interrogated him about his disloyal activities and those of his son in Mosby's Rangers, but the farmer denied everything. No longer being able to control his anger, Cooke slapped him and later wrote that "I gave him the scare of his life by having him tied to a post and telling him we were going to put some Yankee bullets through him which I really did not intend to do of course. Shooting [you is] too big [for] a coward to be shot like a soldier." Cooke told him. "But we did give him twenty minutes to remove his most valued possessions

and then we burned the house so that it could no longer be a rendezvous for guerillas. Tell your son," Cooke said, that "when he comes home, what a nice bunch of Yankees we are."

From there Cooke's rescue mission took a tragic turn when they sadly discovered his companions who had chosen to escape by land rather than swimming the Potomac River. "We found their bodies hanging from trees," Cooke lamented, "riddled with bullets and their faces mutilated by birds. We cut them down, buried them and vowed vengeance upon their slayers."



Harry Cooke, public domain

Setting out on a reign of anger-fueled revenge through the Confederate ranks, Cooke and his fellow scouts vowed to one other that they would never divulge to anyone what transpired on their ride, or the number of casualties that they inflicted. And true to his word, Cooke gave no details in his diary save for the fact that they confiscated many guns, horses, arms, and ammunition, and turned them in to the Quartermaster upon their

return.

Returning to Major Gallup's camp near Staunton, Virginia, weary and emotionally spent by what he had undergone during the previous weeks, Cooke learned in early 1865 that he was to be reassigned as a military clerk in Alexandria, Virginia, a position he readily and enthusiastically accepted. Because Mosby's Rangers had confiscated Lincoln's handwritten letter of commission, it was now Cooke's intention to use his proximity to the White House to see Lincoln and request a new letter from him. Fate, however, intervened and had something else in store for Harry Cooke.

With war's end in sight, Cooke figured he would be able to see Lincoln with perhaps a bit less difficulty than had the war been raging. He chose what he considered to be an opportune time to visit Lincoln; five days after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox. Even if the war was over, Cooke had been heartbroken to have lost the letter written by Lincoln appointing him "Head of the Lincoln Federal Scouts" and he wanted to share with Lincoln stories of his perilous exploits as well as asking to have the letter replaced. On the cool spring evening of April 14, Cooke went to the White House but, as his diary records, was informed that the President had gone to Ford's Theatre to see the British comedy, "Our American Cousin" starring Laura Keene. Cooke hurried to the theater, purchased his ticket, grabbed a program as he entered, and stood in the back so as not to disturb the audience.

What happened next was sadly described by Cooke in his diary. "About twenty minutes after I entered I heard a pistol shot, at the same moment a man (whom I soon learned was J. Wilkes Booth) jumped from the President's box to the stage; he fell

but got up again, and shouting some Latin phrase, ran through the scenery and out the backstage door. At first the audience seemed to think the incident was part of the play, but someone shouted from the stage, 'The President has been shot!' I think it was Miss Keene who cried out. At that, the whole audience rose from their seats; many rushing to the President's box. Some started after Booth who had mounted a horse in the alley and fled. . . . These events cannot be fully comprehended from reading a bare statement."

Cooke followed the crowd across the street to the Petersen Boarding House where they took the mortally wounded president. "I remained around the place all night with many others," Cooke wrote, "and begged that I might be admitted, but that could not be. In the morning [Secretary of War] Stanton came to the door and seeing me, took me into the room where the President lay. He removed the covering from his face, a face that was so physically homely yet so grand and peaceful. But his spirit had passed on to the 'Great Beyond.' I did not obtain that for which I sought, for 'The Master's Word was lost.'" For the rest of his life Cooke retained the April 14, 1865 Ford's Theatre program from that fateful night and the \$2 bill that Lincoln had given him seemingly so many years ago.

With the close of the war, Cooke returned to his home in Iowa, but his adventures over the previous three years made it seemingly impossible to be content with life in a small rural town. Restless, he moved frequently (Ohio, Illinois, then New York City) before eventually ending up in Los Angeles where he lived the remainder of his life.

Cooke made and invented all the effects used in his very popular magic act. Besides perfecting his magic skills, Cooke, like many people in the

late nineteenth century, became fascinated with spiritualism. The glad tidings of spiritualism—that the dearly departed were ever present to offer comfort and advice to the living—were powerfully appealing in the nineteenth century, and the movement's influence soared with the suffering

ty feet of rope just like he had done for Lincoln some six decades earlier. During this performance, Cooke wore his blue Union Army uniform with the Head of the Lincoln Scouts badge over his heart just as he had done during the Civil War. The result was the same as when President Lincoln observed



Houdini and the ghost of Abraham Lincoln, Library of Congress, LC_3a27314u

produced by the Civil War. Spiritualist newspapers proclaimed the faith, and circles of believers established themselves in the leading cities.

Although an extremely clever and gifted magician, Cooke devoted most of his time to exposing fake spiritualism and in fact sold out the Standard Theater in New York for four consecutive months in 1880 doing exactly that. Skeptical of spiritualism from the start, Cooke spent night after night debunking mediums and spiritualists as charlatans long before the man who would become his protégé, Harry Houdini, took up the cause.

For the next quarter of a century or so, Cooke was back on the road with his professional magic and spiritualism debunking show. On May 1, 1924, at the age of eighty, Harry Cooke duplicated his feat of escaping from fif-

ty; Cooke escaped to the amazement of his audience. It was a poetic and fitting dénouement to an exciting and dangerous life. It would be the last time Cooke wore his uniform. Six weeks later Harry Cooke passed away peacefully in his sleep having been billed as "America's Oldest Living Magician."

That title, however, simply seems quite inadequate in describing the amazing, if not historically significant, life of Horatio G. "Harry" Cooke. Perhaps, then, a more fitting title would have been "Lincoln's Magician." Certainly, "Uncle Abe", the Great Emancipator, would have heartily approved.

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