

# The Wide Awake Bulletin



**The Lincoln Group of New York** FEBRUARY 2018  
DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

## In This Issue



• 1 • **President's Letter**



• 2 • **Sidney Blumenthal Wins Award of Achievement for 2017**



• 2 • **February 2017 Meeting**



• 2 • **April 2017 Meeting**



• 3 • **November 2017 Meeting**



• 4 • **A Brief History of Lincoln on Stamps by Rob Kaplan**

• 5 • **Lincoln and His "Hell-Cats" by Paula Hopewell**



• 6 • **Member Interview: Steve Aronson**

• 7 • **Lincoln Books 2017**

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## President's Letter



Steven R. Koppelman

**D**ear Members,

In many respects this is the most difficult *President's Letter* I've written—it's certainly the most personal. I've had the privilege, and I do mean privilege, to serve as president of The Lincoln Group of New York since 2014. Last year I informed our Executive Committee that when my second term ends in February 2018, I would be stepping down, enabling the organization to move on with a new president. Prior to our upcoming February meeting, the Executive Committee will meet, select, and recommend to the membership someone to take over whom I'm certain will be a dedicated individual and will serve the organization well.

At the time that I informed the Executive Committee of my decision, I didn't know (for sure anyway) that my wife and I would be retiring/relocating to the Fredericksburg area of Virginia, the heart of Civil War country, which we will be doing this spring. Although we're excited about our upcoming change, we do still have family and friends here. So we will be back up north quite frequently, and I certainly plan to attend many future meetings of The Lincoln Group of New York. This is a truly great organization, and it's been an absolute pleasure to be part of it for the last 20 years—I've always felt I was at my best when I was with this group. I have met many special people through this organization, and am extremely fortunate to have made so many of what I'm sure will be lifelong friendships. I think Lincoln said it best (as he seemingly always does) when he wrote, in a letter dated July 13, 1849, "The better part of one's life consists of his friendships."

But that's more than enough about me. Perhaps you've noticed the name of a new co-editor on this issue of *The Wide Awake*. It's been a pleasure to work with Rob Kaplan, a (retired) professional editor, this past year. He's made some major and significant contributions to this issue, and I'm sure you'll enjoy them. As always, Hank Ballone, the photographer/artist for *The Wide Awake*, has done his usual outstanding job. I'm proud to say that he and I have now put out 14 annual issues together!

Finally, our Award of Achievement committee should absolutely be recognized for their hard work, dedication, and commitment. Paula Hopewell chaired the committee in 2017, with Tom Dames and Joe Truglio. It's a task that, though rewarding, is extremely time consuming, so please join me in thanking them for their efforts.

Enjoy!

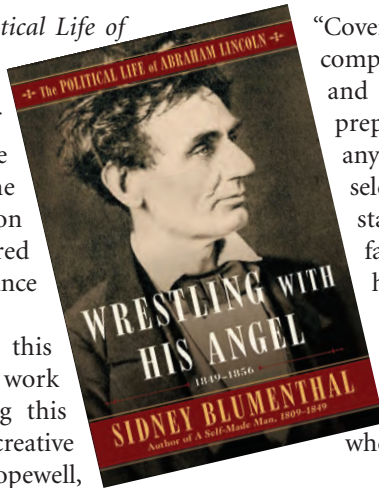
Sincerely,  
Steve

**Steven R. Koppelman**  
President

## Sidney Blumenthal Wins Award of Achievement for 2017

*Wrestling With His Angel: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln Vol. II, 1849-1856* (Simon & Schuster) by Sidney Blumenthal has been selected as the recipient for the 2017 Award of Achievement. The award, presented to the individual or organization that has done the most to encourage the study and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln, has been conferred annually by The Lincoln Group of New York since 1988.

The award committee, in making this selection, expressed the opinion that the work covers Lincoln's political evolution during this critical period in a thorough, insightful, and creative way. According to committee Chair Paula Hopewell,



“Covering a span of just seven years, Blumenthal describes a complex web of personalities, political forces, and personal and historic events that shaped Lincoln's character and prepared him for the national stage. These years were anything but fallow ones in Lincoln's life, though they are seldom treated with this depth and richness.” She further stated that “Blumenthal has contributed detailed and fascinating insight into the impact these few short years had on the future President.”

In addition to Ms. Hopewell, the award committee for 2017 included Tom Dames and Joe Truglio. The award will be presented to Mr. Blumenthal at our February 2018 dinner meeting, where he will also speak on his book.~

## 2017 Meetings Review

**The Year 2017 was unique in many respects, and that was equally true as regards the interpretations of the life and times of Abraham Lincoln that The Lincoln Group of New York had the opportunity to hear about during our meetings.**

**February 21, 2017:** The first meeting of the year, in the dining room of the historic Roosevelt House in New York City, began with President Steve Koppelman introducing Frank McKenna, the Chair of the 2016 Award of Achievement Committee. After thanking fellow committee members Paula Hopewell and Joe Truglio for their hard work and dedication, Mr. McKenna formally presented the award to Noah Andre Trudeau for his book, *Lincoln's Greatest Journey: Sixteen Days that Changed a Presidency, March 24 – April 8, 1865*. In making the presentation, Mr. McKenna noted that “the committee unanimously concluded that Mr. Trudeau's work provides ground-breaking primary research into Lincoln's little-known and longest stay away from Washington, DC during his extremely stressful presidency.” His deep knowledge, Mr. McKenna added, “is evident throughout this original work, which demonstrates that there is indeed much to be gained in studying America's greatest president and statesman.”



Frank McKenna, Noah Andre Trudeau & Steven R. Koppelman

The presentation concluded, Mr. Koppelman announced that Ms. Hopewell would be the chair of the 2017 Award of Achievement Committee, and that Tom Dames would be replacing Mr. McKenna as the latter's term was coming to an end. The large audience then proceeded downstairs to the auditorium to hear Mr. Trudeau's presentation on his now award-winning book.

Interestingly, although Mr. Trudeau did of course discuss the subject of his book—Lincoln's meeting at City Point, Virginia, with General Ulysses S. Grant, General William T. Sherman, and Admiral David D. Porter—much of his talk focused on exactly how and why

what was in the book got there. He did so by introducing the audience to three other individuals who spent time with Lincoln at City Point, and whose personal papers provided him with source material for the book—Captain John S. Barnes, Commander of the USS Bat, a US Navy warship; Samuel H. Beckwith, the telegrapher assigned by U.S. Grant to serve as Lincoln's personal communications specialist; and Captain Charles Penrose, who was assigned by the War Department to be Lincoln's personal aide throughout his visit. Citing examples from the book, he talked about both the researcher's craft and how historians determine what's trustworthy and what isn't—that is, what to keep and what to discard as unreliable—when it comes to letters, memoirs, and other documents.



Noah Andre Trudeau

Closing the remarks, Mr. Trudeau argued that April 8, 1865, the last day of Lincoln's trip, was one of the “top ten great moments in his presidency.” Brought to the Depot Field Hospital, the largest military hospital in the United States, for a tour of the grounds, the kitchen, and the administrative offices, Lincoln told his hosts that what he really wanted was to meet and greet each of the patients, shake their hands, and tell them that the war was finally reaching its conclusion. Lincoln later stated, “I came here to take by the hand the men who have achieved our glorious victories,” and in so doing gave them both encouragement and his sincere thanks.

After an informative question and answer session, The Lincoln Group of New York gave Mr. Trudeau its sincere thanks as well ~

**April 17, 2017:** Spring had finally arrived and The Lincoln Group of New York marked the season by focusing on Lincoln's life in Springfield, Illinois. It was in April 1837 that **continued on page 3**

**2017 Meetings Review, continued**

Abraham Lincoln first walked into Joshua Speed’s store in Springfield, told him he was moving into town, and asked what it would cost to buy the materials for a bed. When it turned out to be more than he could afford, Speed offered him the opportunity to share his room (and double bed). Accepting the offer, Lincoln carried his saddle bags upstairs to the bedroom, came back down, and exclaimed, “Well, Speed, I am moved!”

One hundred eighty years later, the speaker for the evening, Dr. Charles B. Strozier, author of *Your Friend Forever, A. Lincoln*, a 2017 Lincoln Prize Finalist, provided a stimulating analysis of why Lincoln’s relationship with Joshua Speed was “one of the most important friendships in American history.” One of the reasons for this, he said, was that it was an April 1842 letter from Speed that led to Lincoln’s reestablishing his relationship with Mary Todd after they had broken up. In the letter, Speed discussed the consummation of his recent marriage, an issue over which both Speed and Lincoln apparently had some concerns. Lincoln’s reply, which Dr. Strozier called the “emotional turning point of Lincoln’s life,” read in part, “I opened [Speed’s letter] with intense anxiety and trepidation—so much, that although it turned out better than I expected, I have hardly yet, at the distance of ten hours, become calm.... I tell you, Speed, our forebodings, for which you and I are rather peculiar, are all the worst sort of nonsense.” As a result, Lincoln and Mary were married in November,



**Charles B. Strozier**

and she subsequently played an enormous role in guiding Lincoln toward a career in politics and, ultimately, the presidency.

Although as their shared internal conflicts were resolved, Lincoln’s friendship with Speed ultimately faded away, Dr. Strozier still considered the relationship “one of the most interesting friendships in nineteenth century history, one that was moral and spiritual, but not physical.” One important result of the friendship was that for the balance of Lincoln’s life his clinical depression never returned, even though he certainly suffered some horrific tragedies—it had enabled him to find his “emotional compass.” ~

**N**ovember 9, 2017: As is our tradition, the November meeting opened with a recitation of the Gettysburg Address, the honor this year going to Anthony Czarnecki, who did a masterful job by emphasizing certain words and phrases that particularly resonated with him. Dinner was subsequently enjoyed by all, and just as President Steve Koppelman was about to suggest adjourning to the auditorium for our formal program, Vice President Paul Ellis-Graham interjected with a surprise presentation. Since Mr. Koppelman’s second term as president would be ending in February, he was presented with a beautiful plaque inscribed as follows:

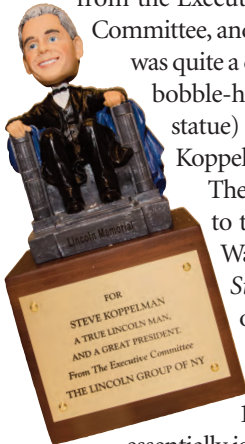


**Anthony Czarnecki**

“The Lincoln Group of New York Expresses Its Deep Appreciation to Steve Koppelman for His Outstanding Leadership as President.” But, that wasn’t all! Mr. Ellis-Graham’s presentation was followed by a second, this one from the Executive Committee, and it



**Steven R. Koppelman & Richard Sloan**



was quite a creative and unique gift indeed—a Lincoln bobble-head (based on the famous Lincoln Memorial statue) but instead of Lincoln’s head it had that of Mr. Koppelman, and quite a good likeness!

The presentations over, the group moved downstairs to the auditorium to listen to the evening’s guest, Walter Stahr, speak on the subject of his latest book, *Stanton: Lincoln’s War Secretary*. Focusing strictly on Stanton’s relationship to Lincoln, Mr. Stahr took us back to their first meeting as co-councils on the Cyrus McCormick reaper patent case in 1855. Recalling the famous story about Stanton essentially ignoring and insulting Lincoln during the course of the trial, Mr. Stahr pointed out that the story actually first came out about 20 years after the fact, and said that he doubted it had actually happened.

Nevertheless, he pointed out, during the first year of his presidency Lincoln “had few harsher critics than Edwin Stanton,” but noted that, fortunately for Stanton, his negative comments appeared in private letters rather than in newspapers. However, once Stanton replaced Simon Cameron as Secretary of War, he “flipped” around, not only on Lincoln but also on General McClellan, whom he had previously befriended but now castigated. As Mr. Stahr stated, “Where you stand depends on where you sit.” Moreover, although he was a Democrat, Stanton was an early proponent of using black troops, pushing for it very early on in the war, and later on a forceful advocate for the Freedmen’s Bureau.



**Walter Stahr**

The highpoint of his career as Secretary of War, according to Mr. Stahr, was during the Chattanooga Campaign. The Union army in Tennessee was under siege, and badly in need of relief. Although Lincoln joked that Stanton wouldn’t even be able to get a single corps from northern Virginia to Washington in one week’s time, the Secretary of War actually managed to move 20,000 soldiers from northern Virginia to Chattanooga in a week, with Stanton explaining that “The danger was too imminent and the occasion too serious for jokes.”

Mr. Stahr closed, appropriately, by discussing Stanton’s famous “Now he belongs to the ages” quote, supposedly **continued on page 5**

## A Brief History of Lincoln on Stamps

by Rob Kaplan

Americans tend to think of Abraham Lincoln as the quintessential American. But he has, in fact, been an icon for people all around the world for well over 100 years. One of the ways this has been manifested is in the issuance of postage stamps celebrating his life and achievements. The United States was, not surprisingly, the first country to issue such a stamp, but there are now more than 1,700 stamps from over 100 countries in South America, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Oceania, as well as a handful in Europe.

It all began in April 1866, when what was then called the U.S. Post Office issued an appropriately black 15c stamp with Lincoln's image to commemorate the first anniversary of his death, the first stamp it had ever issued specifically as a memorial [1]. Since then, the U.S. has issued 150 additional



1

Lincoln-related stamps as well as almost 50 postage-paid cards and envelopes. Most of the stamps issued between the 1860s and 1930s were definitive stamps—small stamps intended strictly for mailing purposes, many of them bearing the same portrait of Lincoln. The 1940s, however, brought several commemorative stamps—larger stamps issued primarily for collectors. These included stamps



2

commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery (1940); recognizing the fifth anniversary of Chinese resistance to Japanese aggression, with images of Lincoln and Sun Yat-sen (1942) [2]; and celebrating the 85th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address (1948). A decade later, as the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's birth drew closer, there was a series of four stamps issued to mark the event, the first on the anniversary of Lincoln's debate with Stephen Douglas in Ottawa, Illinois, on August 27, 1858 [3].



3

Over the next 50 years, more than two dozen Lincoln-related stamps were issued. Then, for the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 2009, there was a set of four more, depicting the sixteenth president at different stages in his life—as a rail-splitter [4], lawyer, politician, and president. The most recent U.S. issue, in 2016, is a reprint of a stamp from 1877, one of a set of six commemorating classic American stamps that includes portraits of Lincoln, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin—America's first Postmaster General.



4

The vast majority of Lincoln stamps, however, are from countries other than the U.S. The first—not counting American possessions or territories like Guam, Puerto Rico or the Canal Zone—came from Cuba, which issued a set of



5

stamps honoring writers of the Americas in 1937 [5], including, besides Lincoln, Juan Montalvo of Ecuador, Camilo Henríquez of Chile, and Ruben Dario of Nicaragua, among others. The following year brought two stamps from the tiny republic of San Marino commemorating Lincoln's having been made an honorary citizen by that country's regents in 1861 [6].



6

In 1942 Cuba issued another stamp, this one celebrating the “Spirit of American Democracy,” with portraits of Presidents Maceo of Cuba, Bolivar of Colombia, Juarez of Mexico, and, of course, Abraham Lincoln. Four years later, in 1956, the principality of Monaco issued an unusual diamond-shaped stamp with Lincoln's image to commemorate the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition in New York [7].



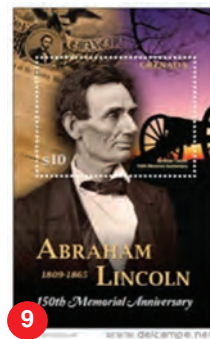
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Then, in the late 1950s, as the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's birth and the centennial of the Civil War approached, the floodgates opened, and countries all around the world began issuing Lincoln stamps. These included not only many of the newly-independent African countries—such as Niger [8], and countries in the Middle East and South America, but also many of the world's island nations. Not surprisingly, 50 years later, on the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 2009, and the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in 2011, the floodgates



8

opened again, and the stamp collecting community was inundated with new issues honoring the sixteenth president, including stamps from countries as diverse as Bulgaria, Grenada [9], Liberia, and others.



9

It's important to note that from a collector's perspective, a “Lincoln stamp” isn't necessarily one that has Lincoln's image on it. Although the vast majority do, there are a good number that are considered Lincoln stamps for other reasons. For example, there are several stamps that incorporate quotations from Lincoln into their designs, such as the 1960 stamp, part of the American Credo series, which includes the quote “Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves” [10]. One of the more obscure examples of such quotes appears on a stamp

**continued on page 5**

## Lincoln and His “Hell-Cats” in Elizabeth Brown Pryor’s Six Encounters with Lincoln

by Paula Hopewell, Award of Achievement Committee (2016–present)

During his lifetime, Abraham Lincoln was accustomed to plenty of criticism and ridicule, most of which he accepted and, perhaps, even enjoyed to some extent. Students of Lincoln are familiar with some of the reasons for this trashing—his face and lanky build, his unruly hair and equally unpolished manners, his love of jokes and stories, his attitudes towards slavery, and his conduct of the Civil War. Following his death, despite being virtually deified, Lincoln has been, and continues to be, criticized in a variety of areas—some with reason and some less so, including, among others, questionable use of his constitutional authority. Noting the tendency to mythologize Lincoln, in her posthumously published book, *Six Encounters with Lincoln: A President Confronts Democracy and Its Demons* (Viking, 2017), Elizabeth Brown Pryor invites us to consider six lesser-known aspects of his presidency—not to denigrate the great president that he was, but to more fully understand his struggles and humanity. For me, recognizing some of these challenges underscores and enhances my appreciation of the considerable triumphs for which Lincoln is famous.

Pryor acknowledges that the book is “an invitation to rethink our presumptions about Abraham Lincoln,” and “an unorthodox and provocative look” at his presidency. One of the areas she explores, in a chapter titled “Hell-Cats,” is his relationships with strong women. Of

course, Lincoln’s secretaries, John Nicolay and John Hay, who were not overly fond of Mary Todd Lincoln, sometimes referred to her as the “Hell-Cat,” but according to Pryor his wife was not the only “Hell-Cat” (or “she-devil”) in Lincoln’s life. Pryor opens the chapter with an 1863 illustration from *Vanity Fair* showing an angry-looking woman in a manly jacket with the heading “The Strong Women’s League.” The “hell-cats” the author discusses include such well-known women as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Anna Dickinson, Clara Barton, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony. Pryor describes in some detail the difficulties these women had in their encounters with Lincoln, and he with them. She also examines his relationships with his mother, sister, step-mother, and wife to try to understand why Lincoln might have had trouble with women later in life.

Although Pryor presents a Lincoln who does not give strong women their due, she acknowledges that he was undoubtedly a man of his times, and certainly consumed by other matters. In addition, she ends the chapter with a discussion of Lincoln’s masterpiece, his Second Inaugural Address, in which she believes Lincoln inherently paid tribute to all the women who, in their own way, fought for our nation’s survival. While Pryor does not provide a definitive study of Lincoln’s relationships with influential women, she does fulfill her promise to offer a fresh consideration of his presidency. And I applaud Pryor for this perspective, and others like it that she proposes we consider, whether we like to or not. Some of her insights may make us flinch, but they deserve to be heard. ~

## 2017 Meetings Review, continued

said at the moment Lincoln passed away. Perhaps sadly, Mr. Stahr said that he did not think Stanton had ever actually made the statement since there is no contemporary evidence of it, only stories that appeared many

years after the fact. Though we may never know the truth about what Stanton said, what we do know after Mr. Stahr’s presentation is much more about the “odd mixture of good and evil” that was Edwin Stanton. ~

## A Brief History of Lincoln on Stamps, continued



10

issued by the American occupying forces in Germany in 1951-52. The stamps—there is a series of ten in various colors and denominations—picture the “Freedom Bell,” a replica of the Liberty Bell that was presented as a gift to the people of Berlin, on

the rim of which is a paraphrase of a line from the Gettysburg Address—“That this world under God shall have a new birth of freedom.” What makes this one particularly obscure is that it’s virtually impossible to even see the quotation on the stamp—much less read it—without a magnifying glass [11].

Other related stamps feature buildings associated with Lincoln, including the famous log cabin, his home in Springfield, and, most popular of all on both foreign and domestic stamps, the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the statue inside it. The image of the memorial was first featured on an American stamp in 1923 [12], less than a year after it was



12



11

completed, and has since then been pictured on stamps from more than two dozen countries, including Colombia, Gambia, Mongolia, and Turks & Caicos [13], among others. The most recent is the 2015 stamp, one of a series issued in conjunction with Japan, commemorating the centennial of



14

America’s gift of dogwood trees in gratitude for Japan’s gift of cherry trees to the city of Washington, D.C. [14].

Philatelic history suggests that the people who determine what stamps will be issued, both in America and around the world, have a preference for anniversaries—particularly significant ones like centennials, sesquicentennials, and bicentennials. Having fairly recently passed the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth, there won’t be another significant anniversary for some time. Even so, there’s no reason to doubt that as long as Lincoln is remembered, and as long as there are postage stamps, his life will continue to be celebrated on them. ~



13

Stampbug [www.delcampe.net](http://www.delcampe.net)

## Member Interview: Steve Aronson

We are privileged to have so many accomplished and interesting individuals as members of The Lincoln Group of New York. In the interest of enabling our members to know their fellow members better, with this issue we are launching a series of interviews to introduce individual members to the group as a whole. For our first interview, we have chosen Stephen Aronson, a retired attorney and part-time actor originally from Lynchburg, Virginia, who now lives in Staten Island, and who has been a member of the group for nearly twenty years.

WA: What did you do for a living before you retired?

SA: I actually had two careers. First I was an Army lawyer, a captain handling courts-martial for the Judge Advocate General's office, which I did for four years. Then I became a federal attorney in Washington, and worked in compliance and enforcement for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and then the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. At the same time, though, I was working part-time as an actor. Then I quit the law to go into acting full-time, and I did that for eight years. Finally, I got a job as a lawyer with the New York City Department of Social Services, and did that until I retired in 2016. Even while I was working for the city, though, I continued to act part-time in theater, films, TV, and soap operas, and I'd like to do some more acting in the future.

WA: What is it about history that makes it so appealing to you?

SA: I've always been fascinated with history—I majored in it, and Political Science, as an undergraduate at Virginia Tech. But why do I find it so appealing? Well, there are the clichés about it, like “If you don't know where you've been, you don't know where you're going.” But the real thing is that it's the story of who we are. When you study history, you find out who you are, where you came from, what happened, and what you can learn from the past. History is what it's all about for me. It's the one thing you need to know in order to understand what's going on in the world.

WA: Do you remember what first made you interested in Lincoln?

SA: Growing up with Southern sentiments in Lynchburg, Virginia, in the 50s and 60s, I read a lot about the Civil War, mostly about the South and the Confederacy. But in the process I learned a lot about Lincoln—about how patient he was, how smart, how practical, and how fair he was. You pick up on a lot of his qualities even if what you're reading isn't necessarily pro-Lincoln, and I thought all that was very interesting. And then, about 20 years ago, I saw Harold Holzer being interviewed on television and he talked about the Lincoln Group, so I checked it out, and it just got me hooked.

WA: What is about Lincoln that you find so appealing now?

SA: What I really like most about him—and I know it sounds very superficial—is his sense of humor. He was able to make an otherwise tense moment lighter by telling a story to put people at ease, and I think it made people comfortable with him. I know he was corny, and people rolled their eyes when he started telling those

stories, but I like that part of him. Maybe it's because I like to think that I have a sense of humor too, so it's a part of me as well.

WA: Is there any particular aspect of Lincoln's life that you find especially interesting?

SA: I like the fact that he was ambitious. And anybody who doesn't think he was ambitious is wrong. He was aggressively ambitious—even Billy Herndon said that Lincoln's ambition was “a little engine that knew no rest.” Lincoln himself said his ambition



Steve Aronson (center) as a “Lincoln Man” in *Gore Vidal's Lincoln*, 1988

was to “be esteemed by his fellow man,” and he made a lot of effort, including a lot of self-learning, so he could achieve that.

WA: Do you think that having been an attorney gives you any particular insight into Lincoln?

SA: Because I was a lawyer, I feel I can relate to Lincoln in certain ways. To give an example, one of the things he did as a lawyer, which lawyers always do, was a lot of research. The Cooper Union speech is a great example. He wasn't going into court, but the speech certainly had a purpose, and before he gave it he did all this research to make sure he had the facts right. I've read that some of the things he claimed were said at the Constitutional Convention weren't entirely accurate, but it's obvious from the text of the speech that he'd studied the Founders' attitudes toward slavery. Another thing is that he always wanted to know both sides of an issue, which is what lawyers have to do if they're going to present their cases effectively. He was also fair, intelligent, and patient, which lawyers need to be no matter who they're representing, and I can relate to that.

WA: Looking at it as an actor, who do you think has portrayed Lincoln best on film or on stage?

SA: On film my favorite is Raymond Massey in *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. I have to say, though, that he locked in only one aspect of Lincoln, and that was the melancholia. That part was fabulous, but it was only one dimension. I also think Henry Fonda, in *Young Mr. Lincoln*, was very good, because he showed a lot more personality. Daniel Day-Lewis was also good in *Lincoln*, but I think all the hype turned me off, so I didn't **continued on page 8**

## Lincoln Books 2017

It is often said that there are more than 15,000 books about Abraham Lincoln. However, people have been saying that for at least 20 years, during which time hundreds of such books have been published, and for some curious reason the total number never seems to change. Be that as it may, it's unlikely that anyone could say definitively how many Lincoln books there are—only that there are a great many. But for those of us who are interested in our sixteenth president, it seems that even a great many is never enough.

In order to help LGNY members work their way through the maze of new Lincoln books, we have put together a list of new titles published in 2017. It's important to note, though, that these are not all the Lincoln books published last year. They are only the new—or new editions of—nonfiction books for adults, published in hardcover and/or paperback by traditional publishers (i.e., not self-published), which are primarily if not entirely about Abraham Lincoln.

We have included one exception to this—Tom Peet and David Keck's third edition of *Reading Lincoln: An Annotated Bibliography*, published by CreateSpace, because it is a unique volume that provides information about hundreds of other books on the subject. Also, although we have not included fiction in the list, we would be remiss if we didn't mention *Lincoln in the Bardo* by George Saunders (Random House, 368 pages, hardcover, \$28.00), a bestselling, and unusual, novel that revolves around the death of Willie Lincoln, which was chosen as the winner of the prestigious Man Booker Prize.

Finally, there may be other appropriate titles of which we are unaware, but these are the books we found on the basis of searches on "Lincoln" on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. We hope you will find this list helpful, and that you will share your thoughts about it with us.

**Abraham Lincoln and William Cullen Bryant: Their Civil War** by Gilbert H. Muller, Palgrave Macmillan, 255 pages, hardcover, \$99.99

**Abraham Lincoln Civil War Stories: Heartwarming Stories About Our Most Beloved President, Second Edition**, by Joe Wheeler, Howard Books, 400 pages, paperback, \$15.99

**Abraham Lincoln Was a Liberal, Jefferson Davis Was a Conservative: The Missing Key to Understanding the American Civil War** by Lochlainn Seabrook, Sea Raven Press, 246 pages, hardcover/paperback, \$22.99/\$16.99

**Becoming Abraham Lincoln: The Coming of Age of Our Greatest President** by Richard Kigel, Skyhorse Publishing, 296 pages, hardcover, \$24.99

**The Best of American Heritage: Lincoln** edited by Edwin S. Grosvenor, American Heritage/New Word City, 224 pages, paperback, \$9.99

**The Election of 1860: A Campaign Fraught with Consequences (American Presidential Elections)** by Michael F. Holt, University Press of Kansas, 272 pages, hardcover, \$29.95

**Lincoln: The Man Who Saved America** by David J. Kent, Fall River Press, 272 pages, hardcover, \$9.98

**Lincoln and Congress** by William C. Harris, Southern Illinois University Press, 176 pages, hardcover, \$24.95

**Lincoln and the Abolitionists: John Quincy Adams, Slavery, and the Civil War** by Fred Kaplan, Harper, 416 pages, hardcover, \$28.99

**Lincoln and the Democrats: The Politics of Opposition in the Civil War** (Cambridge Essential Histories) by Mark E. Neely Jr, Cambridge University Press, 248 pages, hardcover/paperback, \$75.00/\$24.99

**Lincoln in Indiana** by Brian R. Dirck, Southern Illinois University Press, 152 pages, hardcover, \$24.95

**Lincoln on Leadership for Today: Abraham Lincoln's Approach to Twenty-First-Century Issues** by Donald T. Phillips, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 336 pages, hardcover, \$26.00

**Lincoln's Notebooks: Letters, Speeches, Journals, and Poems** edited by Dan Tucker, Black Dog & Leventhal, 256 pages, flexibound, \$19.99

**Lincoln's Sense of Humor** by Richard Carwardine, Southern Illinois University Press, 184 pages, hardcover, \$24.95

**Lincolnology: The Real Abraham Lincoln Revealed in His Own Words** by Lochlainn Seabrook, Sea Raven Press, 1,050 pages, \$44.99

**Lincoln's Fight for Religious Freedom: How Abraham Lincoln and Joseph Smith Saved the Constitution** by Ron L. Andersen, Cedar Fort, 176 pages, paperback, \$13.99

**Looking for Lincoln in Illinois: A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit** by Guy C. Fraker, Southern Illinois University Press, 152 pages, paperback, \$21.95

**Making an Antislavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom** by Graham A. Peck, University of Illinois Press, 280 pages, hardcover, \$34.95

**Memories of Lincoln and the Splintering of American Political Thought (Rhetoric and Democratic Deliberation)** by Shawn J. Parry-Giles and David S. Kaufer, Penn State University Press, 240 pages, hardcover/paperback, \$89.95/\$29.95

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**Six Encounters with Lincoln: A President Confronts Democracy and Its Demons** by Elizabeth Brown Pryor, Viking, 496 pages, hardcover, \$35.00

**Wrestling With His Angel: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln Vol. II, 1849-1856** by Sidney Blumenthal, Simon & Schuster, 608 pages, hardcover, \$35.00 ~

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## Member Interview: Steve Aronson, continued

appreciate his performance as much as I did some of the others. I have to say, I'm not a big star person—I don't really like stars. On stage I've seen two great portrayals of Lincoln. One was in a production at Ford's Theatre called *The Heavens Are Hung in Black*, which takes place between Willie Lincoln's death and Lincoln's issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, and which starred an actor named David Selby. There was no melancholia at all in Selby's performance—he did the jokey, corny, hayseed kind of a guy, and he did that beautifully. The second was a play called *Mary T and Lizzy K*, about Mrs. Lincoln's relationship with Elizabeth Keckley, and Lincoln was played by an actor named Thomas Adrian Simpson. I was terrifically impressed with his performance, particularly in the scene in which Mary seemed to be going crazy. The way he comforted her—he was so caring, nurturing, and loving—that it moved me to tears.

WA: Which Lincoln-related sites that you've visited did you find most interesting?

SA: I haven't been to many of the sites, except for Ford's Theatre, but I've been there many times to see plays. There is something, though, that means a lot to me about Ford's Theatre. Years ago when they were trying to raise money to build the new part of the theater next to the original building, you could buy a brick with your name on it, which I did. And then, one day when I was standing in front of the theater and looking down at my brick, I noticed there was an enormous picture of Lincoln across the street in the education center, and—this is crazy—he seemed to be looking down at the theater with my brick there, and I can't explain it, but I suddenly felt like I had a real connection to Lincoln. Unfortunately, it's a connection to where he was assassinated, but it's also a connection to a place where he enjoyed some plays before he was assassinated, and that means a lot to me.

WA: If you could go back in time and be present at some event in Lincoln's life, what would it be?

SA: It would have to be the Inaugural Ball in 1865, when Frederick Douglass wasn't allowed in because of his color, and Lincoln gave instructions that he should be. And then, when Lincoln saw Douglass, he said, in a voice loud enough to be heard

by the people around him, "Here comes my friend Douglass." I would love to be able to actually see that happen, because it was such an extraordinary thing to do, and because it says so much about the kind of person Lincoln was.

WA: Do you have a favorite Lincoln book?

SA: Picking a favorite is hard to do, but there are a number I like very much. I enjoy reading about his relationships with people, books like *Lincoln's Men* by Daniel Mark Epstein, about his secretaries, *We Are Lincoln Men* by David Herbert Donald, T. Harry Williams' *Lincoln and His Generals*, and of course Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*—that was a fabulous book. I also like *Lincoln's Sword* by Douglas Wilson, Allen Guelzo's books *Lincoln and Douglas* and *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*, David Herbert Donald's *Lincoln, Land of Lincoln* by Andrew Ferguson, and Jan Morris' *Lincoln: A Foreigner's Quest*. I've read almost 150 Lincoln books but I have another 200 on my shelves, and I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I know I will die without reading them all.

WA: Besides Lincoln, what other presidents do you admire?

SA: My favorites are Lincoln, of course, Jefferson, Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt, and my favorite of all time, Kennedy. They're all part of the mosaic that made this country great. None of them were perfect, but each one contributed something that was vital to making the United States what it is today.

WA: What do you think people can learn from studying Lincoln?

SA: I think he's a wonderful model for people because he was someone who rose from nothing, who came from poverty, but who learned and grew, and became not only one of the greatest men in the history of this country but someone who is admired all over the world. I know he wasn't perfect—I've read some of the negative books about him, and I know he had faults. But, as I said, I'm a lawyer, and I can look at it from both sides, and overall what I see is an extraordinary person who, despite his faults, worked hard, overcame incredible obstacles—both personal and political, and still managed to succeed brilliantly. ~

**Award Committee:** *A special thanks to our dedicated members that served on the 2017 award committee.*

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