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Editor's Note

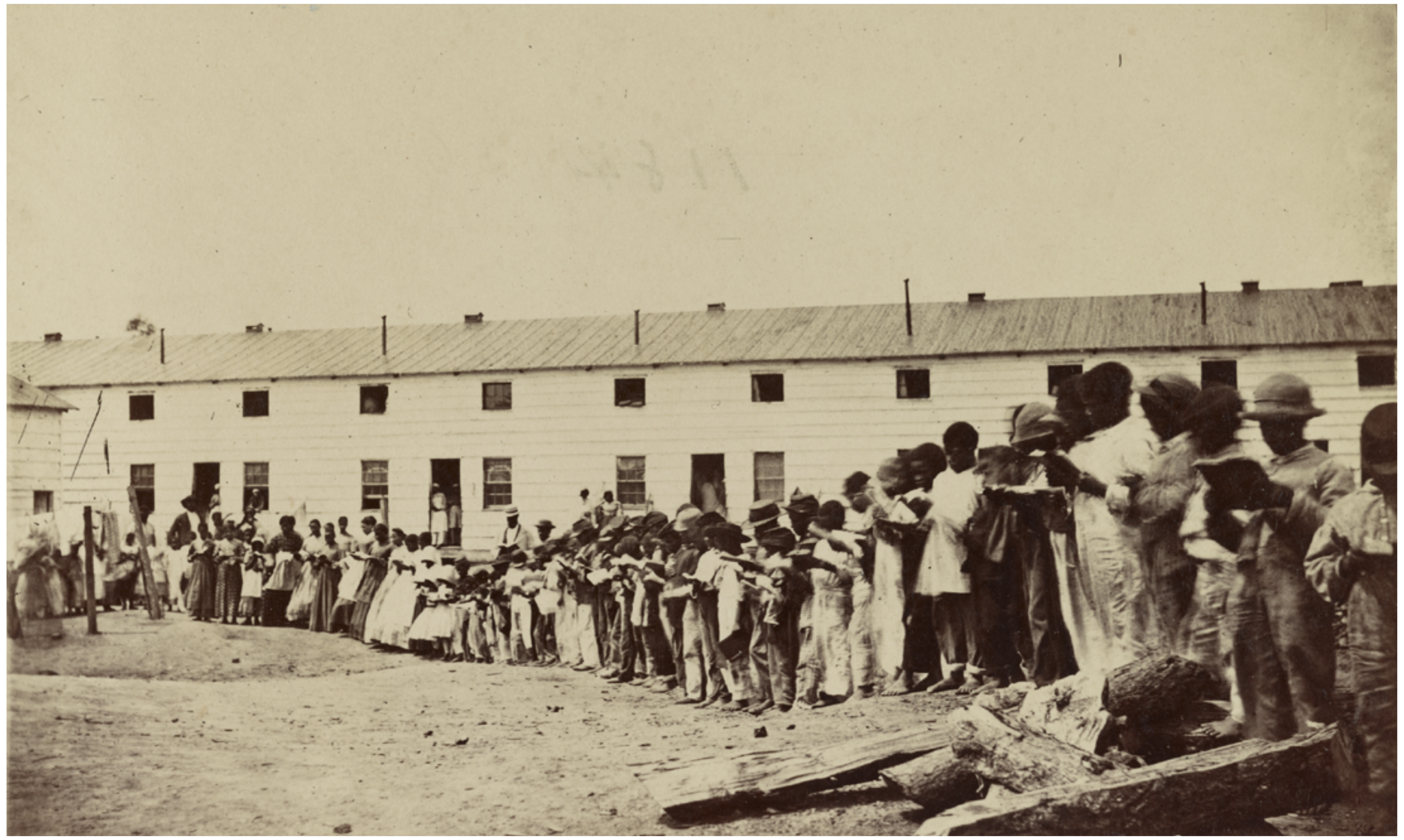
I am pleased to welcome two new but highly esteemed contributors in this issue of *Lincoln Lore*. Michael Burlingame and George C. Rable have both had extraordinary careers writing about Lincoln and the Civil War, and in this issue they share some of their latest research with us. Ronald C. White joins us for a wide-ranging interview that gives insight into his career, from his graduate school days at Princeton to his important new biography of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. The Friends of the Lincoln Collection pays tribute to one of its stalwart members, Al Zacher. And Senior Lincoln Librarian Jessie Cortesi takes us into the stacks to show us some of the Collection's fascinating pieces related to the Christmas season.

I want to thank the Board of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection for allowing me to expand *Lore* by four pages, enabling me to include more text and images in this and future issues.

As always, I hope you enjoy!

- Jonathan W. White

On The Cover: *Abraham Lincoln and Gen. George B. McClellan at Antietam (OC-1525)*



Black refugees at the Contraband Camp in Washington, D.C., preparing to sing for Abraham Lincoln (Library of Congress)

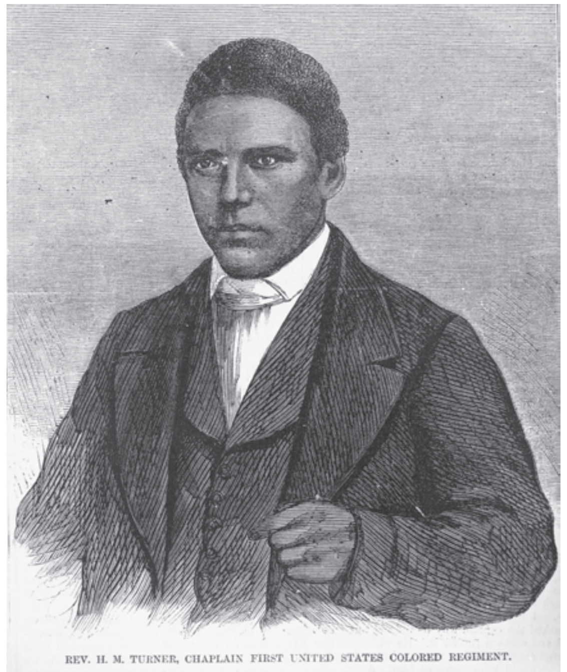
A TUB TO THE WHALE

Lincoln's 1862 Colonization Speech to African Americans & the "Lullaby Thesis"

Michael Burlingame

Critics of Lincoln's August 14, 1862, meeting with five leading Black Washingtonians reject the "lullaby thesis" that the president's "conspicuous advocacy of colonization" was an insincere "device or ploy" designed "to make emancipation more palatable to a racist Northern electorate." Theoretically that electorate would be more "likely to countenance freeing the slaves" if it "assumed that the black presence in the United States was only temporary," as George Fredericksson summarized the thesis. According to that eminent historian, while it "is possible that some such political calculation was involved in Lincoln's colonizationism, . . . no direct evidence has been offered to support" the hypothesis.

Frederickson and other skeptics, including Phillip W. Magness, Sebastian Page, and Mark E. Neely Jr., have failed to consider the most revealing piece of such evidence, a contemporary report published in an African American newspaper and written by Rev. Henry McNeal Turner, a leading Black abolitionist and the pastor of Washington's Israel African Methodist Episcopal Church.


REV. H. M. TURNER, CHAPLAIN FIRST UNITED STATES COLORED REGIMENT.

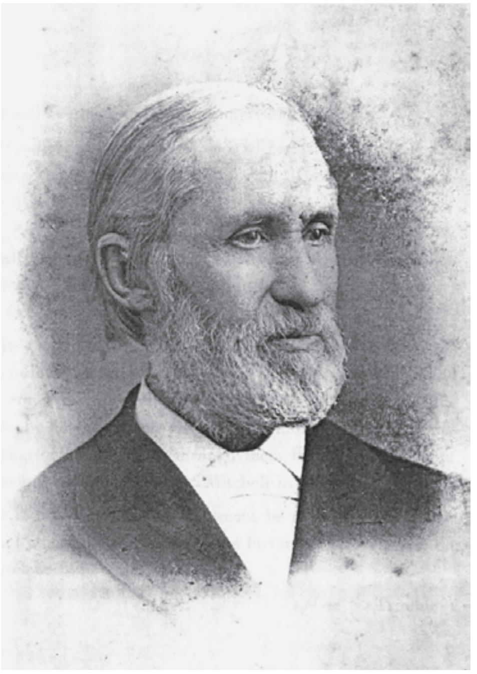
Henry McNeal Turner (Library of Congress)

The first historian to emphasize the historiographical significance of Turner's report was a graduate student, Brian Taylor, whose 2015 dissertation, "'To Make the Union What It Ought to Be': African Americans, Civil War Military Service, and Citizenship," likens Turner's dispatch to works by two prominent historians, David Herbert Donald and James Oakes, both of whom support the "lullaby thesis." Conceding that it "is impossible to determine the extent to which Lincoln suggested colonization as a way to introduce emancipation to segments of the Northern public that opposed it," Taylor observes: "The claim that this was Lincoln's intention . . . is not mere historical revisionism developed by modern authors sympathetic to the president and anxious to dissociate him from colonization." Alluding to the White House meeting of August 14, 1862, where Lincoln urged his African American guests to serve as pioneers spearheading the establishment of a colony in Panama, Taylor remarks that "in the meeting's aftermath, Henry McNeal Turner saw it in terms nearly identical to Donald and Oakes. Writing to the *Christian Recorder* a few days after Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, Turner insisted that the president held little enthusiasm for colonization: 'Mr. Lincoln is not half such a stickler for colored expatriation as he has been pronounced. (I am responsible for the assertion) but *it was a strategic move upon his part in contemplation of this emancipatory proclamation just delivered* [on September 22] [emphasis added]. He knows as well as any one, that it is a thing morally impracticable, ever to rid this country of colored people unless God does it miraculously, but it was a preparatory nucleus around which he intended to cluster the raid [rain?] of objections while the proclamation went forth in the strength of God and executed its mission.'" Taylor observes that in "preparing the nation for emancipation, Turner maintained, the President needed 'a place to point to.'" Taylor notes that while historians "have found the incident distasteful—Eric Foner called it 'one of the most controversial moments of [Lincoln's] entire career'"—the five Black men "who met with Lincoln did not seem particularly offended by Lincoln's message or behavior."

In *A House Built By Slaves: African American Visitors to the Lincoln White House* (2022), Jonathan W. White elaborates on Taylor's point, stressing the importance of Turner's dispatch for understanding Lincoln's motive behind the invitation to Black Washingtonians (along with a shorthand reporter) to visit the White House and hear (and record) an appeal on behalf of a colonization proposal. According to White, Lincoln apparently met with Turner, although no direct evidence documents their encounter. If the two men did in fact meet, it is fair, White argues, to conclude that "Turner's remarkable letter to the *Christian Recorder* may be the only surviving piece of evidence that offers direct insight into Lincoln's political strategy for inviting the black delegation to the White House." The president "used that meeting to help prepare the Northern electorate for emancipation" and "appears to have explained that strategy to Turner," who "may therefore be the only person in whom Lincoln so candidly confided his plan." Although we cannot be sure that Lincoln and Turner met, it is highly likely that they did so. As White points out, it "is known for certain that Turner had private audiences with members of Lincoln's cabinet, including Salmon P. Chase."

Moreover, it was widely rumored at the time that Turner had met with the president, a rumor that Turner unconvincingly dismissed with a "non-denial denial" in the *Christian Recorder*. Writing in the third person, he stated: "Somehow a report gained currency, that Rev. H. M. Turner was the prime mover of this whole affair, and that he had waited upon the President, in reference to this Central American project, which brought down in the midst of the upstir a heavy tirade of denunciations upon him in every direction." Many people "seem to be conscientiously persuaded to credit the report" but "Mr. Turner has now corrected the false statement, and gave them to understand that he hated the infamous scheme of compulsory colonization as much as they could." Note that Turner does not deny that he spoke with Lincoln but rather insists that he, Turner, hates "compulsory colonization," which is beside the point. (Lincoln insisted that he opposed "compulsory" deportation.)

One of Turner's critics was a *Christian Recorder* correspondent signing himself Cerebus, who commented on Lincoln's August 14, 1862, session with five Black Washingtonians: "The most ludicrous part of the meeting was that the principal and originator of the meeting [evidently an allusion to Turner] happened (we suppose unwillingly) to be absent; in fact, it was rumored, to use a cant phrase, that he had smelt the rat, and had vamoosed or skedaddled in true secesh style!" In addition, James Mitchell, whom Lincoln had earlier that month formally appointed "commissioner of emigration" in the Interior Department and who issued the call for Black clergy to publicize Lincoln's desire to meet with African Americans, "stated that the call had been made by himself, seconded by the Rev. H. M. Turner, pastor of the Israel M. E. Church, *who had sought an interview on his own responsibility with the President*" (emphasis added). It is unlikely that Mitchell would have alluded to such an interview unless it had actually taken place, for if Turner had been snubbed, Mitchell would in all likelihood not have mentioned it, though no direct evidence that Turner met with the president has come to light. In addition, it seems that Turner, instead of merely seconding the commissioner's idea, had prompted Mitchell to issue the call.



James Mitchell (Wikimedia Commons)

Evidence within the text of Turner's dispatch tends to confirm the hypothesis that he was reporting what the president told him about that event. When Turner wrote that "Mr. Lincoln is not half such a stickler for colored expatriation as he has been pronounced," he immediately added: "I am responsible for the assertion," by which he evidently meant "I know whereof I speak." Turner provided a similar hint after his statement: "He [Lincoln] knows as well as any one, that it is a thing morally impracticable, ever to rid this country of colored people . . ." Immediately after this analysis of the president's intention, Turner added: "I do not wish to trespass upon the key that unlocks a private door for fear that I might lose it, but all I will say is that the President stood in need of a place to point to." Turner's reference to the key and private door apparently meant, "I enjoy access to the president which I do not want to jeopardize by revealing too much of what he told me, but I will at least say this." Turner was almost certainly not expressing his own opinion of Lincoln, whom he had likened in July 1862 to a hard-hearted "Mystic Pharaoh" refusing to comply with "Heaven's demand" that he free the country's slaves.

Jonathan White argues that Turner's dispatch "may be the only surviving piece of evidence that offers direct insight into Lincoln's political strategy for inviting the Black delegation to the White House," but in addition to Turner, another knowledgeable

Washingtonian published an analysis of Lincoln's purpose in speaking to the African American visitors: Simon P. Hanscom, editor of the Washington *National Republican*, the capital's staunchest antislavery newspaper. That journal played an important role in setting up the August 14 meeting, for one of its assistant editors, Jacob R. S. Van Vleet, had persuaded the reluctant African Americans to send a delegation to the White House. There a shorthand reporter for the *National Republican*, James O. Clephane, took down the president's words verbatim. And by all accounts, Hanscom was a confidante of the president's.

Two days after Lincoln met the Black delegation, the lead editorial in the *National Republican*, doubtless by Hanscom, commented on the policy espoused by the president on that occasion. Colonization to Chiriquí "is not likely to be extensive," for Blacks will not resettle abroad "on a great scale, until there is a decided change in their present views." But "even if not so," the president's endorsement of that policy "will allay the fears which are entertained by some, of injury from the presence of free negroes in large numbers in this country. Without participating, ourselves, in those fears, we yet know that they exist and ought to be taken into the account in determining what is expedient to be done." Lincoln in all likelihood offered this explanation to Hanscom with the understanding that he would repeat it in his paper.

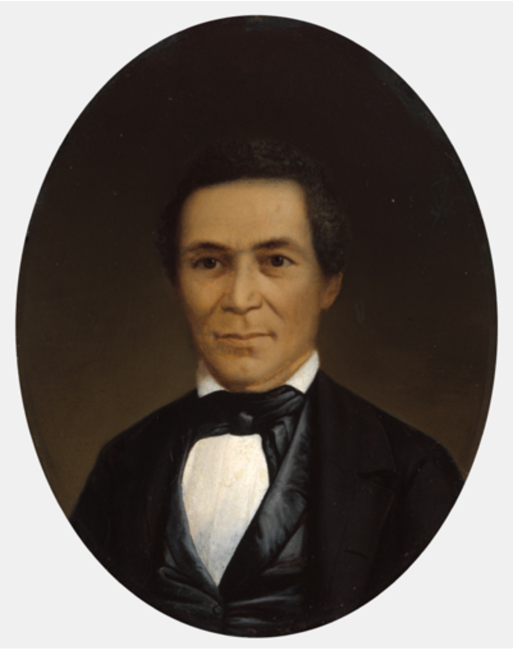
Further insight into Lincoln's strategic thinking is provided by contemporary journalists Harriet Martineau, Frederick Milnes Edge, and Horace Greeley, all of whom informed readers that Lincoln may have been "throwing a tub to the whale"—misleading the public—by conspicuously endorsing colonization. (When confronted by a menacing whale that might, like some real-life Moby Dick, attack their vessel, sailors would try to divert the cetacean's attention by heaving overboard a tub or barrel to serve as a distracting aquatic play toy.)

In January 1862, Harriet Martineau, an English sociologist, speculated that Lincoln's endorsement of colonization in his recent annual message to Congress was insincere, for his "absurd" and "impracticable" plan "is so wrong and foolish that we might safely assume that Mr. Lincoln proposed something that would not do, in order to throw upon others the responsibility of whatever will have to be done." And just what was it that would have to be done? The colonization proposal, she argued, represents "a safe way of making the admission that emancipation has become a necessity which cannot be deferred much longer." In her memoirs, Martineau described colonizationists as people who "were 'throwing a tub to the whale' of adverse opinion, and easing lazy or weak consciences, by professing to deal, in a safe and beneficial manner, with the otherwise hopeless difficulty."

Harriet Martineau (National Portrait Gallery, United Kingdom)

In December 1862, Horace Greeley used the same nautical imagery while commenting on Lincoln's second annual message to Congress, in which the president urged lawmakers to support colonization, gradual emancipation, and compensation for slaveholders. The *New York Tribune* editor opposed those policies, especially the "thriftless folly which gravely proposed the exportation of laborers by the million from a country where such rude labor as they [i.e., Blacks] are fitted for is urgently needed"; the United States "has no laborers to export." But Greeley was willing to make allowances for the president if, by advocating those misguided measures, Lincoln could help overcome conservative opposition to emancipation: "Gradualism, Compensation, Exportation—if these tubs amuse the whale, let him have them!"

In April 1862, Frederick Milnes Edge, a correspondent for the London *Star*, interpreted the newly-passed District of Columbia Compensated Emancipation statute for his English readers. One clause, he noted, "is likely to meet with misconstruction in Europe—namely, the appropriation for colonising the freed slaves. This was adopted to silence the weak-nerved, whose name is legion, and to enable any of the slaves who see fit to migrate to more congenial climes."



John Russwurm (National Portrait Gallery)

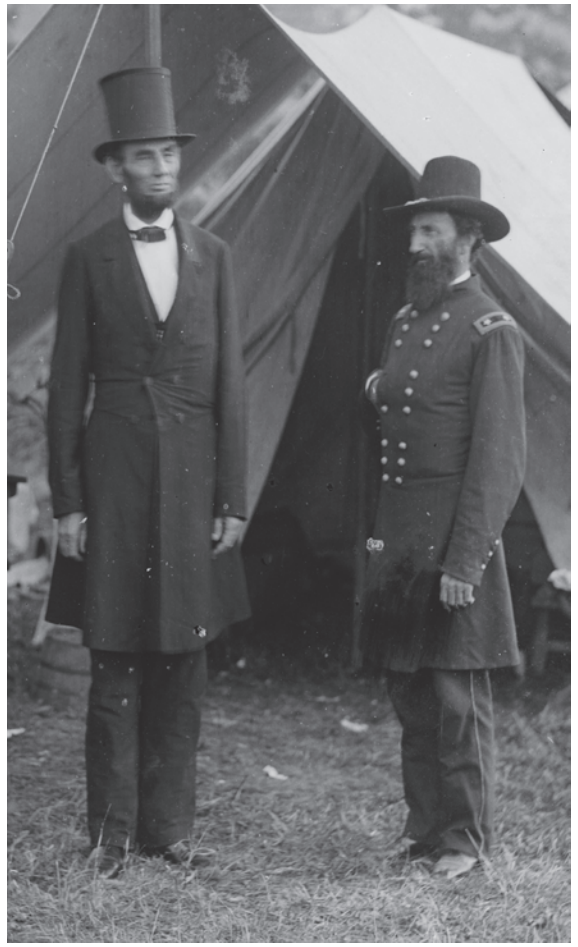
This evidence supporting the "lullaby thesis" complements another argument that seems obvious to many historians, including David Herbert Donald and James Oakes: In late July 1862, Lincoln had read a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet and resolved to issue it as soon as the Union army won a major victory. At that time, it was widely assumed that the electorate, especially in the loyal Border Slave States and significant portions of the North, would accept emancipation only if it were coupled with colonization. In 1861, Lincoln's closest friend, Joshua Speed, writing from Kentucky, warned him: "So fixed is public sentiment in this state against freeing negroes & allowing negroes to be emancipated & remain among us—That you had as well attack the freedom of worship in the north or the right of a parent to teach his child to read—as to wage war in a slave state on such a principle." Another Kentuckian, Senator Garrett Davis, assured the president that Unionists in the Bluegrass State "would not resist his gradual emancipation scheme if he would only conjoin with it his colonization plan." (To Senator Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas, Lincoln cited this statement when justifying his support for colonization.) In July 1862, the president appealed to the Border States' congressional delegations, linking colonization and emancipation: "I do not speak of emancipation at once, but of a decision at once to emancipate gradually. Room in South America for colonization, can be obtained cheaply, and in abundance; and when numbers shall be large enough to be company and encouragement for one another, the freed people will not be so reluctant to go." An Indiana politician told Lincoln that colonization "will, if adopted, relieve the free states of the apprehension now prevailing, and fostered by the disloyal, that they are to be overrun by negroes made free by war." Similarly, Francis P. Blair Sr. of Maryland urged Lincoln to endorse colonization publicly, for it "might ward off the attacks made upon us about negro equality &c &c."

All this is not to suggest that the president's endorsement of voluntary colonization was insincere or that he thought all attempts to make African Americans first class citizens were hopeless. He evidently believed antiblack sentiment was so deeply ingrained that at least some African Americans might reasonably agree with Black abolitionist John Russwurm, who moved to Liberia because it was a "waste of words to talk of ever enjoying citizenship in this country; it is utterly impossible in the nature of things; all, therefore, who pant for this, must cast their eyes elsewhere." Such African Americans deserved a sanctuary abroad where they could enjoy full-fledged citizenship. As James Oakes plausibly speculates, "Lincoln's support for colonization probably had less to do with racism than with racial pessimism."

Other Republicans shared that feeling. As Eric Foner notes in his classic analysis of that party's political thought, "colonization included a genuine humanitarian element, for many Republicans sincerely believed racial prejudice in the United States was so powerful" that African Americans "could never attain any kind of legal or social equality." When "men like [Salmon P.] Chase and Samuel C. Pomeroy despaired of the chances for racial justice in the United States, they reflected the genuine disillusionment of many Republicans" who had long championed civil rights for African Americans.

Humanitarian concern for the many ill-clad refugees who suffered from disease, exposure, maltreatment, and overcrowding in the so-called "contraband camps" in Washington, Alexandria, and Fort Monroe, prompted Lincoln to authorize an ill-considered, poorly administered, disastrous colonization plan in 1863 that briefly resettled over 400 Virginia ex-slaves on Île à Vache (Cow Island) off the coast of Haiti. The British minister to the U.S., Lord Richard Lyons, reported that Lincoln "sanctioned it from motives of benevolence to these unfortunate people." Lincoln did not publicize his support for this enterprise, for it was no longer necessary to prepare the electorate for the Emancipation

Proclamation, and he did not wish to seem motivated by benevolence or anything other than a desire to help the North win the war. Idealistic appeals would not please many voters. Similarly, in 1863 he dealt only behind the scenes with British and Dutch authorities seeking to recruit Black Americans for their Caribbean colonies, which suffered from a labor shortage. Though these proposals went nowhere, Phillip Magness and Sebastian Page cite them as evidence of Lincoln's continued enthusiasm for colonization. But, as historian Michael W. Fitzgerald observes, Magness and Page "exaggerate the significance of this finding beyond recognition." Once again, Lincoln was evidently motivated by empathy for African Americans, for he told James Mitchell, "If England wants our negroes, and will do better by them than we can, I say let her have them, and may God bless her!" He presumably meant that African Americans might well be better off in British colonies than in the U.S.



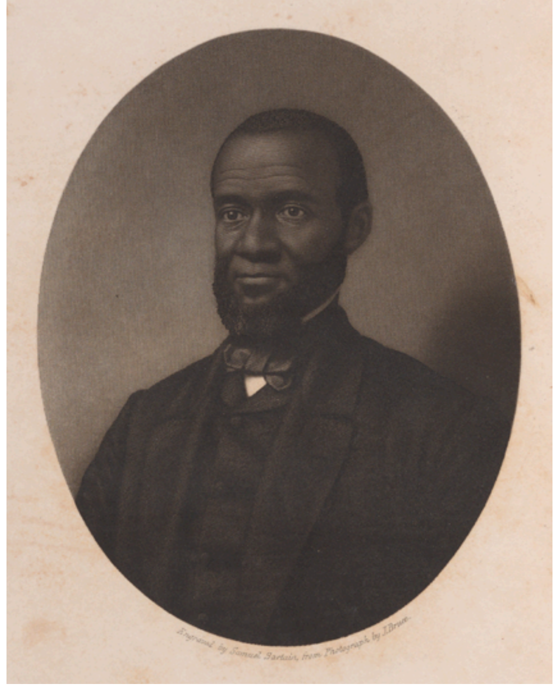
Abraham Lincoln and Gen. John A. McClernand (Library of Congress)

Sebastian Page asserts that "nothing has emerged to prove that Lincoln ever repudiated colonization," but in March 1863, the president told H. Parker Gloucester, a Black minister from Poughkeepsie, New York, that he "was opposed to colonization" and "in favor of colored soldiers, colored chaplains, and colored physicians." That clergyman, who "believed that colored people could fight as well as white men," urged Lincoln to approve a plan for raising a large, all-Black force to be known as "The Fremont Legion." The president's reaction to Gloucester's proposal illustrates an obvious point: once the administration had begun admitting Black men to serve in the Union army as combat troops (a policy change incorporated into the Emancipation Proclamation) Lincoln was not eager to export potential recruits nor the many African American civilians already employed as laborers supporting the military.

Moreover, a week after issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, the president suggested that Gen. John A. McClernand urge southern whites to "adopt systems of apprenticeship for the colored people, conforming substantially to the most approved plans of gradual emancipation; and, with the aid they can have from the general government, they may be nearly as well off, in this respect, as if the present trouble had not occurred, and much better off than they can possibly be if the contest continues persistently." So in early January 1863, Lincoln was clearly recommending a plan whereby free African Americans might be assimilated rather than colonized. Seven months later, he elaborated on that suggestion, telling Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks that he would like the government of restored Louisiana "to adopt some practical system by which the two races could gradually live themselves out of their old relation to each other, and both come out better prepared for the new. Education for young blacks should be included in the plan." This recommendation further indicates that rather than planning to have African Americans resettle abroad, he contemplated a biracial society emerging from the war.

Further evidence of Lincoln's abandonment of colonization is contained in the diary of John Hay, Lincoln's assistant personal secretary, who noted in July 1864: "I am glad the president has sloughed off that idea of colonization. I have always thought it a hideous & barbarous humbug."

Mark Neely has challenged the "lullaby thesis," contending that if Lincoln aimed to woo Democratic support for emancipation by ostentatiously endorsing colonization with his remarks to the Black deputation in August 1862, he failed, for Democratic opponents of emancipation did not budge. But, as noted above, Lincoln had been told repeatedly by knowledgeable people (like his best friend, Joshua Speed of Kentucky, and by a senator from that state, Garrett Davis) that emancipation would not be acceptable unless accompanied by colonization. Did Lincoln have reason to believe them? Probably. But even if he did not, he may well have wanted to call their bluff. As James Oakes observes: "Democrats insisted that they would support emancipation only if it was accompanied by deportation, when in truth they opposed emancipation under almost any circumstances." Moreover, Neely's argument deals not with the motive behind Lincoln's strategy but with its effectiveness, two entirely different matters.



Henry Highland Garnet (National Portrait Gallery)

In addition, Neely misrepresents the response of Henry Highland Garnet, a leading Black abolitionist minister who, Neely claims, "spurned Lincoln's proposal." In fact, Garnet vigorously defended the president. A colonization supporter, Garnet had long championed Africa as the most appropriate place for fellow Blacks to resettle. Now, in a letter published in the New York *Anglo-African* in the fall of 1862, he deemed Lincoln's plan to establish a haven for Blacks in Central America "the most humane, and merciful movement which this or any other administration has proposed for the benefit of the enslaved." Garnet considered "the free and voluntary emigration of our people to any portion of the globe" to be "among the most sacred of human rights" and believed "this is one of God's ways by which the families of the earth are improved and advanced in national character." Rhetorically, he asked: "Where are the freed people of the South to seek a refuge? Neither the North, the West, nor the East will receive them. Nay—even our colored people of the North do not want them here. They all say, [both] white and black—'these Southern negroes if they come here, will reduce the price of labor, and take the bread out of our mouths.'"

Garnet feared that newly emancipated slaves might be captured by Confederates and re-enslaved (which did happen to some Blacks during the war): "if Jeff Davis does not emancipate [the slaves of the Confederacy], and our government does not provide a territory on this continent as a refuge for those who have been freed by our armies, then the condition of these people will be worse than ever it was before. When they again fall into the hands of their tormentors, they will be tortured as human beings never were in this world." But if Lincoln's plan were adopted, Garnet predicted, "hundreds of thousands of men will be saved, and the Northern bugbear 'they will all come here' [will] be removed." Thus, Garnet implied, Lincoln's proposal would smooth the way for emancipation. Garnet "and other colored men of influence at the North" reportedly wrote to James Mitchell "warmly seconding the plan of the president for the colonization of the free negroes in Central America."

Some historians like Magness and Page suggest that Lincoln's public support of colonization was sincere and that to argue that he was merely singing a lullaby is therefore misguided. But, in fact, the president was simultaneously sincere and insincere. In his speech to the Black deputation in August 1862, which was read widely in the press, he gave the misleading impression that he was an enthusiastic colonizationist earnestly promoting a plan laying the groundwork for a large-scale resettlement of African Americans. He knew that such a result was impracticable and undesirable, yet at the same time he regarded "voluntary migration as a kind of safety valve for individual blacks dissatisfied with their condition in the United States," in the words of Eric Foner.

To some, it may seem out of character for Honest Abe to publicly misrepresent his true feelings about colonization, but he was occasionally willing to be somewhat disingenuous in order to promote the antislavery cause. A week after his August 1862 meeting with the Black Washingtonians, he wrote a public letter to Horace Greeley, the *New York Tribune*'s influential editor, who had chided the president for not acting more decisively against slavery. Like that earlier meeting, the Greeley letter was designed to help reduce the inevitable white backlash against the soon-to-be-announced Emancipation Proclamation. That letter gave the misleading impression that Lincoln cared little about the evils of slavery and was only concerned about saving the Union: "My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery," he wrote. "If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union."

Lincoln hated, loathed, and despised slavery from the time he was young, and during the 1850s he eloquently and passionately denounced it as "a vast moral evil" and "the sum of all villainies." But he knew that such rhetoric would not help the Union cause in 1862, for many people in the North and the loyal Border States were glad to fight a war for preserving the nation but would not do so to support an abolitionist crusade. In 1858, when debating Senator Stephen A. Douglas, whose egregious, race-baiting demagoguery seemed to be winning support, Lincoln felt compelled to at least pay lip service to the Black Code of Illinois, which forbade African Americans to vote, hold public office, serve on juries or in the militia, testify against whites, or intermarry with them. When asked by a friendly journalist why he so readily agreed with the senator's oft-repeated, flagrantly racist tirades against miscegenation, Lincoln admitted that he had not been candid: "The law means nothing. I shall never marry a negress, but I have no objection to anyone else doing so. If a white man wants to marry a negro woman, let him do it—*if the negro woman can stand it*." To publicly utter such sentiments in 1858 would have ruined Lincoln's chance to defeat Douglas. This dissembling tactic was in keeping with his statement, made in 1854: "I would consent to any GREAT evil, to avoid a GREATER one." In 1858, he was willing to pay lip service to Illinois' Black Code (a great evil) in order to defeat slavery's most influential northern ally and thus reduce the chances that the nation would, as he put it, "become all slave" (a greater evil). In early 1865, to expediate congressional passage of the Thirteenth Amendment (abolishing slavery throughout the land), Lincoln disingenuously asserted that his administration was not engaging in peace negotiations with Confederate officials. He quibbled about the location where such talks would take place. Knowing full well that Confederate peace negotiators were in Hampton Roads, Virginia—men with whom he would soon parley—he stated that no such commissioners were in Washington or enroute to the capital.

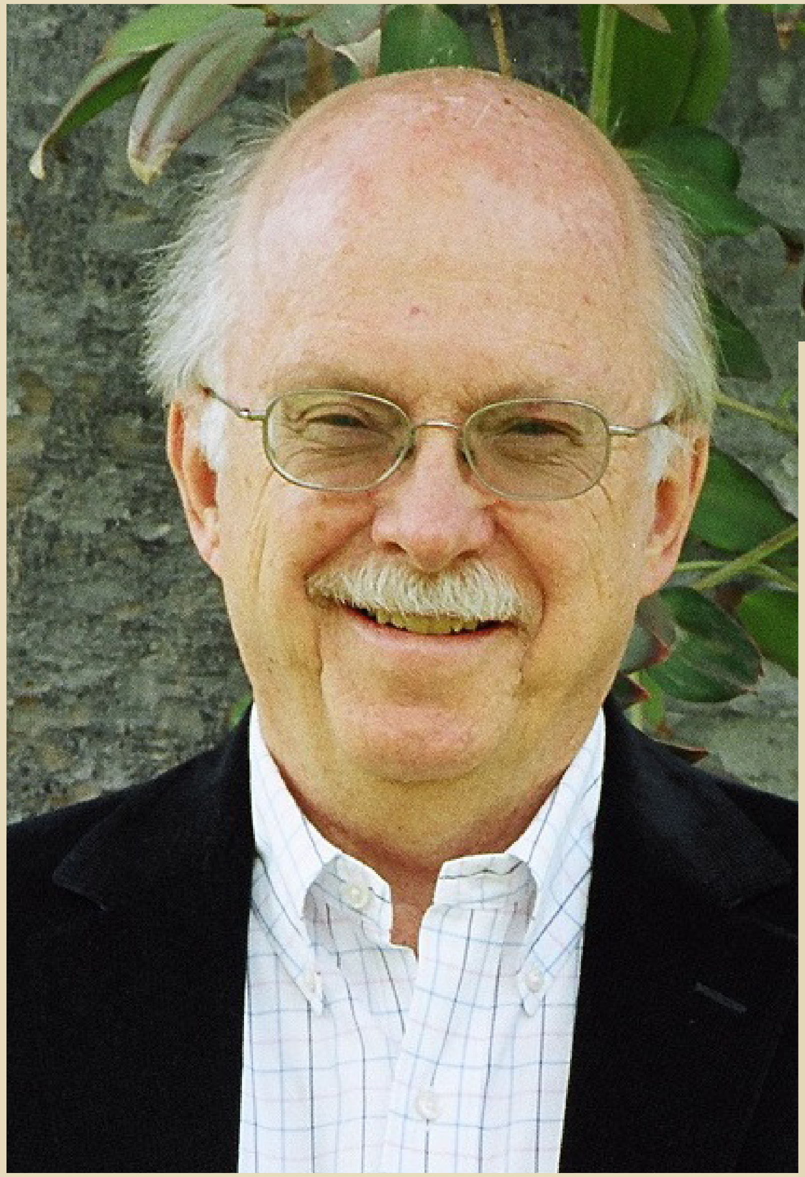
In 1862, the provisional governor of North Carolina, Edward Stanly, threatened to resign immediately after Lincoln announced his intention to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. The president dissuaded Stanly, whose support for the administration he considered important, by alleging that he had reluctantly composed that document under intense Radical pressure. Stanly told a journalist "that the President had stated to him that the proclamation had become a civil necessity to prevent the Radicals from openly embarrassing the government in the conduct of the war." Lincoln "expressed the belief that, without the proclamation for which they had been clamoring, the Radicals would take the extreme step in Congress of withholding supplies for carrying on the war—leaving the whole land in anarchy." The president "said that he had prayed to the Almighty to save him from this necessity, adopting the very language of our Saviour, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' but the prayer had not been answered."

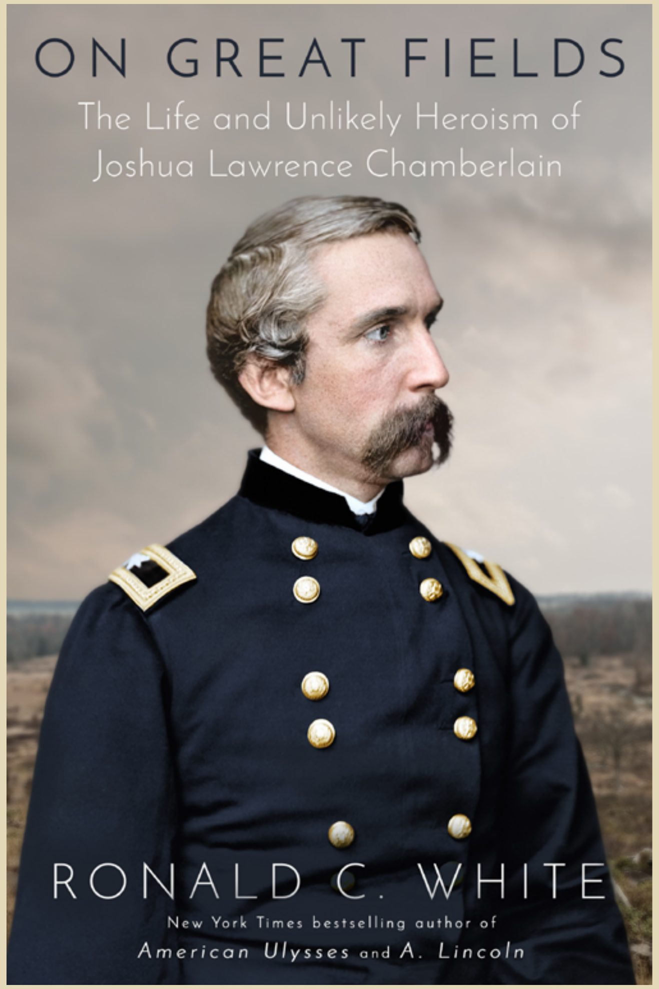
This statement was yet another example of Lincoln's willingness to dissemble in order to strengthen the cause of emancipation, a willingness most dramatically displayed when he invited a shorthand reporter to take down his remarks to the five leaders of Washington's African American community on August 14, 1862, words that were meant to be widely published in newspapers. As Allen C. Guelzo observes, "There was no particularly large or influential black readership of those papers in 1862; the only real significance of Lincoln's little colonization tableau could be for a white readership that needed the oil of reassurance poured onto the rough waters of emancipation—a placebo, in other words." Or a lullaby.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1862, by M.B.Brady, in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the U.S. for the So. District of New York.

Gov. Edward Stanly (Library of Congress)

Michael Burlingame is the Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield and the author or editor of many books, including *The Black Man's President: Abraham Lincoln, African Americans, and the Pursuit of Racial Equality* (2021). He is writing a book about Lincoln and colonization.




ON GREAT FIELDS
The Life and Unlikely Heroism of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain
RONALD C. WHITE
New York Times bestselling author of
American Ulysses and A. Lincoln

An Interview with RONALD C. WHITE

Jonathan W. White

Ronald C. White is the New York Times *bestselling author of two presidential biographies:* A. Lincoln: A Biography *(2009) and* American Ulysses: A Life of Ulysses S. Grant *(2016). He is also the author of* Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural *(2002), a* New York Times *Notable Book,* The Eloquent President: A Portrait of Lincoln Through His Words *(2005), and* Lincoln in Private: What His Most Personal Reflections Tell Us About Our Greatest President *(2021), which won the Barondess/Lincoln Award. His most recent book is* On Great Fields: The Life and Unlikely Heroism of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain *(2023).*

JW: You spent much of your early academic career working on American religious history. What drew you to that field?

RW: I was drawn to the field of American religious history as an historian because I believed that religion has been undervalued in the writing and teaching of American history. On my first day teaching a course at UCLA entitled "Religion in American History," I asked my students: Who is Martin Luther King Jr.? Again and again over the years students answered something like, "Civil Rights reformer." I discovered to my surprise that very few identified him as a minister of the African American church.

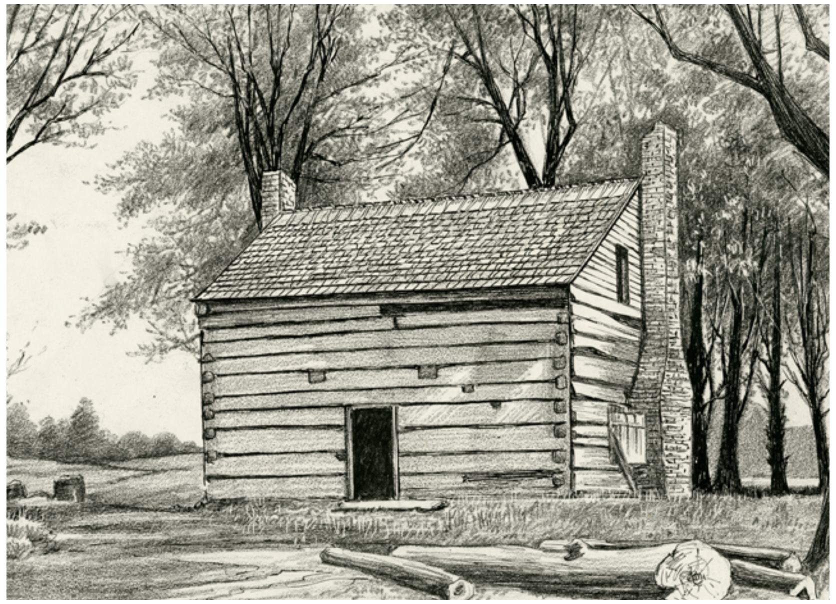
Pursuing this interest, I did my Ph.D. in the Religion Department at Princeton University, focusing on American Religious History, and working with professors John Wilson and Horton Davies. I also studied with professors Jim McPherson and Arthur Link in Princeton's History Department. I had a tremendous experience at Princeton. There were only seven students admitted in my entering class. All of my classes were seminars, both in the Religion and History departments. The seminars usually consisted of six or seven students, the largest fourteen, the smallest 3. We were treated as colleagues with our professors.

It was a delight to work with a young Jim McPherson. In my years as a graduate student at Princeton his academic interests and teaching ranged beyond the Civil War. In one seminar he was at work on a project that became his book *The Abolitionist Legacy: From Reconstruction to the NAACP* (1976). I continue to believe this is an outstanding book but because he has become known as an historian of the Civil War it has never received the recognition it deserves. Jim and Pat McPherson were also very welcoming to Ph.D. students, inviting us into their home.

Growing up in the Civil Rights era, I wanted to know the historical antecedents to Martin Luther King Jr. My dissertation ultimately resulted in *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel, 1875-1925*, published by Harper and Row in 1990. When I began my research, the prevailing wisdom was that the Social Gospel, however vibrant in engaging many social issues, was silent about the race issue. At that time a prominent African American scholar told me there was no Black Social Gospel.

In my book I argued that after the nation's retreat from Reconstruction, the Social Gospel at the beginning of the twentieth century did engage the race issue. I used the debate between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois as a prism to investigate where leading Social Gospelers stood on this issue. For example, Washington Gladden, the so-called "Father of the Social Gospel," was invited by DuBois to speak at Atlanta University in 1903 in a conference DuBois convened on "The Negro Church." Deeply influenced by that experience, when Gladden returned to First Congregational Church in Columbus, Ohio, he preached a remarkable sermon in which he criticized Washington and stood with DuBois.

In a chapter I entitled "The Church Outside the Churches" I showed that many of the most progressive persons were not ministers constrained by white congregations and denominations but leaders of movements and editors who took more progressive stands, thus supporting the new NAACP, which had just been founded in 1909.



Little Pigeon Baptist Church (71.2009.081.1719)

JW: What led you to the study of Abraham Lincoln?

RW: In 1993, the Huntington Library, where I was a "Reader," presented a Lincoln exhibit, "The Last Best Hope of Earth." Teaching in the History Department at UCLA, I decided to offer a seminar on Lincoln. I assigned an anthology of Lincoln's writings and decided to bring my students to the exhibit. I found someone at the Huntington Library—not me—to offer them a lecture on Lincoln.

That semester I found myself struck by Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. As I planned for a second Lincoln seminar for the following year, I wanted to assign a book on the Second Inaugural. Garry Wills had published *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America* in 1992 but there was no book on Lincoln's Second Inaugural.

In 1994, I attended a symposium at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary on "Religion and the American Civil War." At the conclusion, I mentioned to the conveners, Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, that none of the presentations focused on Abraham Lincoln. I was encouraged to submit an essay for their forthcoming book; they would decide if it would be included. "Lincoln's Sermon on the Mount: The Second Inaugural," was included in *Religion and the American Civil War*, which was published in 1998. In my first attempt to write on Lincoln, I felt like a "Johnny Come Lately" in a field where outstanding Lincoln scholars had spent a lifetime at their craft.

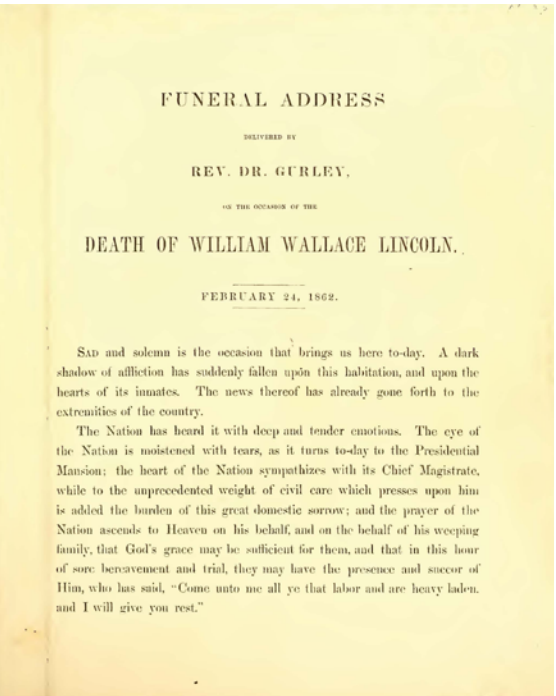
One day at the Huntington Library, a friend said, "You can write for a larger audience. Could I introduce you to my literary agent?" I knew nothing of that world. His initiative led to my literary agent and then to the renowned editor Alice Mayhew at Simon & Schuster. My first Lincoln book, *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural*, published in 2002, was selected as a *New York Times* Notable Book for 2002.

JW: There has been a lot of debate over the years about Lincoln and religion. How do you understand Lincoln when it comes to matters of faith?

RW: When I first taught several Lincoln seminars at UCLA, and together we read an anthology of Lincoln's writings and speeches, I was struck by the religious content that suffused Lincoln's 701-word Second Inaugural Address: He mentioned God fourteen times, quoted the Bible four times, and invoked prayer three times. My academic colleagues cautioned me to not get too excited for they argued that this is what presidential inaugural addresses always do. Not so. In the previous eighteen inaugural addresses I was surprised to see that the Bible had been quoted only one time—by John Quincy Adams.

Scholars have long written about Lincoln's development as a politician, especially in his understanding of the evils of slavery. But as for his religious development, they have continued to depict him in static terms: he remained a fatalist or determinist in his religious beliefs.

Lincoln grew up in Kentucky and southern Indiana in the midst of the Second Great Awakening. His parents attended Baptist churches. As a boy Abraham reacted against the emotionalism of that religion. By the time he settled in New Salem he rejected what he called "revealed religion" and became a fatalist.



FUNERAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

REV. DR. GURLEY,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

DEATH OF WILLIAM WALLACE LINCOLN.

FEBRUARY 24, 1862.

SAD and solemn is the occasion that brings us here to-day. A dark shadow of affliction has suddenly fallen upon this habitation, and upon the hearts of its inmates. The news thereof has already gone forth to the extremities of the country.

The Nation has heard it with deep and tender emotions. The eye of the Nation is moistened with tears, as it turns to-day to the Presidential Mansion; the heart of the Nation sympathizes with its Chief Magistrate, while to the unprecedented weight of civil care which presses upon him is added the burden of this great domestic sorrow; and the prayer of the Nation ascends to Heaven on his behalf, and on the behalf of his weeping family, that God's grace may be sufficient for them, and that in this hour of sore bereavement and trial, they may have the presence and succor of Him, who has said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Funeral Address Delivered by Rev. Dr. Gurley, on the Occasion of the Death of William Wallace Lincoln (71200908405451)

But decades later life tumbled in. In 1850, in Springfield, three-year-old Eddy died. In 1862, eleven-year-old Willie died. Both of these events, plus the terrible crucible of the Civil War, forced Lincoln to rethink his religious beliefs. He could not embrace the emotional Baptist tradition of his parents, but turned instead to the more rational Presbyterian tradition: First Presbyterian in Springfield and New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington. The point is often made that Lincoln did not join either congregation, but Lincoln was not a joiner. An advocate of temperance, he never joined a temperance society, but he spoke for them.

Lincoln's Springfield law partner, William Herndon, is often cited about Lincoln's lack of religious faith. But Herndon did not know Lincoln in his four years in Washington.

Rev. Phineas D. Gurley (Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pa.)

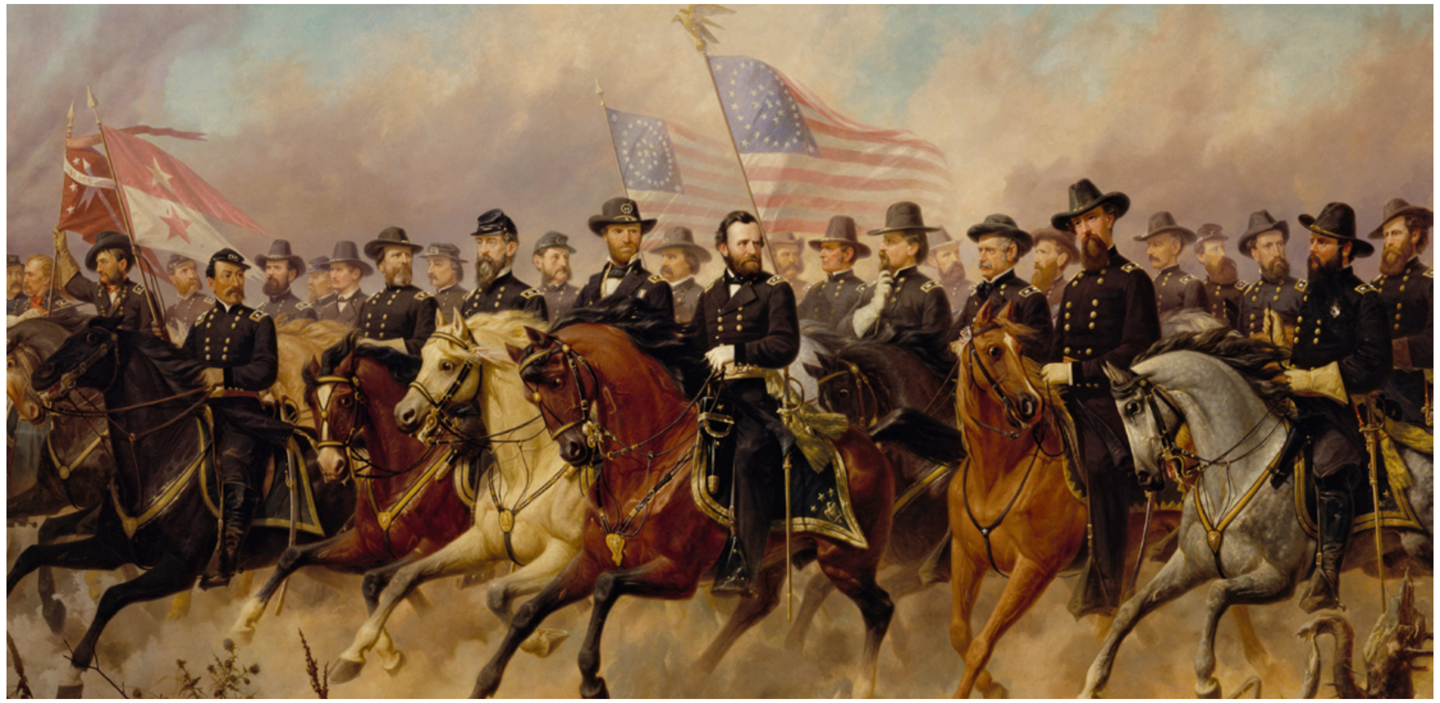
Nor did he know Phineas Densmore Gurley, minister of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. I have read Gurley's sermons at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. Finishing number one in his class at Princeton Theological Seminary, Gurley preached about providence: a loving God who acts in history. In Lincoln's Second Inaugural he has left fatalism behind and speaks about providence, of a God who acts in history: "The Almighty has his own purposes."

JW: You've now moved on to major military figures of the era—Ulysses S. Grant and Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain. What led you to shift your focus, and did you find it a difficult transition from your earlier work?

RW: After writing a biography of Lincoln, who is so well known, I wanted to write a biography of Grant, who I believed needed to be known by a larger audience. For many, Grant the general had been compared unfavorably to Robert E. Lee. Grant the president was often known primarily for the scandals in his administration. The year 2022 would be the 200th anniversary of Grant's birth. *American Ulysses: The Life of Ulysses S. Grant* was published by Random House in 2016. I am pleased that in the four C-SPAN Presidential Historians Surveys in the twenty-first century, Grant has risen thirteen places.

As for Chamberlain, this suggestion of a biography came about while speaking about my Grant biography at the Jonathan Club in Los Angeles in 2017. Someone asked a familiar question: "What is your next book?" I replied, "I don't know. Does anyone have any suggestions?" From the back of the audience, Mark Lipis shouted, "Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain."

In my subsequent due diligence, I learned that there were fine books on Chamberlain as the hero of Little Round Top, but none that told his larger life story. Chamberlain was elected governor of Maine four times, president of Bowdoin College, and became an eloquent lecturer about the meaning of America in the five decades after the Civil War. If earlier biographies were a zoom lens focusing on Little Round Top at Gettysburg, I wanted to employ a wide angle lens writing about his multiple vocations as teacher, soldier, governor, college president, lecturer, and memoirist. I did not find this biography a difficult transition, but the chronology took me fifty years beyond Lincoln and thirty years beyond Grant as I tried to place Chamberlain in his context. In the biography I was determined to pay more attention to the contradictions in the very admirable Chamberlain.



"Grant and His Generals" (National Portrait Gallery)

Little Round Top, Gettysburg (Library of Congress)

JW: You call Chamberlain an "unlikely hero." What made him so unlikely?

RW: He was unlikely for at least several reasons. First, as a boy he loved horseback riding, swimming, and sailing, but there was one boyhood sport he would not do. Boys did what they called "gunning," but at an early age, Chamberlain decided he would not shoot a gun to kill animals. When asked by other boys, he replied, "It is a mean thing to snatch pleasure at another's loss."

Second, his father wanted him to pursue a military career. His maternal grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War. As an eleven-year-old boy he watched his father march off to lead a regiment in the Aroostook War fought over a boundary dispute with the Canadian province of New Brunswick. At age fourteen, his father enrolled him in Major Charles Whiting's military school, which he attended for one year.

As he approached graduation from high school, his parents were divided about what his future should be. His father wanted him to attend West Point. His mother wanted him to become a minister or missionary. After graduating from Bowdoin College, he chose not to attend a military school but rather Bangor Theological Seminary.

Because Chamberlain did not become an ordained minister, these three years have received only several sentences in Chamberlain biographies. Because I have been a dean and a faculty member at Princeton Theological Seminary and San Francisco Theological Seminary, I knew that many persons who attend seminary and do not become ministers still regard their theological education as extremely valuable in their various future vocations.

Bangor Theological Seminary was founded in 1814 but closed its doors in 2013. Fortunately, all their records were acquired by the Maine Historical Society in Portland. Researching those records allowed me to reconstruct interesting aspects of Chamberlain's three years as a student from 1852 to 1855.

JW: Are there popular myths about Chamberlain that need to be dispelled?

RW: The most common recent myths are the criticism that Chamberlain fabricated or exaggerated his role both at Little Round Top in 1863 and in the surrender at Appomattox in 1865. One historian has argued that there is little contemporary evidence for Chamberlain's role in leading the surrender ceremony at Appomattox.

To try to understand this question I traveled to Appomattox. I was welcomed by Patrick Schroeder, historian at the Appomattox Court House National Historic Park. He has spent years researching the surrender and shared with me multiple contemporary sources reporting on the surrender and Chamberlain's role in leading it. I am grateful for his generous cooperation in researching and writing the Chamberlain biography.

In the biography, I also want to be alert to what is missing in the subject's story. For Chamberlain, it was the three years he attended Bangor Theological Seminary. At his graduation he received invitations to lead three congregations as their pastor. Because he did not accept these calls, but was offered a teaching position at this same time at Bowdoin College, these three years have been largely omitted in previous biographies.

I have long believed that modern biographies pass too quickly over the younger years of their subject. Yet, when I speak to audiences, people quickly agree that these years are so formative in who they become as mature adults. I spend two chapters on Chamberlain's formation at Bowdoin College where the curriculum focused on an education grounded in the classics. Even though Bowdoin, like many nineteenth-century colleges before the Civil War, was rooted in a Protestant ethos, his studies at Bangor Theological Seminary allowed him to go much deeper into the breadth and depth of the Christian faith. In researching the Chamberlain papers at the University of Maine at Orono I found Chamberlain's 123 pages of notes from his Bangor Seminary class in Systematic Theology that he kept all his life.

By the 1850s, Baptists and Methodists, much more experiential traditions compared to Congregationalists and Presbyterians, were enjoying enormous success, often led by ministers who were not seminary or even college graduates. Congregationalists and Presbyterians, by contrast, wanted their ministers to be both college and seminary graduates. This suited Chamberlain.

When he served as president of Bowdoin from 1871 to 1873, I was curious to see how this theological education might play out in the Baccalaureate addresses he gave each year. Each year he took a contemporary question—how does science relate to religion?—and brought his enormous learning to what really were sermons.

JW: I have a fond memory of you and me going to see the spot where Chamberlain was wounded at Petersburg a few years ago. I also know you've visited other places related to the Chamberlain story. How important is it for you to visit the sites where the events in your writing took place?

RW: Yes, you and Timothy Orr, your historian colleague, were immensely helpful in my understanding of Chamberlain at Petersburg.

I do worry that today some historians are doing their research almost exclusively from their computers in their offices rather than making the effort to visit the sites so central in the life stories of the subjects. For Chamberlain, I needed to understand various places in Maine—Brewer, Bangor, Augusta, Portland—where he grew up and lived, as well as the battle sites where he fought, especially Gettysburg and Petersburg.

For Lincoln, reconstructed New Salem, and Springfield. For Grant, the towns of Georgetown, Ohio, and Galena, Illinois, and the battles sites of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, the Wilderness, and Petersburg.

I discovered early on how important it is to have the right guides. For example, at Chattanooga all of the buildings associated with Grant were torn down in the middle of the twentieth century, but National Park Service historian James Ogden met me there with maps and photographs. In writing about Chamberlain at Gettysburg, military historian Carol Reardon was enormously helpful in guiding me on my visit.

JW: In many ways, Chamberlain seems like a larger-than-life figure, yet his tombstone is modest. What were your feelings when you first saw it in person?

RW: I was surprised. After reading a critic who argued that Chamberlain was a self-promoter, I was surprised at the simplicity of the gravestone. No mention of Gettysburg or being governor of Maine and president of Bowdoin College.

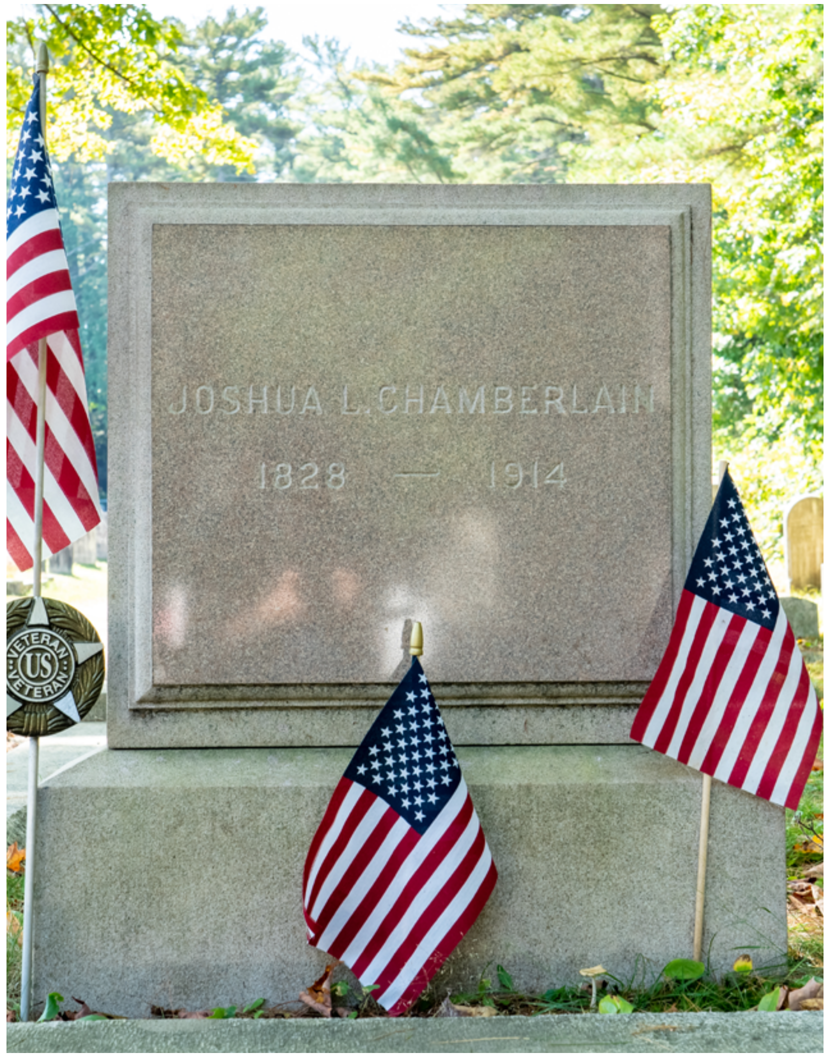
When I visited the Pine Grove Cemetery in Brunswick, I learned that Chamberlain designed the three-foot gravestone. I thought I might read something of the great nab like:

Hero of Little Round Top
Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient
Governor of Maine
President of Bowdoin College

Instead, the gravestone read simply:

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain
1828 – 1914

In writing *On Great Fields*, I came to believe that throughout his life he sought to balance his ambition on one side, where he felt pride in his accomplishments, and self-effacement on the other side, where his Christian formation instilled within him as a youth taught him not to toot his own horn. His simple, unadorned gravestone, which he designed in 1914, bespeaks a man comfortable in his life and trusting in an eternal life to come.



Grave of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain (Photograph by Niles Singer)

JW: Lincoln, Grant, and Chamberlain each come down to us as great leaders. What characteristics made them so effective?

RW: Lincoln, Grant, and Chamberlain, with very different environments when growing up, shared several similar characteristics which made them great leaders.

All three were magnanimous in dealing with Confederate enemies. Lincoln articulated this eloquently in the final lines of his March 4, 1865, Second Inaugural Address: "With malice toward none; with charity for all." Grant strongly resisted President Andrew Johnson's desire to try General Robert E. Lee as a traitor. Chamberlain, in his speeches after the Civil War, opposed the cause for which the Confederate soldiers fought but praised their courage.

All three evinced humility—often called in the nineteenth century "self-effacement"—almost completely lacking in today's political leaders. On Lincoln's thirteen-day train trip from Springfield to Washington in February 1861, speaking to legislators in Trenton, New Jersey, he stated, "I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be an humble instrument in the hand of the Almighty."

Grant's humility expressed itself at the moment of a high honor, arriving in Washington to accept Lincoln's invitation to command all the Union armies in March 1864. Stepping up to the desk of Willard's hotel, the desk clerk told him he could only assign he and his son a small room on the top floor. "That will be fine," responded Grant. When the clerk asked him to sign the hotel register, he was taken aback when he read, "Ulysses S. Grant and son, Galena, Illinois." Rather than exclaiming, "Don't you know who I am?"—posters about Grant were everywhere in Washington—the self-effacing Grant, who usually wore a private's uniform, did not pull rank.

When Chamberlain told Israel Washburn, the governor of Maine, that he wanted to offer his services to Maine and the Union and enlist in the Union army, the governor wanted to name him a colonel. Chamberlain said, essentially, "No, I don't deserve that rank." He would prefer to start at a lower rank and in time prove worthy of a higher rank. In a Union army of "wire pullers," people always pushing for higher rank, Chamberlain would have none of it.

Finally, all three shared the quality of perseverance. We forget the incredible criticism Lincoln faced over what people called "Mr. Lincoln's war." Grant told his wife Julia not to read all the criticisms printed in newspapers about him and his too-slow military advances at Vicksburg and Petersburg. Chamberlain, told by two surgeons he would die after suffering terrible wounds at Petersburg, never complained as he suffered from the effects of those wounds almost every day of his life after the Civil War.

As to a shortcoming, were all three too generous to the Confederacy? After Lincoln's assassination, some Republican senators said privately that they were glad he was no longer president because his Reconstruction policies were too generous. Grant, after his victory at Vicksburg, offered parole to all the defeated Confederate soldiers, the parole stipulating that they would never again take up arms against the Union. Which they promptly did. Chamberlain has also been accused of being too magnanimous to the defeated Confederate soldiers. In his postwar speeches he said again and again that he opposed their cause but commended the courage of the soldiers.

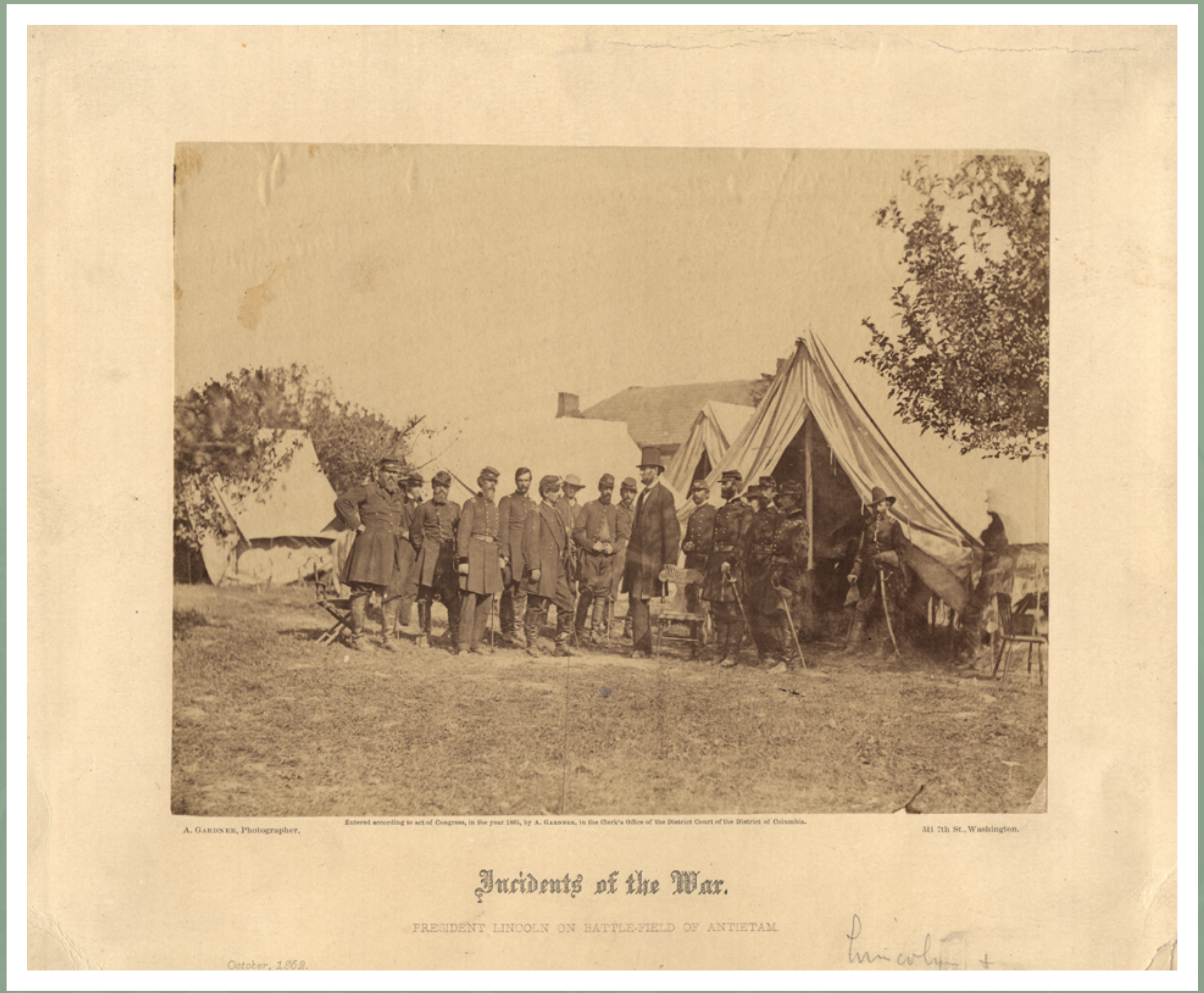
JW: You've tackled some of the largest figures of the Civil War Era. Who's next?

RW: My fourth American biography will focus on the "unprecedented" story of John Quincy Adams in the House of Representatives. After being a one term president, smashed by Andrew Jackson in the 1828 presidential election, at age sixty-four, old in that time, he served for seventeen years in the House of Representatives. I say "unprecedented" because apart from Andrew Johnson's brief five months' service in the Senate in 1875, no American president has served afterwards in elective office. In the twenty-first century we have witnessed George W. Bush and Barack Obama retiring from the presidency at relatively young ages, but not serving again in elective office. Jimmy Carter has had a remarkable retirement leading the Carter Center, but his service was not in elective office.

I am calling this biography Adams's "Third Act," the name of a contemporary organization promoting the idea that Americans in their sixties and beyond have much to contribute to their communities and society. Elected in 1830, Adams would challenge the "Gag Rule" which tabled petitions about slavery without discussion, took on the southern "slaveocracy," and defended the slaves of the ship *Amistad* before the Supreme Court in 1841. I hope the Adams biography can shed new light on a remarkable American leader, but also raise the question about what we expect from American presidents when they complete their one or two terms in office. Could they also serve in the House or Senate?

JW: Thank you so much for joining us!

John Quincy Adams (National Portrait Gallery)

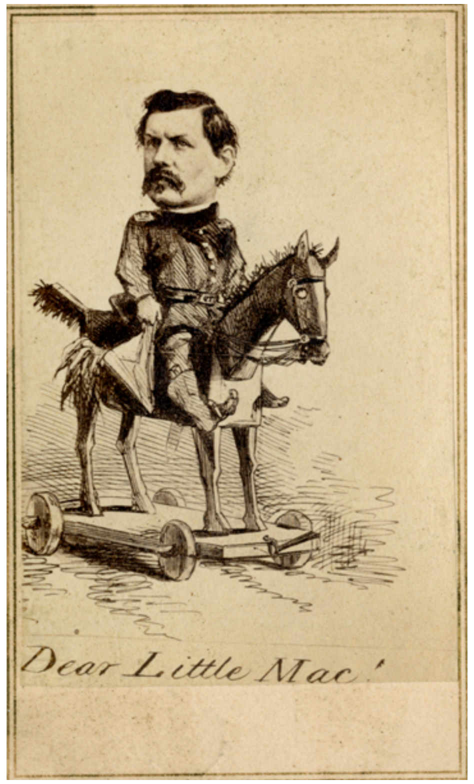

A. Gardner, Photographer.
Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1865, by A. Gardner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Columbia.
511 7th St., Washington.
Incidents of the War.
PRESIDENT LINCOLN ON BATTLE-FIELD OF ANTIETAM.
October, 1862.
Lincoln

"Incidents of the War. President Lincoln on Battlefield of Antietam" (OC-1522)

Lincoln & McClellan: *SET IN STONE?*

George C. Rable

Mention George B. McClellan to students of the American Civil War, and the response is predictable. They know McClellan as a foil to Lincoln who might be able to organize an army but was reluctant to commit it to combat. As Lincoln once said, McClellan had “the slows” and had to be removed from command. To call McClellan a controversial commander at least in the twentieth or twenty-first centuries is misleading. People have largely made up their minds about McClellan—and not in the general’s favor.


Dear Little Mac!

“Dear Little Mac!” (LN-0836)

Indeed, opinions about McClellan and his relationship with Lincoln appear to be set in stone and not likely to change. In his own day, however, McClellan had many warm friends and political supporters, and, of course, no shortage of critics and enemies. McClellan had the misfortune to clash with Lincoln—another controversial figure of the time but who became the savior of the Union, the great emancipator, and the martyr president in the aftermath of his assassination. The apotheosis of Lincoln further damaged McClellan’s historical standing.

McClellan sought vindication in an autobiography but did not live to complete it. His literary executor, William C. Prime, hardly helped matters by bringing McClellan’s partially completed manuscript into print and adding excerpts from letters between McClellan and his wife, Mary Ellen Marcy McClellan, that have offered fodder for McClellan critics ever since. By 1881, McClellan had largely completed his memoirs, and they were stored in a warehouse while he traveled to Europe. Just as he was returning from the trip, a fire tore through the building consuming the manuscript. He began anew but in a desultory fashion and often simply added healthy chunks of his 1864 report on military operations. When McClellan died on October 29, 1885, this new manuscript had only reached May 1862, so Prime had to take over the project. Even the title, *McClellan’s Own Story*, is misleading because it is McClellan’s story only in part since he had not come close to completing an account of his Civil War service. Prime did more than McClellan himself to shape the final product, and, it might be added, further damage his friend’s historical reputation.

For their part, Lincoln’s closest associates helped craft much of what became the standard narrative of the wise president and the troublesome general. As Lincoln’s private secretary John Hay noted in a letter to his fellow secretary and co-author, John G. Nicolay, as they were preparing their ten-volume biography of Lincoln: “I think I have left the impression of [McClellan’s] mutinous infidelity, and I have done it in a perfectly courteous manner. . . . It is of the utmost moment that we should seem fair to him, while we are destroying him.”

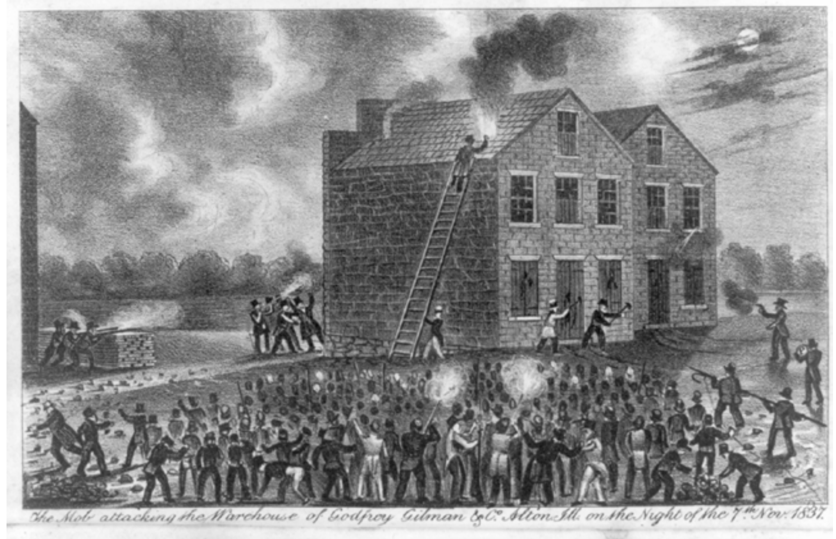
Maj Gen. G. B. McCLELLAN & Lady.
Entered according to the act of Congress, in the year 1862, by R. W. Addis, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Columbia.

George and Ellen McClellan (OC-0797)

Historians have not exactly set out to destroy McClellan, but the weight of their work has been largely negative. Consider this lineup. In the anti-McClellan camp are giants of the Civil War field: Bruce Catton, T. Harry Williams, Stephen Sears, and James M. McPherson. For the defense, we have a so-so biography by Warren Hassler, a good unpublished dissertation by Joseph Harsh, Ethan Rafuse’s fine study of McClellan as strategist and commander, a few recent works that defend McClellan’s campaign operations, and a scattering of articles. And then there is Ken Burns’s documentary that presented thoroughly standard and conventional portraits of generals on both sides; his treatment of McClellan simply followed in the footsteps of Catton et al.

In many ways, the story of Lincoln and McClellan is one of clashing ambitions. In their younger days, both men strove to make their mark in the world; each held forth on the promise and perils of such striving. As the outgoing president of the Dialectic Society at West Point in 1846, nineteen-year-old George McClellan viewed his classmates as the key to national success not only in war but more broadly. “The great difference between the officer and private is that one is supposed to be an educated and well informed man, whilst the other is a passive instrument in the hands of his superior.” Such faith in an elite class, indeed in a natural hierarchy, would hardly sit well in democratic America, but his confidence in the power of superior minds was striking and unequivocal. Achieving greatness not only in the military but all walks of life required study and determination; natural talent combined with hard work remained the key.

McClellan praised his fellow (and presumably like-minded) cadets for appreciating the best literature “essential to the man who would bear the character of an accomplished and polished gentleman.” Indeed, without educated officers, armies would become little more than mobs of the “most depraved and wicked men who would spread mindless pillage and devastation.” Power based on “the virtue of intellectual superiority is infinitely greater and more lasting than that which is the result of mere physical qualities.” Setting his sights still higher, he talked of the great commanders of history, including Napoleon, who recognized the importance of study and self-improvement. Yet he could not ignore the nation’s mounting sectional tensions and even alluded to “the horrors of civil war.” In such a crisis the trained officers would “hold the balance in our hands” and therefore the army should “ever incline to the conservative party” whose highest goal must be to preserve the Union.


The Mob attacking the Warehouse of Godfrey Gilman & Co. Alton Ill. on the Night of the 7th Nov. 1837

The murder of Elijah P. Lovejoy by an anti-abolition mob in Alton, Ill., November 7, 1837 (Library of Congress)

A few years earlier, on a wintry day in January 1838, Abraham Lincoln, a young member of the legislature, spoke to the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, on the “perpetuation of our political institutions.” The opening passages extolling the glories of the republic and singing hymns of gratitude to the founding fathers were jejune, but the address soon took on a more somber tone. This aspiring politician (and lawyer) deplored the “increasing disregard for the law.” Like young McClellan, he worried about the prevalence of “wild and furious passions” and specifically pointed to recent incidents of mob violence in Mississippi, Illinois, and St. Louis. In his view, the only real danger to the American experiment came from within: “If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.” He dreaded a lawless spirit spreading through society like some great contagion, with even the best citizens growing alienated from their government.

In such an atmosphere, there might arise a man of boundless ambition eagerly taking advantage of disturbances and disorder to claim the mantle of savior. “Towering genius disdains a beaten path,” the young Lincoln warned. “It seeks regions hitherto unexplored. It sees *no distinction* in adding story to story, upon the monuments of fame, erected to the memory of others. It *denies* that it is glory enough to serve under any chief. It *scorns* to tread in the footsteps of *any* predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves, or enslaving freemen. Is it unreasonable then to expect, that some man possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch, will at some time, spring up among us? And when such a one does, it will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs."

The striking contrasts in their background and experience should not obscure the strong thread of ambition running through both McClellan and Lincoln. The coming of war meant that George B. McClellan's long-frustrated ambition for martial distinction (if not greatness) might soon be gratified, and there was no shortage of people offering advice or seeking his talents. Viewing himself as indispensable would not only lead McClellan to work far too long and hard but also prevent him from sharing his plans and problems with subordinates, the War Department, or the president. At the same time, his moods often seemed mercurial, sinking one moment, soaring the next. Early in the war, McClellan displayed a penchant for caution, careful planning, an obsession with detail, and hesitation at the moment of crisis, but these qualities were not what contemporaries—including many Republicans—noticed. Not long after McClellan's promotion to major general, the strongly Republican *Chicago Tribune* had declared that "no fitter appointment could be made." Indeed the paper attached to him nearly super-human qualities: "He is now in the full vigor of his powers, both physical and mental . . . nature has endowed him with a close-knit frame which will enable him to endure any amount of fatigue. . . . With prudence and confidence in his strength, he will succeed where a bolder and rasher man would fail. *He will commit no mistakes*. When he advances, it will be with a strength that no ordinary force can oppose; if he recedes, ruin and disaster will not follow in his rear." "There is a charm in this name [McClellan] which will yet work as a talisman upon the American heart," the conservative *New York Herald* predicted.

Alexander Gardner photograph of John G. Nicolay, Abraham Lincoln, and John Hay (OC-1536)

Here was the hero who appeared just at the moment of greatest need, and so comparisons to Napoleon Bonaparte began. Two of Lincoln's private secretaries, John Hay and William O. Stoddard, filed anonymous newspaper dispatches praising McClellan. McClellan basked in the attention. "I receive letter after letter—have conversation after conversation calling on me to save the nation," he exulted. There was now talk of the presidency, which the general claimed he would never take. "I am not spoiled by my unexpected and new position," he assured his wife. Nevertheless, he felt that "God has placed a great work in my hands," and despite his own admitted weakness, he meant to "do right" because "God will help me & give me the wisdom I do not possess." On being appointed general in chief, McClellan told Lincoln, "I can do it all."

Such overweening ambition might well have resonated with (or alarmed) the president. William Herndon knew one thing for sure about his old law partner: he was very ambitious. "That man who thinks Lincoln calmly sat down and gathered his robes about him, waiting for the people to call him, has a very erroneous knowledge of Lincoln," Herndon wrote in a much-quoted passage. "He was always calculating, and always planning ahead. His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest." In a less-quoted letter, Herndon was even more pointed: "His ambition was never satisfied; in him it was a consuming fire which smothered his finer feelings." Lincoln studied a question, listened carefully, but less often asked advice of anyone. There was about him a quiet, though in some ways steely, self-confidence that belied his popular image as the humble Illinois rail-splitter. Despite periodic moods of depression and seeming apathy, Lincoln often acted like a driven man. He set his sights not only on political success but on lasting influence, and at times appeared to see himself as destined for some great work. Deeply resentful of his great rival Stephen A. Douglas, in the 1850s Lincoln feared that his ambitions had been a "flat failure." Yet the presidency, secession, and civil war would give Lincoln ample opportunity for greatness.

Even the historians most critical of McClellan have praised his organizational abilities, and some have acknowledged his strategic sense. In 1882, Francis Winthrop Palfrey who had served in the 20th Massachusetts Infantry (the famed "Harvard Regiment") offered one of the earliest and most judicious assessments. While praising McClellan as both organizer and strategist, Palfrey noted the general's failure to deploy his forces with enough speed and vigor to obtain "decisive results," though he might have added that decisive results eluded virtually all Civil War generals. Palfrey realized that it might seem strange to praise McClellan as the Army of the Potomac's best commander—as indeed it does—but he carefully weighed the difficulties McClellan had confronted. For Palfrey, the question of timing was especially important in shaping McClellan's historical image because he had faced the Confederates early in the war and at the height of their strength. Yet Palfrey also acknowledged that McClellan's politics and especially early talk of a presidential candidacy made his removal from command most likely, especially given his checkered record and his difficulties with Lincoln. Whatever the general's shortcomings and limitations, Palfrey deemed McClellan's failures "partly his misfortune but not altogether his fault."

Palfrey's roughly balanced though not entirely convincing analysis was generous but not uncritical. It recognized McClellan's political liabilities without probing more deeply the political nature of the command relationship. Given the president's position as commander in chief, Lincoln and his advisers had to select and evaluate the Union's military leadership. At the beginning of the war, none of the generals had commanded large armies in combat, and given the eventual size of Civil War armies and the limits of staff, communications, and transportation, that task often seemed beyond the capabilities of even the better generals. Ulysses S. Grant in an often-quoted passage would later describe McClellan "as one of the mysteries of the war." But what has been much less often noted was Grant's conviction that no commander was likely to succeed early in the conflict: "It has always seemed to me that the critics of McClellan do not consider this vast and cruel responsibility—the war, a new thing to all of us, the army new, everything to do from the outset, with a restless people and Congress. McClellan was a young man when this devolved upon him, and if he did not succeed, it was because the conditions of success were so trying. If McClellan had gone into the war as Sherman, Thomas, or Meade, had fought his way along and up, I have no reason to suppose that he would not have won as high a distinction as any of us."

However that might be, Civil War campaigns sometimes seemed like a series of blunders and missed opportunities, and the inability of generals to follow up even after victories was striking. McClellan's supporters stressed the role of political interference by the Lincoln administration in the Army of the Potomac's operations—including both the withholding of forces from McClellan on the Peninsula and the ordered withdrawal at the end of the Seven Days campaign.

Yet to mount any kind of defense of McClellan's military record, or a more critical assessment of Lincoln's leadership, should hardly mean ignoring the general's shortcomings or failing to see how the president grew in his role as commander in chief. Indeed, what might be termed the "standard narrative" contains a good deal of truth. Historians have emphasized McClellan's slowness and timidity along with his repeated overestimation of enemy numbers. The general seemed oblivious to public impatience; he also appeared uncertain of himself when the moment for decisive action arrived. The stress of command itself may also have reinforced McClellan's natural cautiousness.

Both Lincoln and McClellan considered the Union to be a sacred trust, but they could not agree on military strategy. McClellan the engineer favored meticulous preparation and thought the war might be won by overwhelming the Confederates in a single campaign. Such a strategy risked considerable delay, and Lincoln had to respond to political pressures that McClellan cavalierly dismissed. The president could at times be indecisive while McClellan was often loath to explain (or even share) his plans with the government.

More broadly speaking, Lincoln and McClellan came to see the nature of the war in quite different ways. Lincoln's views, however, evolved—albeit haltingly—while McClellan's did not. McClellan failed to recognize how changing attitudes about the role of slavery in the conflict meant that the more conciliatory and conservative policies that he preferred were losing public favor. He opposed both confiscation and emancipation even as Lincoln was coming to embrace both as necessary means to overcome Confederate resistance. McClellan remained fundamentally conservative—in terms of his own whiggish background and later his identification as a Democrat aligned with the Stephen A. Douglas wing of the party. McClellan believed in moderation and compromise, and the war did not weaken that faith. Given his political philosophy and West Point training, McClellan favored maneuvering over fighting and preferred moving along rivers and railroad lines rather than advancing overland.

That McClellan would not throw his troops headlong into battle or assault heavily fortified positions partly explains his popularity in the ranks, and indeed his success in winning the loyalty and even affection of his men was striking. McClellan identified with his soldiers and many of them identified with him. He was quite visible in camp and became known for looking after his troops' welfare. Newspapers paid much attention to McClellan, and early in the war uniformly exalted the "young Napoleon." Expectations for success ran so high that they set the general and his most devoted acolytes up for disappointment.

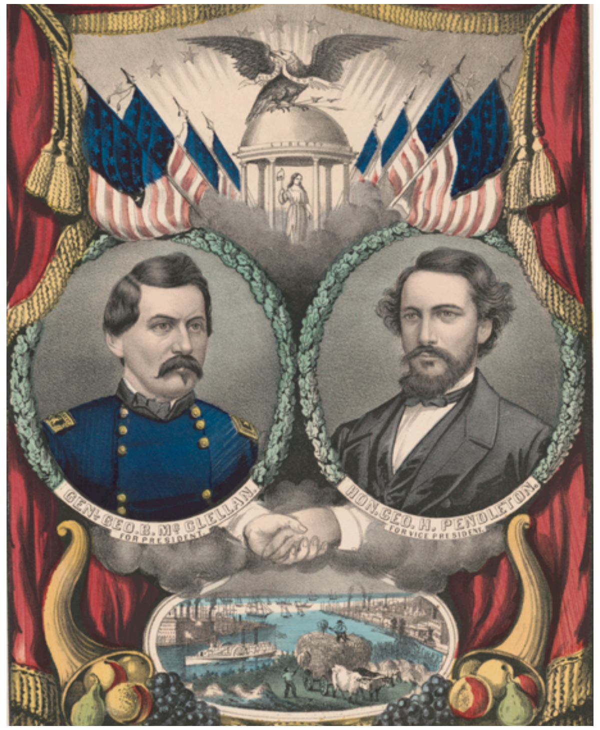
McClellan prided himself on military professionalism, but the men he commanded were mostly citizen-soldiers. McClellan's elevated standing in the army and at home stood in ironic contrast to his at times condescending attitude toward the volunteers. McClellan may have been a Democrat, but he was no democrat. At the same time, McClellan often had trouble with superiors, whether military or civilian; frustration and anger boiled over if a proposed strategy or requests for more men were not approved. He had little faith in civilian leadership or the northern public.

For his part, Lincoln showed great patience with McClellan, at least until the early months of 1862. He reluctantly went along with McClellan's Peninsula Campaign despite strong reservations, but in March removed McClellan as general in chief while leaving him in command of the Army of the Potomac. The president's appointment of corps commanders in the Army of the Potomac created additional friction. There followed a series of controversies over whether McClellan had left Washington adequately defended, over the withholding of troops from McClellan's army, over the general's frequent calls for reinforcements, over whether McClellan's army should have been withdrawn from the Peninsula in August, and over the general's conduct of the Maryland Campaign in September. McClellan hardly helped his cause with complaining and at times self-pitying dispatches.

The relationship between Lincoln and McClellan began early in the war and at times dominated its course with many a twist and turn. It was often a conflict of command that spilled over into the political arena and divided the president's advisors. Politicians and journalists of various stripes had a great deal to say about Lincoln and McClellan. So too, did the men in uniform. Enlisted men as well as officers read newspapers, followed politics, and developed their own ideas on strategy; they often viewed their military superiors and civilian rulers with a critical eye. Unlike many nineteenth-century European armies, American armies did not play an independent political role, but that hardly meant an absence of political opinions and political partisanship in the ranks. The soldiers would have say about both McClellan and Lincoln; many would cast their votes in 1864 during one of the strangest and most important presidential elections in American history.

McClellan deplored the influence of politics on the conduct of the war, yet could hardly escape from that reality. However much McClellan might wish to insulate himself from Washington politicians, that was simply not possible. Politics became inextricably entangled with the war's conduct. Of course, the Lincoln administration had to select and deal with an array of military commanders. Lincoln himself had much to learn, could be oblivious to logistical constraints, and had unrealistic expectations for military success based on the Union's superior resources. He eventually developed a firm resolve in working with generals but paid a price for earlier indecisiveness and allowing generals—including McClellan—to bypass the chain of command.

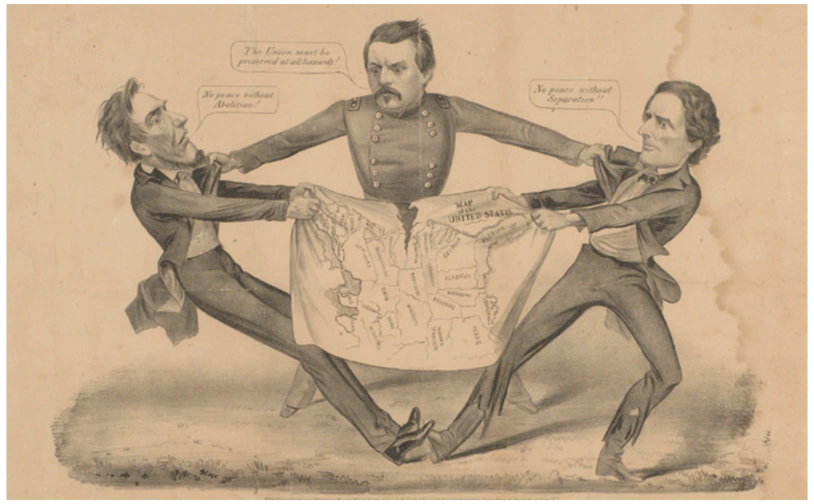
McClellan tended to draw a whiggish distinction between politicians and statesmen; he viewed himself as principled and his opponents as conniving. His opinions of Lincoln ran hot and cold, but he often saw the president as an uncultivated teller of droll stories who failed to grasp the most important elements of military strategy. The two men came to regard each other warily. Lincoln only occasionally showed flashes of temper, but McClellan could easily grow out of sorts and bristle with self-righteousness. Through much of his life, Lincoln suffered from bouts of melancholy, and McClellan could fall into the depths of self-pity as well.


GENL. GEO. B. MC CLELLAN.
FOR PRESIDENT.
HON. GEO. H. PENDLETON.
FOR VICE PRESIDENT.

"Grand National Democratic Banner," 1864 (Library of Congress)

It was certainly ironic that McClellan, who took an often-jaundiced view of politicians, if not of democracy itself, should be nominated for president. The general obviously sought martial glory and claimed to disdain political ambition, even as Democratic politicians and editors raised the possibility of a presidential nomination. Yet political entanglements had soon followed. Meeting with Radical Republican senators, he bluntly declared that he was fighting to preserve the Union, not for the Republican Party or for emancipation. Indeed, the famous Harrison's Landing letter not only made policy recommendations but would later be deployed as a campaign document. McClellan's erstwhile friend Edwin Stanton, after being appointed secretary of war, became an implacable critic. Likewise, the always suspicious members of the congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War worked tirelessly to prove that McClellan was an incompetent if not disloyal commander. In the cabinet, in the Congress, and in Washington social circles, the president and the general became constant subjects of political intrigue.

In the end, the conflict between Lincoln and McClellan reached a culmination when the Democrats chose the general as their presidential nominee in 1864—a faceoff between a president who badly wished to be reelected and a general who sometimes appeared to be a diffident candidate. Despite repeated calls after November 1862 to give McClellan another command, Lincoln's own ambition for a second term had dictated keeping McClellan at arm's length to avoid strengthening his political hand. Ironically, in disputes over reconstruction policy, two of the president's Radical Republican critics accused him of unbridled political ambition. Yet the uncertain military situation along with lukewarm support, if not outright opposition from some Republicans, made Lincoln's prospects for reelection seem doubtful. But by the fall of 1864, Union military victories and opposition missteps rescued the president. The supposed Copperhead influence at the Democratic convention along with the peace plank in the party platform killed McClellan's prospects for garnering the soldier vote. Shortly after the election, McClellan resigned from the army and traveled with his family to Europe.


The Union must be preserved at all hazards!
No peace without Abolition!
No peace without Separation!!
MAP of the UNITED STATES

"The True Issue or 'Thats What's the Matter'" (71.2009.081.0242)

It is important to remember how many people at the time lacked confidence in Lincoln's decisions as commander in chief; by the same token, there is a need to acknowledge how high McClellan stood in the estimation of many contemporaries. In the aftermath of Union victory and Lincoln's assassination, much of that was forgotten. Historical reputations are constantly being revised, but McClellan's appears fairly fixed, even as each generation seems to favor different (albeit mostly positive) versions of the Lincoln saga. This all might have struck both men as ironic, though McClellan lacked any appreciation of irony, whereas Lincoln at times reveled in it.

Yet on hearing news of Lincoln's assassination, McClellan did note one irony that hit home with so many other Americans: "How strange it is that the military death of the rebellion should have been followed with such tragic quickness by the atrocious murder of Mr. Lincoln!" Thinking back on their relationship, McClellan remarked, "Now I cannot but forget all that had been unpleasant between us & remember only the brighter parts of our intercourse." Unfortunately for McClellan, history would later focus mostly on the "unpleasant" aspects of the relationship. In a sermon preached a little over a week after Lincoln's death, a leading Presbyterian minister observed that the nation had attempted to make McClellan into an idol after the Union disaster at Bull Run, but God had refused to allow it. Instead, Lincoln became the martyr president and McClellan his foil, a simple story later baked into the standard Civil War narrative, and one that to this day often resists even the mildest revisions.

George C. Rable is professor emeritus of history at the University of Alabama. He is the author of several books, including *Conflict of Command: George McClellan, Abraham Lincoln, and the Politics of War* (2023).

ALFRED ZACHER:

A Profile of a Lifetime of Service

Tim Harmon

Al Zacher, who literally wrote the book on the challenges of the second terms of U.S. presidents, has been particularly fascinated by how Abraham Lincoln was preparing for his. "Lincoln had four years, and look what his achievements were," the longtime board member of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana said in a recent interview. "A common man, a minority president, he fought a war, kept the country from separating—and freed the slave population. . . . He was in the category of the greatest leaders in all history."

Yet there is always the riddle of the mission cut short, little more than a month after his second inauguration. "As his second term approached, with victory his, Lincoln knew full well the stark reality of what lay ahead," Zacher wrote in his 1996 book, *Trial and Triumph: Presidential Power in the Second Term*. Healing and restoring the nation "would take all of his powers of persuasion, of tact, and patronage, to bring the disputing factions together. . . . The defeats, the victories—all he had faced in the war, he would now meet in peace and reconstruction."

Lincoln was forming a plan to offer the newly freed slaves protection and economic self-sufficiency while letting the former slave states begin to govern themselves again under military supervision. Zacher believes passage of the Thirteenth Amendment outlawing slavery in January 1865 very significantly set the tone for what Lincoln foresaw in his second term. But "it was a very different set of challenges that he would have."

Ninety-five years old, with two grown children and six grandsons, Zacher still lives in the woodsy Fort Wayne home he shared with his wife, Hanna, a leader of the League of Women Voters who shared his passion for history and current events. She died in 2017.

Alfred J. Zacher grew up in Bay City, Michigan. His father died when he was 10, and he says he has been working since he was 14. After graduating from Antioch College, Zacher served with the Army Corps of Engineers supporting frontline troops in the Korean War and earned a master's in economics from the University of Michigan. In the 1950s, he moved to Fort Wayne, where he founded the commercial and industrial real estate business that bears his name. Now led by his son, Steve, The Zacher Company has played a vibrant role in the growth of Indiana's second-largest city, developing an industrial park, a hospital campus, and representing major national and regional manufacturing, retail, office, and apartment clients. "I don't want any winners or losers in transactions," Zacher once told an interviewer. "It's always my intention that everybody should come out feeling they've been treated fairly."

Zacher's fondness for consensus served him well in his uncompensated side career of board service for a galaxy of nonprofits. Zacher "is not a one-hour-a-month board member," said Judy Pursley, who has served with Zacher on the boards of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, an organization devoted to stopping child abuse, and a shelter program for homeless families. "He brings innovations," she told the Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette*. "He brings research for his innovations," she said. "He brings a civility to the members of the board. And he brings follow-through."

Zacher served for many years on the old Friends of The Lincoln Museum board, helped with the transition after the museum was closed, and continues to serve on the current Friends board. Sara Gabbard, who recently retired as executive director of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana and longtime editor of *Lincoln Lore*, said Zacher has been "an extraordinary director. He's been with us most of the way," helping with fundraising and always serving on several committees.

Stewardship of the annual R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture has perhaps been Zacher's signature contribution. A voracious reader, he participated in selecting, inviting, and, most memorably, delivering pithy, informed introductions of the authors at the annual event. "He really worked hard on giving these succinct introductions to each author that pretty well captured the guy's career," Gabbard said.

Zacher's pride is evident as he explains the organization's role in keeping Lincoln's legacy alive, including crucial fundraising to preserve the world's largest private collection of Lincoln material and the Rolland and McMurtry lecture series. "The collection offers the opportunity to become more intimately acquainted with Lincoln," he said.

The Rolland Center for Lincoln Research, also underwritten by the Friends, opened in 2022 at the Allen County Public Library, where the sixteenth president's papers, letters, and photographs are housed. Designed for students, tourists, and scholars as well as library patrons, the Center offers rotating displays of the actual memorabilia, combined with virtual screens that allow visitors to immerse themselves in other features of the collection. Fascination with Lincoln is not fading, Zacher said. "The interest on the part of young people appears to be very strong, based on the tours going on at the Rolland Center."

Somehow, Zacher also fit a third major role into his busy lifestyle, that of a presidential scholar. He spent eight years writing *Trial and Triumph*, published in 1996.

(A second edition, which includes assessments of Bill Clinton's and George W. Bush's second terms, was published in 2012 as *Presidential Power in Troubled Second Terms*.) Zacher says he got the idea for the book while reading Henry Adams's treatise on Thomas Jefferson, which suggests that Jefferson had a near-disastrous second term. "And I remembered Franklin Roosevelt's court-packing in the second term, and Nixon's resignation. . . . 'What,' I thought, 'is going on with this second term?'"

To analyze the effectiveness of second-term presidencies, he began with biographies and autobiographies, then read each chief executives' 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," he said in a previous *Lincoln Lore* interview. "Our mayor befriended Bill Clinton in law school and I asked him to send Clinton a copy of the book," Zacher said. At his first press conference after reelection, President Clinton mentioned that he had just finished reading an excellent book on the second term. Zacher was deluged with interview requests from national media.

"When I was interviewed on the *Today Show*," Zacher recalled, "I was asked the question, what does Clinton need to do to be successful in a second term, and I said, 'get his scandals behind him!'" Political commentator James Carville, also on that morning's show, told Zacher afterwards, "You sure nailed it."

Zacher and Carville were right. What came to be known as the Clinton-Monica Lewinsky Scandal emerged a year or so later, though, as Zacher notes, the Arkansas Democrat ended up having a successful second term because of his strong economic policies and his ability to work with a Republican Congress even after impeachment. Clinton's unlikely rebound illustrates one of the key traits Zacher sees in successful second-termers: their ability to learn from their experience in command, and their willingness to adjust their policies and priorities to meet new challenges.

"Lincoln's great power of analysis and evaluation of the circumstances led him to constantly be thinking about solutions," Zacher said. Even toward the end of his life, Lincoln's thoughts about what to do about slavery and the just-conquered South were still evolving, Zacher points out. He was determined that slavery be forever eliminated, and he wanted to protect the former slaves and help them become economically independent. He also wanted to make white southerners feel accepted into the Union once again, and knew it would take time for even northerners to fully accept equal rights for African Americans.

When the tide of war turned, Lincoln's moral and political power in the North solidified. But his resounding reelection did not ensure success in Reconstruction; the field of action would be in the South, where there was little support for him beyond the freed slaves. Meanwhile, the Radical Republicans in Congress viewed his conciliatory strategies as close to treason.

Zacher wonders whether Lincoln, always susceptible to self-doubt and prone to depression, may have doubted he was up to the task. He is intrigued by the sixteenth president's almost reckless disregard for personal safety in the days leading up to the assassination. Lincoln had warnings from friends—even warnings in his own dreams. Did Lincoln have a secret wish to go out as a martyr rather than a failed second-term president? "I would not think of going there," Zacher said. Lincoln's comments in his last meeting with his Cabinet, however, suggested he was warming to the new challenges. "The morning he died," Zacher said, "he was demanding that his version of Reconstruction be the one that would be adopted."

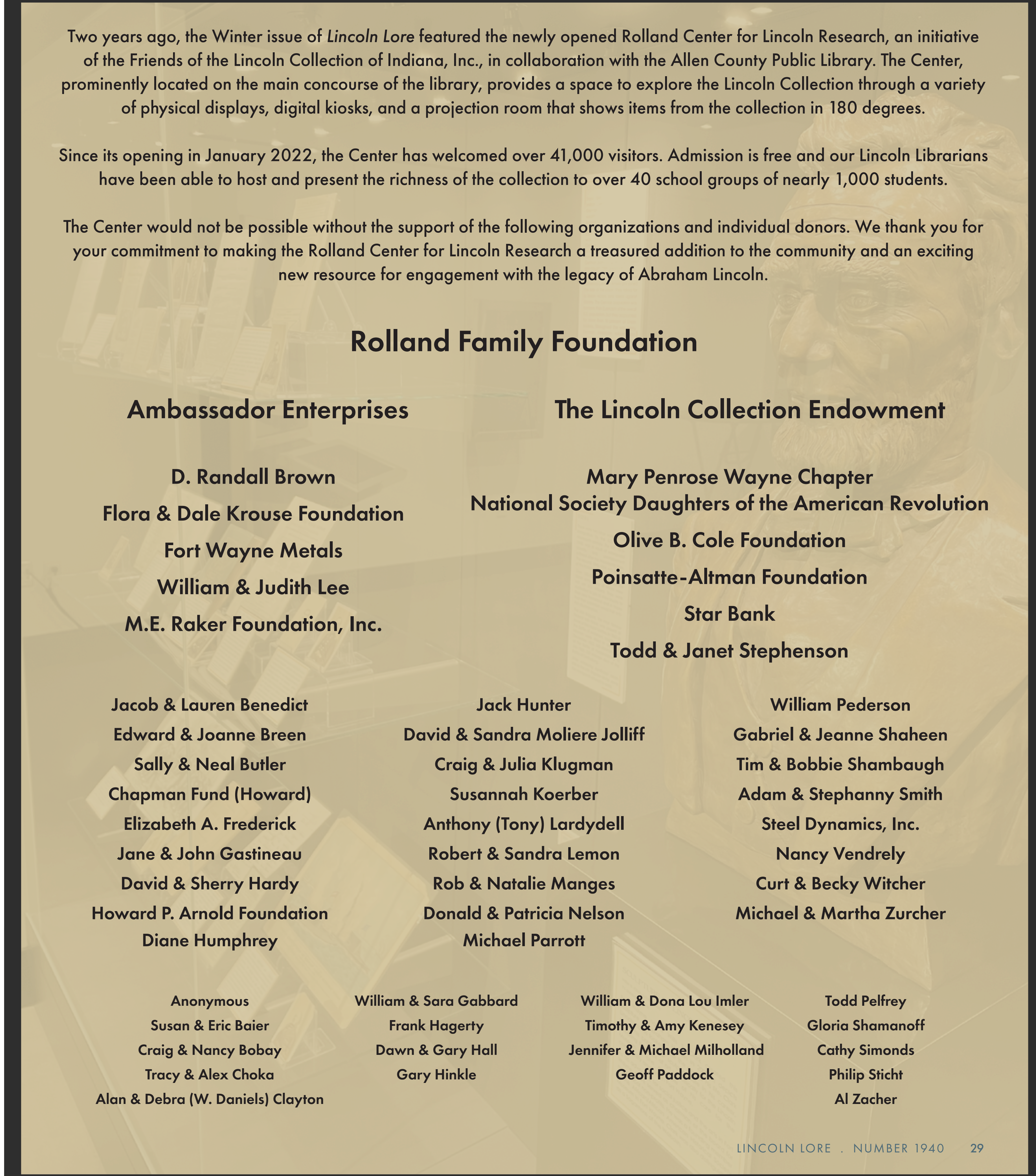
But, as Zacher observes, no one truly knows what was in Lincoln's mind.

Gabbard, who has known him for about 40 years, believes Zacher's ability to make the distinction between facts and supposition is a sign of his intellectual honesty. So on the subject of a second term that died with Lincoln on April 15, 1865, Zacher can only offer well informed, clearly labeled speculation. "If Lincoln had not been assassinated, Reconstruction would probably have been more successful than it was under Andrew Johnson," Zacher said. "But with the rising strength of the Radical Republicans, his leadership would have been challenged."

If so, would Lincoln be seen as the outstanding leader we celebrate today? "It is less likely," Zacher said.

Tim Harmon is a retired editorial writer for the Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette*.

THE
ROLLAND CENTER FOR LINCOLN RESEARCH



Two years ago, the Winter issue of *Lincoln Lore* featured the newly opened Rolland Center for Lincoln Research, an initiative of the Friends of the Lincoln Collection of Indiana, Inc., in collaboration with the Allen County Public Library. The Center, prominently located on the main concourse of the library, provides a space to explore the Lincoln Collection through a variety of physical displays, digital kiosks, and a projection room that shows items from the collection in 180 degrees.

Since its opening in January 2022, the Center has welcomed over 41,000 visitors. Admission is free and our Lincoln Librarians have been able to host and present the richness of the collection to over 40 school groups of nearly 1,000 students.

The Center would not be possible without the support of the following organizations and individual donors. We thank you for your commitment to making the Rolland Center for Lincoln Research a treasured addition to the community and an exciting new resource for engagement with the legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

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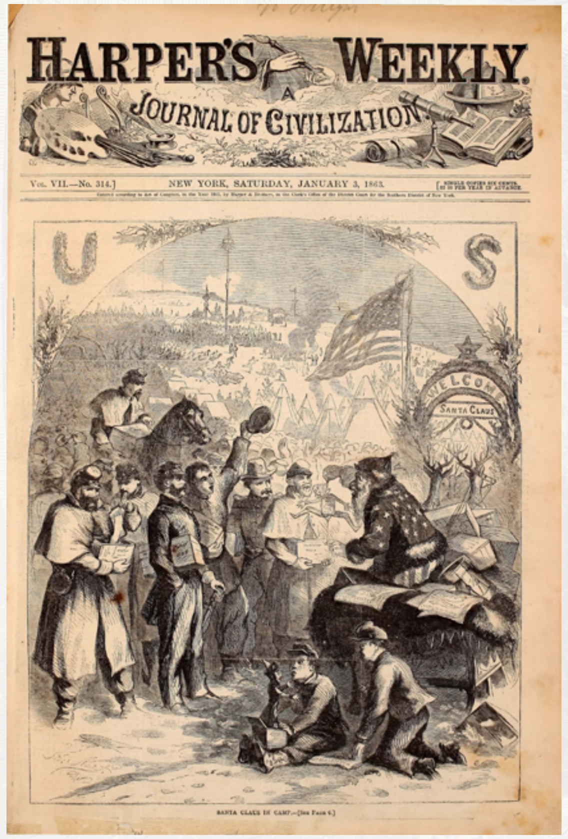
Philip Sticht
Al Zacher

From the Collection by *Jessie Cortesi*

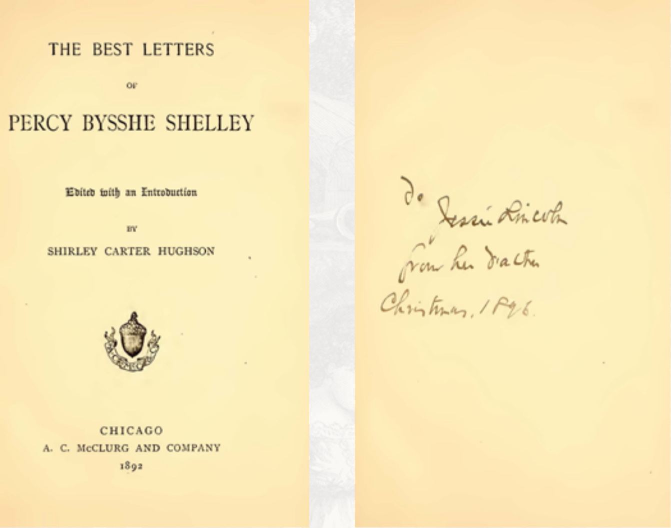
CHRISTMAS WITH THE LINCOLN FINANCIAL FOUNDATION COLLECTION

For Americans, there was little "peace on earth" on the Christmases of 1861–1864. But even as the Civil War raged, the holiday was celebrated in soldiers' camps and civilian homes. Though most of the traditions that we associate with a Victorian Christmas—greeting cards, Christmas trees, Santa Claus—were relatively new to Civil War-era Americans, they were part of the celebrations. Perhaps most famously, the cartoonist Thomas Nast evoked the image of Santa Claus as a symbol of the Union cause. Nast's now-classic Santa Claus first appeared in *Harper's Weekly* in 1863 and would reappear annually thereafter.



"Santa Claus in Camp," Harper's Weekly, January 3, 1863 (71.2009.084.08088)

This cover illustration by Thomas Nast from the January 3, 1863, issue of *Harper's Weekly* features Santa Claus decked out in striped pants and a star-spangled coat distributing presents to the troops—including a toy that looks like Jefferson Davis with a rope around his neck.



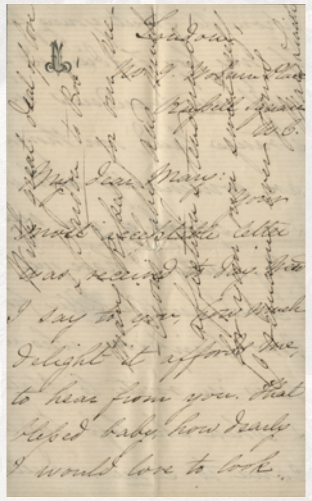
THE BEST LETTERS
OF
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Edited with an Introduction
BY
SHIRLEY CARTER HUGHSON

CHICAGO
A. C. McCLURG AND COMPANY
1892

To Jessie Lincoln
from her father
Christmas, 1896.

Robert T. Lincoln gifted this book, The Best Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, published in 1892, to his daughter Jessie at Christmastime in 1896. (71.2009.084.06957)

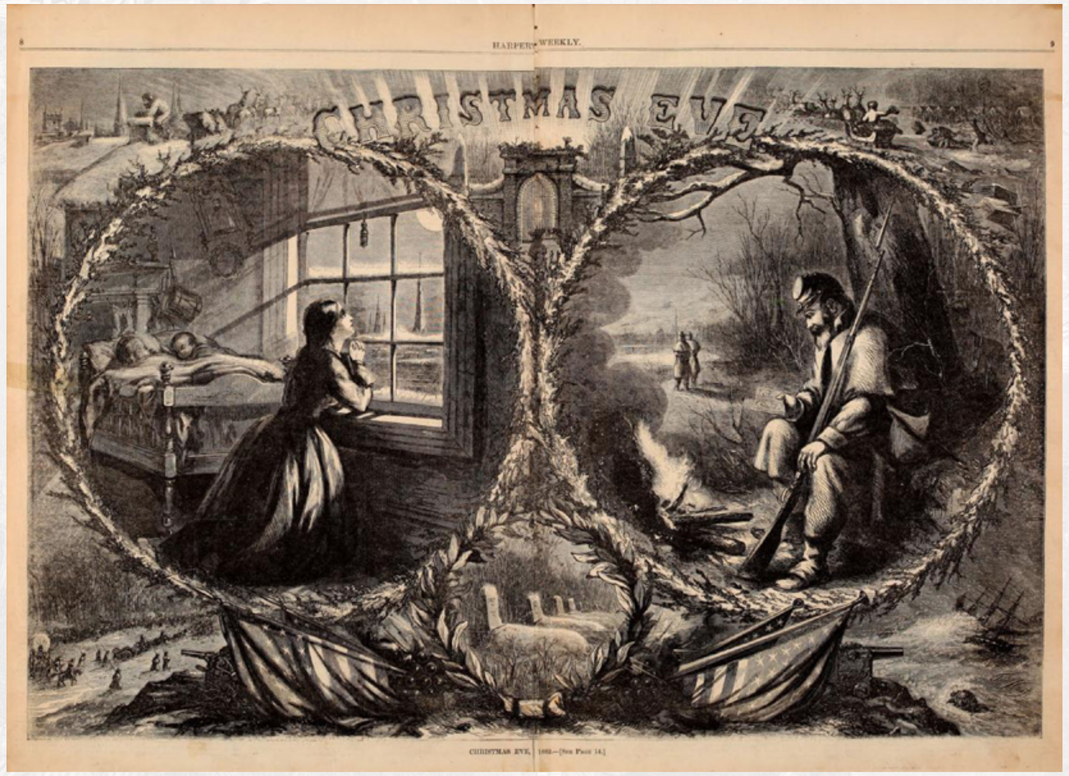


London

My Dear Mary: Your
[illegible] letter
was received [illegible]
I say to you [illegible]
delight it afforded me,
to hear from you. That
blessed baby, how dearly
I would love to look.

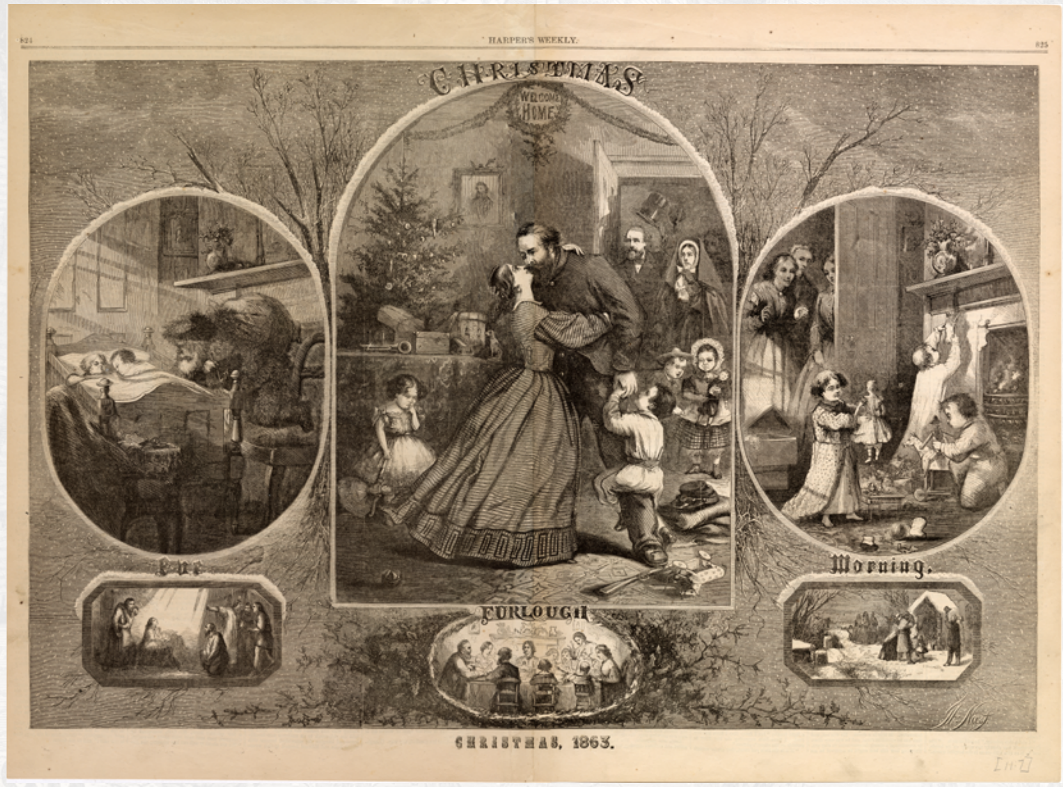
Letter from Mary Todd Lincoln to Mary Harlan Lincoln (71.2009.085.02600_20)

Mary Lincoln wrote this letter to her daughter-in-law Mary Harlan Lincoln from London in November 1870. She considers her plans for the upcoming Christmas holiday, which may lead her to vacation in Italy with Ellen Simpson, wife of Bishop Matthew Simpson of the Methodist Episcopal Church. She contemplates sending Tad back to America for school but shares her fears for his safety.



"Christmas Eve, 1862," Harper's Weekly, January 3, 1863 (71.2009.084.08088)

In this January 1863 illustration, Thomas Nast portrays a married couple separated by war on Christmas Eve, 1862. The wife, with her children asleep and Santa Claus preparing to come down the chimney above, prays at the window for her husband's safe return. Her husband, a Union soldier on guard duty, holds photographs of his family and longs for home, while above him Santa's sleigh makes a stop at an army camp.



"Christmas, 1863," Harper's Weekly, December 26, 1863 (71.2009.081.0103)

The large center image of this December 1863 Nast illustration depicts a soldier returning home for Christmas, reuniting with his family. The left image depicts two children sleeping as Santa Claus hovers over them, while the image on the right depicts a family playing with toys on Christmas morning. The three small vignettes depict the birth of Jesus, Christmas dinner, and families attending church on Christmas morning.

Jessie Cortesi is a Senior Lincoln Librarian for the Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection with the Rolland Center for Lincoln Research at the Allen County Public Library.

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