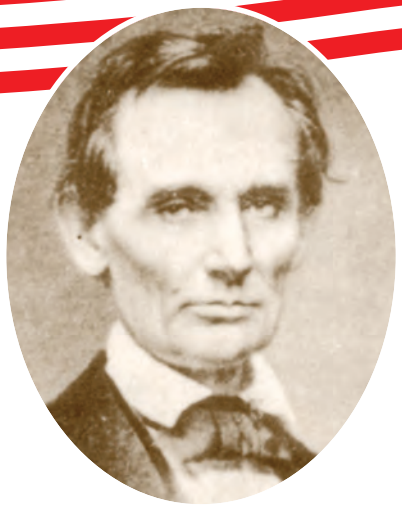
The Wide Awake Bulletin

The Lincoln Group of New York

FEBRUARY 2016

DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN



In This Issue

• 1 • President's Letter

• 1 • *Lincoln and the Jews* and Ford's Theatre Co-Winners of Award of Achievement

• 3 • February 2015 Meeting

• 4 • March/April 2015 Meetings

• 4 • November 2015 Meeting

• 5 • In Memoriam James A. Getty

• 6 • Member Collectibles (And Their Stories)

• 9 • Lincoln Family Cemetery

Editor: Steven R. Koppelman

Photographer & Artist: Henry F. Ballone

President's Letter

Steven R. Koppelman

Dear Members,

We have reached the end of not only the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth but the assassination and Civil War sesquicentennials as well, and thus it now becomes incumbent upon us all to celebrate and study history more for its own merit, rather than based on anniversary dates. After all, as Lincoln famously wrote in his *Annual Message to Congress* on December 1, 1862, "we cannot escape history." As we strive to continue studying the life and times of Abraham Lincoln, I do encourage you to think about what your favorite aspect of the Lincoln story is and why you're enticed by it. What is it about Lincoln's life that draws you to him? Let me know!

Last year I used this space to request that members provide *The Wide Awake* with their Lincoln collectible stories—the how and why, the thrill of the hunt, the sentimentality—and many of you did just that. Within these pages you'll view and read about a very eclectic group of Lincoln related items, each special to its owner for diverse reasons, reflecting not only different facets of Lincoln collecting but of Lincoln himself—I hope you enjoy it.

Lastly, I would like to salute this year's Award of Achievement Committee, John Bodnar (Chair), Frank McKenna, and Richard Sloan. In a year commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Lincoln assassination, there was an embarrassment of riches as a multitude of books, exhibits, and performances kept this dedicated group extremely busy. The co-winners they selected, as you will read about below, are the result of vetting that would rival any other organization.

I continue to look forward to seeing you all at our meetings during the course of the year!

Sincerely,
Steven R. Koppelman
President

Lincoln and the Jews and Ford's Theatre Co-Winners of Award of Achievement for 2015

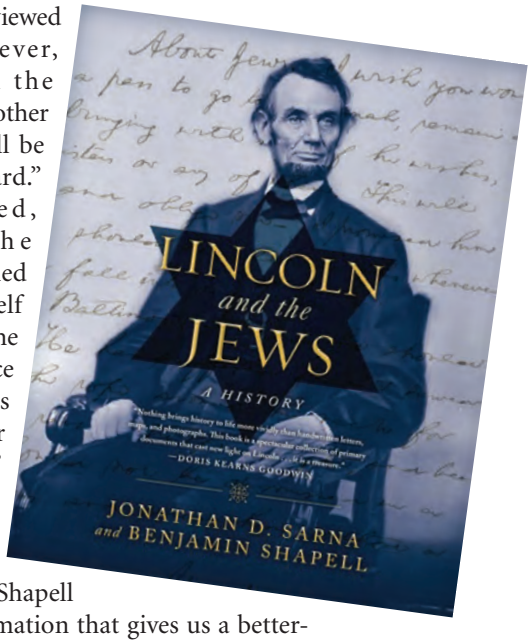
In the sesquicentennial year of the assassination of Lincoln, the Award of Achievement Committee was faced with a deluge of worthy candidates from the mediums of print, film, museum exhibitions and theater. In an unprecedented decision, the committee decided to honor co-winners for the 2015 Award.

Jonathan D. Sarna and Benjamin Shapell, authors of *Lincoln and the Jews: A History* (and accompanying exhibition)

According to John Bodnar, Chair of the award committee, they recognized *Lincoln and the Jews* as a "monumental achievement, one that will surely be viewed in the future as the seminal work on Abraham Lincoln's relationship with America's Jewish population. The inclusion of numerous primary sources, many of which the **continued on page 2**

Lincoln and the Jews and Ford's Theatre Co-Winners of Award of Achievement for 2015 continued

committee members viewed for the first time ever, makes their work the standard by which all other works of its kind will be judged going forward." Bodnar continued, "Along with the exhaustively researched content, the book itself is visually stunning. The selection and sequence of photographs immerses the reader into the authors' narrative and transports the reader into another time and place. Sarna and Shapell uncovered new information that gives us a better-rounded picture of Lincoln as a leader." Many of the primary source documents were also on display at the exhibition which, locally, appeared at The New-York Historical Society.



The award will be presented to Dr. Sarna and Mr. Shapell at our upcoming February meeting.

Ford's 150: Remembering the Lincoln Assassination

Ford's Theatre's *Ford's 150: Remembering the Lincoln Assassination* was an illustrious achievement in the sesquicentennial year. Bodnar indicated that "Ford's Theatre not only thrilled the thousands that personally attended all of their events, but they used

Morning Vigil with Actor Portraying Dr. Leale

National Park Service Commemorative Wreath

streaming technology to bring the performances to countless other Abraham Lincoln and U.S. history enthusiasts." He further stated that, "The 36-hours of continuous programming, with dozens of costumed interpreters and reenactors, was its own history in the making!" Note that C-Span covered many of these events and they are still available for viewing on their website.

This major commemoration included the following:

Silent Witnesses: Artifacts of the Lincoln Assassination (this exhibition reunited for the first time since April 1865 an extraordinary collection of artifacts)

Now He Belongs to the Ages: A Lincoln Commemoration (Introduced by Colin Powell and featuring performances by Julian Bond, Judy Collins, Harold Holzer, Eugene Robinson, David Selby, and James Swanson amongst others)

The Lincoln Tribute (around the clock events: evening candlelight and morning vigils with costumed reenactors in the street between Ford's Theatre and the Petersen House, wreath-laying ceremony, Taps, etc.)

Freedom's Song: Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War (musical featuring the words of Abraham Lincoln and music inspired by letters of those who lived through the Civil War)

One Destiny (a one-act play that revisits the events of April 14, 1865)

Leaders and Legacies and *Mourning Our Lost Leaders* (panel discussions with leading historians)

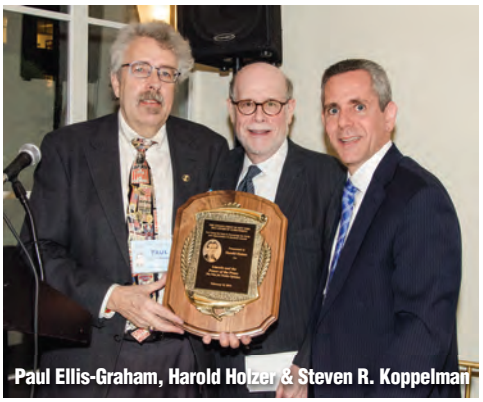
The award will be presented at our upcoming April meeting, for Ford's Theatre's great concept, organization, and execution of the April 14th-April 15th observance of Lincoln's tragic death. This was a commemoration that touched us emotionally and enriched us intellectually. ~

2015 Meetings Review

2015 was an exciting year of special meetings and events with acclaimed guest speakers and presenters, as attendees were treated to unique interpretations of the life and times of Abraham Lincoln…

February 10, 2015: In the midst of another brutal winter in the northeast, the weather cooperated, as New York was treated to a partly sunny 40-degree day. However, the real treat for the attendees this evening was the meeting itself. President **Steven R. Koppelman** introduced the Chair of the 2014 Award of Achievement Committee, **Paul Ellis-Graham**, who then came to the lectern to make the 2014 award presentation.

Mr. Ellis-Graham speaking on behalf of his fellow committee members, John Bodnar and Frank McKenna, praised the outstandingly researched and superbly written *Lincoln and the Power of the Press: The War for Public Opinion* by **Harold Holzer** as the winner of the 2014 Award of Achievement for "doing the most to encourage the study and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln." In presenting the award to Mr. Holzer, Mr. Ellis-Graham pointed out the wonderful analysis of primary sources he used to illustrate Lincoln's masterful control over the press as well as the most important editors of the day such as James Gordon Bennett, Horace Greeley, and Henry Raymond.


Paul Ellis-Graham, Harold Holzer & Steven R. Koppelman

In accepting the award, Mr. Holzer explained how this was the most special of awards to him because it comes from "home, New York!" He then explained the special relationship he had with the late Mario Cuomo (who had just passed away on New Year's Day), having worked with him on the *Lincoln on Democracy* project (winner of our 1990 Award of Achievement), and describing how Cuomo, unlike other researchers who simply use the *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* as a source for searching specific quotes, instead read all eight volumes from cover to cover! Mr. Holzer then dedicated the award to the late Governor Cuomo.

At this point, Holzer introduced his friend, acclaimed actor **Stephen Lang**, arguably most well-known for his celebrated performance as villain Colonel Miles Quaritch in James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009). To the people in this room however, he's best known for his highly praised performances as Stonewall Jackson in *Gods and Generals* (2003) and George Pickett in *Gettysburg* (1993). Mr. Lang treated the audience to a stunning performance as he recited Lincoln's *Second Inaugural Address.* The attendees were mesmerized as, perhaps Lincoln's greatest speech, was delivered in such an evocative and passionate way. At its conclusion, when Mr. Lang finished delivering the "With malice toward none…" line, the room broke out into loud cheers and applause, much like what must have happened just one month short of 150 years earlier.

Stephen Lang

Jonathan White

But, as they say, "the night was still young." Mr. Koppelman then introduced the guest lecturer for the evening, the Assistant Professor, Department of Leadership and American Studies at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia, Dr. **Jonathan White**, who spoke about his new book, *Emancipation, the Union Army, and the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln.*

Dr. White's opinion is that the presidential election of 1864 was the most important one in our nation's history but that it is largely misunderstood. He then eloquently and entertainingly explained exactly why this is the case. Pointing out that "emancipation was a top down process from Lincoln to the soldiers," White described and gave examples of soldiers who opposed the policy of the government and were thus subject to arrest. Soldiers who spoke out, even in private letters, were still liable to face retribution. Dissent would not be tolerated and by publicly punishing soldiers, in essence sending a message, the punishment was often more preventative than punitive.

Dr. White spoke of the dozens of officers that were Democrats and dismissed from the service during 1863-1864 under Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's direction, indicating that "Stanton's tactics were effective." Stanton, in justifying his actions (in this instance with respect to a quartermaster clerk) stated, "When a young man receives his pay from an administration and spends his evenings denouncing it in offensive terms, he cannot be surprised if the administration prefers a friend on the job." It seems that at times, soldier's ballots were judged to be more important than their bullets.

Dr. White's main premise was that though 78% of the soldiers that voted, voted for Lincoln, it's not quite the "thumping" that it appears to be. Soldiers who were Democrats were intimidated and coerced into silence—a "significant amount of soldiers did not vote because of their beliefs or intimidation" according to White. He further indicated that 50% - 60% of eligible soldier voters voted for Lincoln—the rest didn't vote or voted for McClellan.

In closing, Dr. White was clear that despite the incidents of intimidation that he spoke of, the idea of soldiers voting in the field was a tremendous political innovation and an incredible expansion of democracy that today, we take for granted. ~ **continued on page 4**

2015 Meetings Review, continued

March 28, 2015: The traditional April dinner meeting was supplanted this year by a special commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Lincoln assassination and New York funeral. On this day, a distinctive half-day symposium at the historic Cooper Union took place before a large and enthusiastic audience.

In his opening remarks, President **Steven R. Koppelman** set the stage for the day by requesting that people attempt to put themselves in the mindset of what it must have been like 150 years earlier. Stating that perhaps New Yorkers at that time picked up the *New York Times* and read of the assassination as, "A sensation of horror and of agony which no other event in our history has ever excited," Koppelman further suggested that these same people likely would have expressed sentiments such as being "thunderstruck" from the news or perhaps it was like receiving "a dagger to the heart." (These were actual reactions to the assassination taken from letters and diaries that appeared in *Mourning Lincoln* by Martha Hodes).

2015 Lincoln Prize winner **Harold Holzer** then opened the sessions by leading a tour of The Great Hall at Cooper Union, and speaking on Lincoln's unique history there. Attendees enjoyed seeing (and taking photographs of) the historic room as well as the actual lectern before which Lincoln spoke.

Frank J. Williams

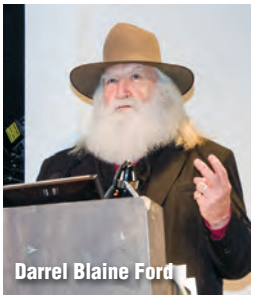
Frank J. Williams, Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court (Ret.), then presented on a topic that he's uniquely qualified to discuss, *The Lincoln Assassination & Military Tribunals*. A fascinating presentation was followed by a lively Q&A session.

Barnet Schecter

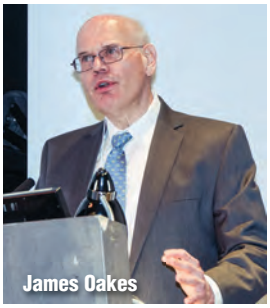
Next up was New York historian, **Barnet Schecter**, author of *The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and the Fight to Reconstruct America*, who spoke on *The African American Experience at Lincoln's New York funeral*. A unique subject that likely has not been discussed anywhere else!

After a refreshment break, **Richard Sloan** moderated a panel discussion on the Lincoln assassination conspirators. The panel consisted of **Michael Kauffman**, author of *American Brutus*, **Kate Larson**, author of *The Assassin's Accomplice: Mary Surratt and the Plot to Kill Abraham Lincoln*, and **Dave Taylor**, creator of the popular blog, Boothiebarn.com. An in-depth discussion of John Wilkes Booth and all of the conspirators, their level of participation and knowledge of Booth's plans, and their various degrees of guilt were all debated.

Richard Sloan, Michael Kauffman, Kate Larson & Dave Taylor


Darrel Blaine Ford

At this point in the program, it was time for a change of pace as "Walt Whitman" otherwise known as **Darrel Blaine Ford**, took the stage to recite some of Whitman's Lincoln-related writings and most poignant poetry. The crowd was riveted, as if watching Whitman himself, as the resemblance was uncanny.


James Oakes

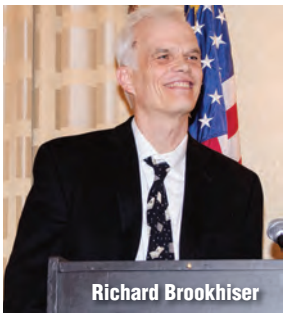
Finally, it was time for the keynote speech as Distinguished Professor of American History, **James Oakes**, spoke on Lincoln's Legacy, providing his most unique and fascinating view of why Lincoln was our greatest President. An exceptional culmination to a unique day! ~

April 25, 2015: Part two of the special commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the Lincoln assassination and New York funeral consisted of a walking tour, led by **Richard Sloan**, of a portion of the actual route of Lincoln's New York funeral procession.

Beginning at City Hall, participants were able to view the spot where Lincoln's casket lay in state (and the site of the only known photograph of Lincoln in death). Then proceeding up Broadway, walkers viewed sites that have fascinating connections not only to Lincoln, but to Mrs. Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth. Among these were two of Mathew Brady's photo galleries, the St. Nicholas and Metropolitan Hotels, Brooks Brothers (where the coat worn by Lincoln at his second inaugural was made), the store where Mrs. Lincoln purchased the White House china, Stewart's and Lord & Taylor's department stores (where she often shopped), and the old Winter Garden Theatre (where on November 25, 1864, three Booth brothers, Edwin, Junius, and John Wilkes appeared together in the play, *Julius Caesar*).

All along the way, Mr. Sloan delighted the partakers with his vast knowledge of each and every location, telling superb stories of how they relate to the Lincoln theme. It was not only a beautiful day weather-wise but a most enjoyable day history-wise! ~

November 10, 2015: A rainy overcast day did not dampen the spirits of attendees who came to hear eminent historian of the founding period **Richard Brookhiser** speak on his latest book, *Founders' Son: A Life of Abraham Lincoln*. But before the main event, some other significant proceedings took place.


Richard Brookhiser

As is tradition at The Lincoln Group of New York's November meeting, a member is invited to recite the Gettysburg Address. This year, the honor went to **continued on page 5**

2015 Meetings Review, continued

Paula Hopewell

Paula Hopewell who gave an exceptional reading that received much applause. Following that, President **Steven R. Koppelman** spoke of the recent loss within the Lincoln community of Jim Getty, the nation's leading Lincoln presenter, who passed away on September 26 at age 83 (see *In Memoriam* on this page), requesting that a moment of silence be observed to remember and honor Jim.

Mr. Brookhiser was then introduced by Mr. Koppelman who noted that while other books on Lincoln have discussed how he looked back to the Founding Fathers, here we have for the first time, a historian of the founding looking ahead to Lincoln. Brookhiser framed his lecture on Lincoln's relationship with five fathers—George Washington, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson, as well as his actual father Thomas, and God, the father.

Space does not allow for a full recap of Mr. Brookhiser's provocative thoughts on Lincoln's relationship with each father, and how they influenced him. However, some of the areas in brief, that he concentrated on, follow in the paragraphs below.

Though generally praising Thomas Lincoln, Brookhiser pointed out the shortcomings in Lincoln's relationship with his actual father thus he needed to search out surrogates (also saying that perhaps none of us get everything we want or need from our father).

He spoke much about Lincoln's reading of Mason Locke Weems' book, *The Life of Washington*, written a year after Washington's death. Stating that Weems' interpretation of Washington stuck with Lincoln so much that when he spoke before the New Jersey State Senate on the way to his inauguration in Washington, D.C., he referred to the Battle of Trenton, in terms almost exactly as Weems did, emphasizing how Washington and his men fought not just for independence but most importantly, for liberty.

He discussed Thomas Paine's book, *The Age of Reason*, and how it influenced Lincoln, when in his twenties, on thoughts about religion. These thoughts would not have been beneficial for an up and coming young politician to publicize, especially at that time.

According to Brookhiser, the *Gettysburg Address* was Lincoln's most forceful referral to Thomas Jefferson, as well as the specific phrase that "all men are created equal," a term he said that Lincoln would cling to. Lincoln felt that our country began, was born if you will, in 1776 with the issuance of Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*, or in other words, "four score and seven years" before Lincoln issued his *Gettysburg Address*.

Lincoln's relationship with God was quite complex. Mr. Brookhiser pointed out how Lincoln wrestled with the thought of why God would let all these Civil War related deaths occur. This ultimately led to his *Second Inaugural Address* with lines such as "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray," "yet if God wills," and "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Here, according to Brookhiser, "Lincoln came very far from Thomas Paine." Brookhiser concluded a memorable presentation stating that Lincoln was speaking with confidence, telling everyone that this is what we now do, as our country moves forward.

And as we move forward, while we all like to look back to Lincoln, perhaps we'll now look back with yet another prism within which to view him through. ~

In Memoriam

James A. Getty of Gettysburg, the nation's leading Lincoln presenter, died on September 26, 2015. He was 83 years old.

From the *Gettysburg Times*:

> Jim touched countless thousands of lives with his vast knowledge of all-things Lincoln. Getty would often present his programs over 500 times each year to visitors to Gettysburg, and to students in schools. Jim later developed a leadership presentation specifically for corporate executives and government leaders, where audiences were able to capture the lessons of history and apply them in today's business environments.

Getty regularly delivered the *Gettysburg Address* on Remembrance Day, every year on November 19th, at the National Cemetery in Gettysburg.

In 2014, Getty was presented with the prestigious Richard Nelson Current Award from the Lincoln Forum. That same year he also received the Meritorious Service Award from the Grand Army of the Republic Sons of Union Veterans. ~

James A. Getty

Member Collectibles (And Their Stories)

Alfonso Alejo

This is a large painting I did in 2012 of Lincoln as he appeared before the 1860 election. It took me three days to complete, and I did it in a Warhol-esque style. My wife and friends love it. I am quite attached to it too!

John Bodnar

It was through the Madison, New Jersey youth athletics program that I first met John Brown. He was the father of a boy in my son's class, and as luck would have it, a neighbor who lived only a few streets down from our home. John was a retired advertising executive, credited with many famous national campaigns. If you have ever received a Coca-Cola teddy bear during Christmas season, you can thank John Brown. Just before he retired, John developed an enthusiasm for painting, and began traveling to Montana where he would paint incredible Native American visages.

One night, after a bottle of wine (or two) and hours of animated conversation, we decided that the only white man in history who had a face weathered like a man living off the land out West—other than Keith Richards maybe—was Abraham Lincoln. Brown got to work, creating what is still the largest portrait of Lincoln's face that I have ever seen. The painting is based on the famous Alexander Gardner photograph taken just days prior to Lincoln delivering the *Gettysburg Address*.

This portrait was one of the last works of the artist's lifetime before he passed away from cancer. I always thought it fitting for an artist named John Brown to paint such a meticulous and mammoth portrait of Abraham Lincoln.

Harold Holzer

In 45 years of collecting Lincoln iconography—prints, photographs, paintings, and statuary—I've always had to go looking for choice items: at antique shops, flea markets, or in catalogues and auction galleries. The quest has been challenging and exciting—and exhausting. At this stage of my life, I think it's much more fun when someone walks into your office, unexpectedly, and gives you something you never even knew existed, much less might be available for your own collection. That is precisely what happened to me twice: once in 2013, when a young sculptor named Frank Porcu set up this sculpture in my office. It's new, it's highly original, and it's the model for a limited edition bronze he has created under the patronage of another new and wonderful friend, Shawn Thomas. I think it's one of the most breathtaking Lincoln images I've ever seen and I'm so proud and thrilled to have it.

Speaking of unexpected surprises, here's one more. About ten years ago, I was visiting an exhibition at Gettysburg College of Lincoln paintings by the great painter Wendy Allen. Naturally I was immediately drawn to a multi-tich of Lincoln—12 panels in all—representing Wendy's interpretation of Mathew Brady's Cooper Union photo. It struck me as a staggering achievement. My wife and I gazed at in in wonder. Then she poked me and said, "Look at the book Lincoln is resting his hand on." Yes, Brady had provided Lincoln with a pile of books to lean on for the 1860 pose because he was so tall his arms couldn't reach the table he had set up in his New York studio as a prop! But on her thickly-painted canvas (Wendy is the Van Gogh of Lincoln portraitists—you can almost *feel* her paint, and it always looks fresh and wet!), the artist had put titles on the book spines, and one of them said: "Holzer, *Lincoln at Cooper Union*," the title of my then-current book. I was flabbergasted—flattered beyond belief. The ultimate inside joke. I called Wendy that day to thank her profusely for the compliment. Not long after the exhibition came down, she asked me to be on the lookout for a large delivery. I wasn't disappointed: she sent me all 12 panels as a gift, and I proudly had an art installer from the Metropolitan Museum hang it properly in our Manhattan pied a terre.

So if you ask me my favorites—representing the best collecting moments of my life (my new motto is: it's better to receive than to give chase)—I'd vote for Wendy and Frank, my favorite Lincoln painter and favorite Lincoln sculptor. I'm truly blessed to own their brilliant works.

continued on page 7

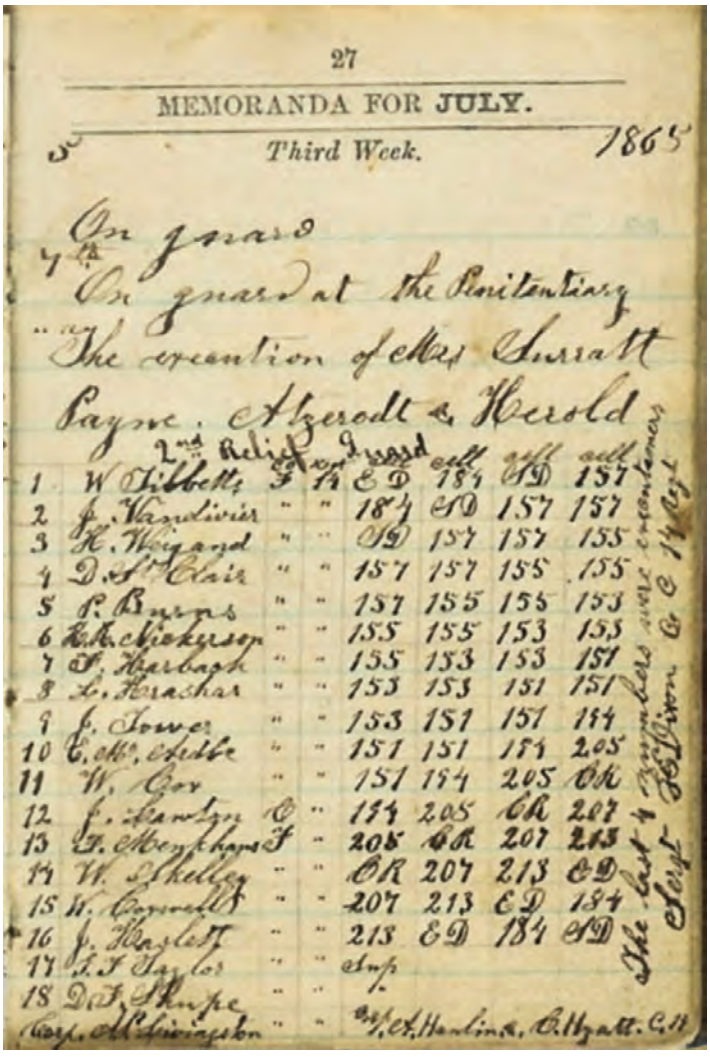
Member Collectibles (And Their Stories), continued

Paula Hopewell

By far and away, my favorite Lincoln possessions are two sculptures by John McClarey. I met John and his wife Carole a few years ago at the Lincoln Forum, and I indulged myself with the purchase of one of his Lincoln pieces. Later, I bought the companion piece, Lincoln as a young boy, which makes up John's work "Remembrance." The card reads: "Lincoln sits beside himself as a boy with a fish he has caught, and reflects on his memory of an act of kindness learned at home—kindness to strangers, especially soldiers. Kindness became a trademark of the Lincoln persona which defined his career before and during his Presidency."

Ed Isaacs

I acquired my great-great-grandfather's diary from a distant cousin in Maine. George E. Dixon was from Poundridge, New York. During the Civil War he served in various New York regiments. On May 16, 1865, his diary indicates that he was on guard at the old penitentiary over the Lincoln assassination conspirators and in the courtroom during the day while witnesses were being examined. He saw the bullet that killed Lincoln, also the pistol and two carbines, and Booth's boot that was cut open to take it from his broken leg by Dr. Mudd. On July 7, 1865 he was on guard duty at the penitentiary, the day of the executions of Mary Surratt, Lewis Payne, George Atzerodt and David Herold. Page 27 of the diary lists the names of those on duty that day, most importantly the four guards (see #15, 16, 17, and 18) that stood under the scaffold and who were responsible for knocking the props out, or springing the traps.



27

MEMORANDA FOR JULY.

Third Week. 1865

On guard

On guard at the Penitentiary

The execution of Mrs Surratt

Payne, Atzerodt & Herold

For more detailed information see:
https://awesometalks.wordpress.com/2009/04/10/an-awesometalk-with-ed-isaacs-owner-of-civil-war-diary-from-soldier-who-guarded-the-lincoln-conspirators/

Alan Lowcher

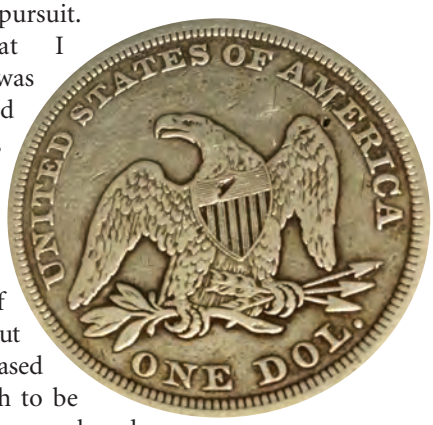
Years ago, my wife and I went to an antique show at a local high school. Piled up on a vendor's table were old prints, posters and advertising material. I started going through the stack and I came across an image of Abraham Lincoln from a steel engraving memorializing his tragic death. It was dirty, stained, and someone had used the paper as a scratch pad for ciphering. I snatched it up for $25 and had it conserved and professionally framed in a period style (see "before" and "after" photos). Aptly named "The Nation's Martyr," it holds a place of honor in my home. When I look at it, I reflect on what Lincoln accomplished during his life and what "might have been" but for the assassin's cowardly act.

continued on page 8

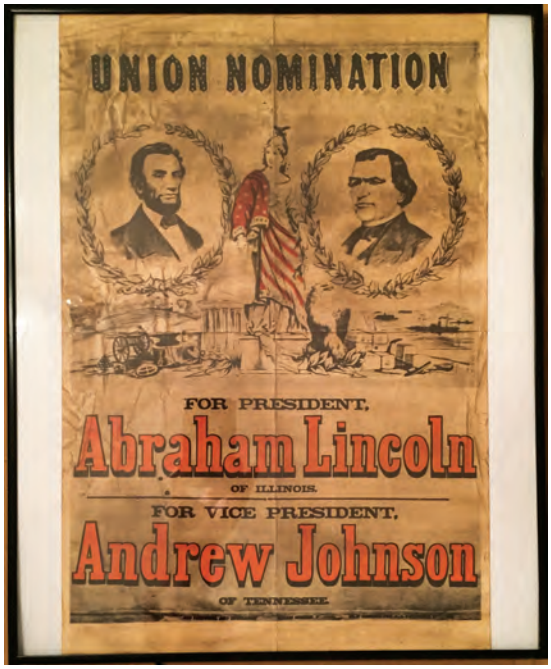
Member Collectibles (And Their Stories), continued

Jim Santagata

Many years ago, when I realized I had no self-control when it came to buying books on Lincoln or on the Civil War, I promised myself I would not give in to collecting anything else related to either of the two. As that became more and more difficult to live up to, I did some soul searching regarding what would satisfy my interests without becoming another out of control pursuit.



What I settled on was one single item, a Seated Liberty 1847 Silver Dollar, so that I would own something that was in existence in both the year Lincoln began his career in the U.S. House of Representatives and throughout the entire Civil War. I purchased one that was worn enough to be affordable, yet has great eye appeal, and that I wouldn't have to worry about significantly diminishing in value by carrying in my pocket as a conversation piece, especially at Civil War or Lincoln related gatherings (I also own one minted in 1861, but that one is in near-mint condition and is now worth almost $1,000, so I don't dare remove it from its case).



Frank Scaturro

My parents found this Lincoln-Johnson campaign poster at a house sale and gave it to me for my birthday when I was a teenager. (I can't recall which birthday—maybe 16th or 17th??) The owner must not have appreciated its significance. (Glad Frank's parents did realize the significance – ed.)

Stuart Schneider

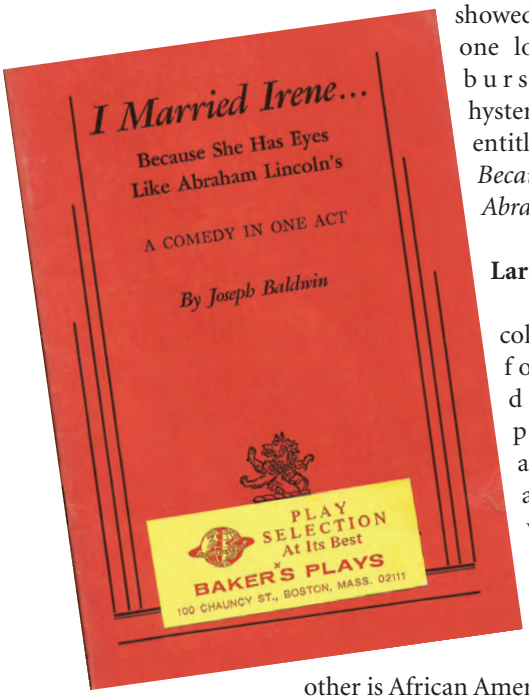
Among my favorite items is an early "Lincoln for Senator" photo ribbon. This 1858 photo (1.25 inches tall) was taken by Alexander Hessler and attached to a silk ribbon. This is one of the earliest political ribbons created for Lincoln's run for Senator against Stephen Douglas in 1858. I bought it in 1982. In those days, photo ribbons were not considered very valuable. Much has changed since then. It's one of my favorites because it's an early Lincoln piece and a rare pre-presidential campaign item.

Richard Sloan

I have many neat little collectibles, each one with a story behind it. Unfortunately, my wife—whose name is Irene—is like a football widow. In her case she's a Lincoln widow! Nothing I have ever brought into our home has excited her (in a positive sense that is!) I came home with my first Lincoln rocker, a used piece I found at a local antique store. "UGLY!" she said. Once I brought home a five foot high statue of Lincoln that looked like one of those carved cigar store Indians. She rolled her eyes. During a stroll along Atlantic City's boardwalk by myself (Irene was playing the slot machines) I saw a gorgeous glass one-piece model of Booth's derringer pistol. Exquisite. She didn't appreciate that either. It got to the point where I no longer even bothered to show her anything Lincoln-related that I bought.

There was one exception, however. It took place about thirty years ago. I was browsing through a publisher's catalogue of plays. (I'm a passionate collector of plays—published or otherwise—about Lincoln and/or his assassination.) One title caught my eye and I said "I gotta have this!" It was a 1966 one-act play by a writer named Joseph Baldwin. There were only four characters in it, and it set me back a big two dollars. When it arrived in the mail I frantically unwrapped it and **continued on page 9**

Member Collectibles (And Their Stories), continued



showed it to Irene. She took one look at the cover and burst out laughing hysterically. The play was entitled *I Married Irene ... Because She Has Eyes Like Abraham Lincoln's.*

Larry West

One primary collecting/research area for me is photo-decorative and photo-personal accessories; often they are ceramic/glass, with vintage images. Within this, I pursue concentrations; one is Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, as peers, the other is African American/multiracial family imagery. These decorative focal points allow me to even contrast the Lincoln and Douglass parlors.

I searched years for a Lincoln commemorative object that was just right. Usually auctions were my frequent source but I found a dealer with an 1850-1925 period focus as is mine. I acquired this cup and saucer commemorative set from him. He had two over the last 40 years of dealing. It is the real thing (unlike thousands of cheap Lincoln ceramic/glass cups, plates, etc.). This one has a real, heat fused, pigment print (which sometimes can be identified as carbon prints). It is essentially hand done, including the borders. It's of course the $5 bill portrait, by Berger, at the Washington Brady Gallery in 1864 (but not by Brady physically). Red/orange set, gilded border. Circa 1865-1890. ~

Lincoln Group of New York photos & many more Lincoln & Civil War photos can be seen on Henry F. Ballone's web site at: civilwarnut.com

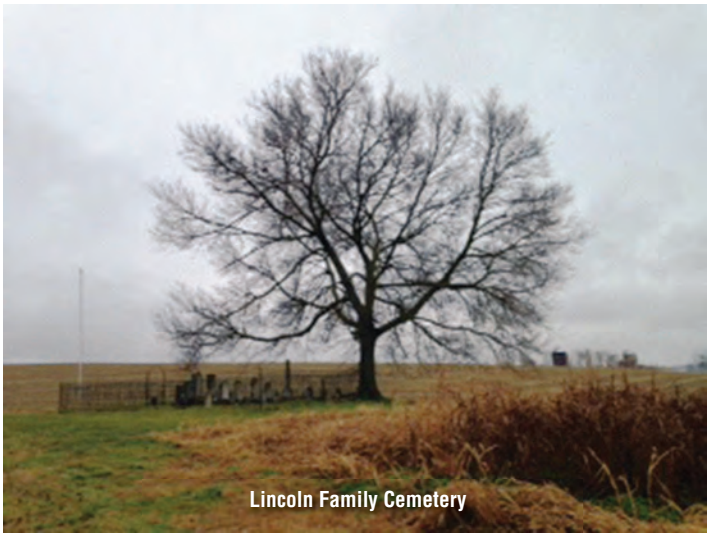
Lincoln Family Cemetery

by Paula Hopewell

Early in the morning of December 2, 2014, I set out to find the Lincoln Family Cemetery, spurred on by a tip I'd gotten at the Lincoln Forum in Gettysburg a few weeks earlier. I had spent the night in nearby Harrisonburg, Virginia, right off I-81 and was using my GPS to find the cemetery at 7884 Harpine Highway, Route 42, in nearby Linville.

After a false turn or two, I found a little side road with a Virginia historical marker, labeled "Lincoln's Virginia Ancestors." The marker explained that President Abraham Lincoln's great-grandfather, John Lincoln, had moved to the Linville area with his family in 1768. Lincoln's father, Thomas, was born nearby. A distant Lincoln relative, Daniel Boone, had encouraged Lincoln's grandfather, the elder Abraham Lincoln, to migrate through the Cumberland Gap to Kentucky "by 1782." Other Lincolns stayed behind in the Shenandoah Valley and the President's great-uncle, Captain Jacob Lincoln, the brother of his grandfather, built the homestead nearby about 1800, just a few years before President Abraham Lincoln was born in Kentucky. The marker states that "Five generations of Lincolns and two family slaves are buried on the hill."

I put on my hiking boots, bundled up and walked up the hill, past a field, and stopped in my tracks as I took in the scene before me—an iron fence surrounded a cluster of grave stones,


Lincoln Family Cemetery

bracketed by a bare flag pole and a beautiful bare tree framing that historic spot. On the far side of the fence, I found the gate, which creaked impressively as I opened it and entered the little graveyard. There I found a marker to "Virginia John" Lincoln and other members of the Lincoln family. However, the marker that left the deepest impression was barely legible: "The Last of the Lincoln Slaves; Uncle Ned and His Wife Queen."

I wandered around for about an hour, taking in the beauty of that part of the Shenandoah Valley and all that had happened there. What a unique place! There was no visitor's center, no sidewalk, no interpreters or guides, no pamphlets, no brochures, no other visitors—just a pristine impression of this land and its place in American history.

continued on page 10

Lincoln Family Cemetery, continued

Behind me, a new home was under construction. A brand new home! On the other side of the cemetery, down a gentle hill, lay Capt. Jacob Lincoln's home, in a state of some disrepair. The contrast was striking.

During my visit to the area, someone told me that there had been a second Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, a Lincoln cousin whose family had remained behind in Virginia. That Abraham Lincoln wore a Confederate uniform and fought against his more famous and powerful Illinois cousin.

In preparing for this article, I discovered that the Jacob Lincoln homestead, including the cemetery, is on the market, with an asking price of $449,000. On the *National Register of Historic Places*, the 4,000 square foot home sits on 9.38 acres.

I also learned that the cemetery had been restored and rededicated in 2015, an effort led by the Massanutten Chapter of the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution). A woman named Shelvie Carr (a retired teacher) was the chairman of the rededication committee, and I had a long and delightful conversation with her. She considers the cemetery to be "a tribute to the Valley," a symbol of the hope that brought the settlers there from the North. Along with the Lincolns, a vast migration of early settlers had passed through this area on their way to Kentucky, the Northwest Territory and many destinations further west.

Starting in June, 2015, the DAR cleaned up the grave stones, repaired and repainted the fence, and spruced up the area. A lot of old brick fragments were found in the graveyard, and research confirmed that a brick wall had once surrounded the tomb stones. The brick fragments were made into a wall under the hackberry tree that overlooks the cemetery. The DAR planted narcissus bulbs (an old flower that the Lincolns might have enjoyed) along the fence and under the tree. The narcissus should bloom in March, 2016. At the rededication ceremony in October, 2015, the DAR unveiled a large brass interpretive marker, explaining the tombstones and identifying those buried there. A video clip of local TV coverage of this ceremony is available online.

Though unconfirmed, Shelvie believes that Uncle Ned and Queen were slaves during the Civil War, and that they stayed in the area after emancipation. Their bodies are not buried with the Lincolns, but are elsewhere on the hill. One last Lincoln lives in the Valley, a 77-year-old man named Ernie (his 5th great-grandfather was "Virginia John").

Our study of history is fleeting. The environment I visited last year is no more. In just one year, the deteriorating graveyard has been cleaned up and renewed, warding off further disintegration. A marker has been added to help visitors understand the individuals buried there. A family lives in the home that was under construction in 2014 (they have a pet beagle named Abe!). Hopefully, further efforts to understand and preserve this site will continue.

Every February 12th, the President of the Lincoln Society of Virginia, Dr. Phillip Stone of Sweetbriar College, holds a commemorative ceremony at the Lincoln Family Cemetery. One year, according to Shelvie, Dr. Stone and his dog were the only ones in attendance. In 2016, I plan to be there as well. ~

"The Last of the Lincoln Slaves: Uncle Ned and His Wife Queen"

Award Committee: *A special thanks to our dedicated members that served on the 2015 award committee.*

John Bodnar, Chair • Frank McKenna • Richard Sloan

THE WIDE AWAKE is a publication of The Lincoln Group of New York. We welcome your feedback, letters and comments, as well as news of your Lincoln related activities. Please direct your correspondence to:

Steven R. Koppelman, Editor • *The Wide Awake* • 5 Leigh Court • Randolph, NJ 07869

Lincoln & Civil War event photos can be viewed at: civilwarnut.com