



The Wide Awake

Bulletin



The Lincoln Group of New York FEBRUARY 2019
DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

President's Letter



Paul Ellis-Graham

Dear Members,

It has been an interesting and exciting year for the Lincoln Group of New York. We were saddened to learn that our president, John Bodnar, could no longer continue in his leadership role due to a combination of personal, family, and professional commitments. We are fortunate to still have the aid of Lorraine Figarelli, John's administrative assistant, who continues to serve as our co-treasurer until a replacement can be found. At the November meeting I announced that I will take John's place as president in 2019, a position that I held once before (earning me the nickname "Grover Cleveland").

However, as I advised the Executive Committee, since I am now retired and spending part of the year in the South, I feel it's important that I have an active vice president to assist me. I am very pleased to say that current member and editor of *The Wide Awake*, Rob Kaplan, has agreed to serve temporarily in that capacity until he is hopefully confirmed at our election in February. Rob has been extremely helpful to me as we seek to carry on the legacy of the LGNY, which I have been a part of for the last 30 years. Among other things, Rob and I went on an exhaustive search for a new meeting venue that would be both more affordable and still attractive to our members.

We are extremely grateful to Harold Holzer for helping us to meet at the Roosevelt House in midtown for the last several years, but the food and liquor there proved to be too costly. Beginning with our meeting on February 4th, we will be holding our meetings at the Villa Mosconi, which is located at 69 MacDougal St. in Greenwich Village. The restaurant has excellent food, a quaint and private meeting space, and is close (two blocks away) to both mass transit and a parking garage—the West 4th St. Washington Square subway stop and the Minetta Parking Garage at 122-128 West 3rd St.

As a result of our last meeting at the Roosevelt House, with fellow member and Lincoln Forum Co-Director Frank Williams of Rhode Island as our guest, I feel a strong sense of renewal and commitment to the type of programs that have made the Lincoln Group of New York special. But our success is only possible with the presence and commitment of you, our members. As we carry on into the new year, please renew your membership as soon as you can (as a sustaining member, if possible) and tell others about our group. We always need new friends!! I hope you enjoy this current issue of *The Wide Awake* and look forward to seeing you throughout the coming year!

Sincerely,

Paul Ellis-Graham
Acting President

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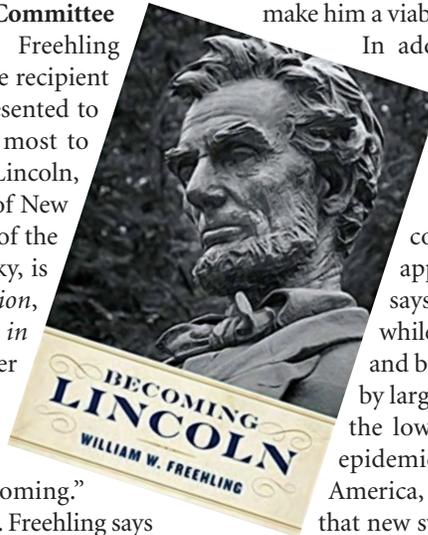
Dr. William W. Freehling Wins Award of Achievement for 2018

by Paula Hopewell, Chair, Award of Achievement Committee

Becoming Lincoln by Dr. William W. Freehling (University of Virginia Press) has been chosen as the recipient of the 2018 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. Dr. Freehling, Singletary Professor of the Humanities Emeritus at the University of Kentucky, is also the author of the two-volume *Road to Disunion, Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1860-1830*, and numerous other books.

Unlike many other biographies of Lincoln, Dr. Freehling focuses on the prewar years, arguing that Lincoln's "monumental life was all about becoming." Comparing him to a Horatio Alger-like character, Dr. Freehling says that Lincoln's story is striking for the way he "specialized in turning losses into gains," learning from his many failures and applying what he learned during his life and, particularly, his presidency. Equally striking are the uncanny ways in which this apparently self-made man attracted the assistance he needed over and over again.

These traits were clearly exhibited, Freehling shows, in the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates and their aftermath. Due to the undemocratic apportionment of the Illinois legislature, even though Republicans outpolled Democrats in the election that followed, more Democratic legislators were elected, as a result of which Douglas defeated Lincoln for the U.S. Senate seat. Drawing on that experience, Lincoln shrewdly proceeded to quickly and effectively hone his strategy in 1859, culminating in the breakthrough speech at Cooper Union in early 1860 that helped



make him a viable candidate for the Republican nomination.

In addition, as a dark horse candidate at the Chicago convention just a few months later, he was able to draw on the assistance of the many friends he had made along the way to help him secure the nomination. Dr. Freehling's discussion of that convention provides a good example of his approach to the subject. Not only Lincoln, he says, but Chicago itself, was "becoming." Even while convention delegates looked on, the streets and buildings of the city were being literally lifted by large screw jacks out of the quagmire caused by the low-lying water table that had caused lethal epidemics. It was becoming "that new world, America, remaking a community's destiny, just when that new symbol, the Rail-Splitter," was becoming the man who would rescue the entire country from the quagmire of slavery that had plagued America since its inception. Both the city and the man "epitomized the...determination to rise, whatever forbidding odds must be overcome."

Built on Freehling's vast knowledge of the period, this "quietly passionate and deeply learned book," as Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jon Meacham calls *Becoming Lincoln*, is both dynamically written and full of nuanced analysis not only of Lincoln's personal development but also of the complex geopolitical forces that made his "becoming" possible.

The award committee for 2018 included Paula Hopewell, Tom Dames, and Rob Kaplan. The award will be presented to Dr. Freehling at our February 2019 dinner meeting, where he will speak on his book.~

2018 Meetings Review

Any year that begins with a presentation by Sidney Blumenthal and ends with one by Frank Williams has to be considered a banner year for The Lincoln Group of New York.

February 15, 2018:

Unseasonably warm weather greeted the large, nearly capacity, crowd that met at the Roosevelt House for the year's first meeting. The night began with President Steve Koppelman announcing that the Executive Committee, having met earlier in the day, had recommended a new slate of officers as is done every two years: John Bodnar as president, Paul Ellis-Graham as vice-president, Fran Berman as secretary, and Bob Langford and Lorraine Figarelli as co-treasurers. After unanimous approval by the membership, Mr. Koppelman also added that Rob Kaplan would be the new member of the Award of Achievement Committee for 2018, and then formally introduced new President John Bodnar to The Lincoln Group of New York. Mr. Bodnar made a



John Bodnar

touching speech thanking many individuals and the group as a whole before speaking the words that so many were happy to hear: "Dinner is served."

After dinner President Bodnar introduced the Chair of the 2017 Award of Achievement Committee, Paula Hopewell, to make a very special presentation. Ms. Hopewell, after thanking her fellow committee members, Tom Dames and Joe Truglio, presented the award to Sidney Blumenthal for his book *Wrestling with His Angel: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln, Volume II, 1849-1856*. In making the presentation, Ms. Hopewell stated that although the book is intended to be part of a four-volume series, it "stands on its own" in having done the most this year to encourage the **continued on page 3**

2018 Meetings Review, continued



Sidney Blumenthal

study and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln. She said it presented a “rich and complex web of political personalities” and, most importantly, contained a “powerful logical analysis” of this period of Lincoln’s life. In accepting the award, Mr. Blumenthal stated that he was deeply honored.

His subsequent lecture, titled *Lincoln at the Creation: The Bloomington Convention of 1856*, was delivered in a beautifully eloquent style, a verbal effort very much matching his superb writing. He spoke of how the Lincoln “of history” essentially emerged from the aftermath of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which ultimately led to the creation of the Republican Party in Illinois (interestingly, as Blumenthal commented, the last large northern state to do so).

Mr. Blumenthal spent a good deal of time detailing the political activity, moral judgment, resolve, and character of Lincoln, whom he also referred to as a very “interior” person, noting that it was his “self-discipline that most impresses me.” Another focus of his talk was Lincoln’s “Lost Speech” at the Bloomington Convention of 1856 of which, unfortunately, there is no extant copy. Although those who heard it left conflicting reports, it’s generally considered to have been a radical speech, especially for a central and southern Illinois audience. William Herndon, Lincoln’s law partner, called it the “grand effort of his life.” On this night, one might reasonably argue, we witnessed a similarly “grand effort” from Sidney Blumenthal. ~

April 18, 2018: Our April meeting saw not only a new president, John Bodnar, but a new venue as well—the NYC Seminar and Conference Center, located in the historic Masonic Hall on West 23rd Street. President Bodnar opened the meeting with a brief discussion of some of his plans for the LGNY in the coming year, and then invited the group to partake of dinner. After dinner, taking the lectern again, he introduced the evening’s speaker, Nicholas



John Bodnar

J.C. Pistor, author of *Shooting Lincoln: Matthew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and the Race to Photograph the Story of the Century*. An investigative reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Mr. Pistor is also the author of *The Ax Murders of Saxtown: The Unsolved Crime that Shocked a Nation* (2014).

Although, as Mr. Pistor explained, Brady’s name is considerably better known than Gardner’s, Gardner is actually responsible for many of the iconic photographs from the Civil War. A native of Scotland with no experience as a photographer, Gardner came to America in 1856 and went to work as one of Brady’s assistants. By that time Brady was already a famous photographer, with studios in New York City and Washington, DC. Paradoxically, Brady’s



Nicholas J.C. Pistor

vision was so poor that he generally arranged the cameras and subjects and then had one of his assistants take the picture. Regardless of who operated the camera, however, Brady put his name on all the photographs from his studio, in the process helping originate the concept of branding.

In 1863, however, Gardner left Brady and opened his own Washington studio, which led to a rivalry between the two that lasted through the end of the Civil War and beyond. Even though Brady was still the better-known photographer, when those accused of conspiring to assassinate Lincoln were captured, Gardner was the one chosen by the government to photograph the conspirators. He also took the famous pictures of their execution, which, according to Mr. Pistor, represented the beginning of modern photojournalism. Brady was still, of course, famous for his war photographs, but once the war was over and Americans wanted to put it behind them, his business decreased significantly and he went bankrupt, dying in poverty in 1896. Gardner gave up photography in 1871, turned to banking, and lived in Washington until his death in 1882. Although in recent years Alexander Gardner’s work has come to be recognized and more appreciated than it was in his own day, Mr. Pistor argued, Matthew Brady is rightly credited with both pioneering the concept of war photography, and fostering the development of celebrity culture by making photographs of famous people available to the public at a reasonable rate. ~

November 5, 2018: Our annual meeting celebrating the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, for which we returned to the Roosevelt House, was called to order by Acting President Paul Ellis-Graham. He began his remarks by expressing regret at the resignation of President John Bodnar, and said that, in consultation with the Executive Committee, he had agreed to serve as president through 2019. He also thanked the committee and several other members of the group for helping him during the transition. Then, noting that it is a LGNY custom to have a member recite the Gettysburg

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2018 Meetings Review, continued

Address at our November meeting, he introduced Co-Treasurer Robert Langford, explaining that Mr. Langford had been chosen in honor of his attaining the age of four score years. When Mr. Langford finished, our usual book raffle was held, and dinner was served.

After dinner, Acting President Ellis-Graham introduced the evening's speaker, Frank J. Williams, retired Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, author and editor of many books, and founder (with Harold Holzer) of the Lincoln Forum. With the 23rd annual meeting of the Forum about to take place later in the month, Chief Justice Williams



Paul Ellis-Graham

began by briefly reminiscing about its founding, explaining that it had been created essentially to provide an opportunity for members of the various Lincoln groups around the country to meet and exchange ideas about their

favorite subject, a goal it has clearly achieved.

Then, turning to his main subject, the chief justice noted that he had become an attorney himself because of Abraham Lincoln—ultimately leading to his seat on the bench—and raised the unusual question “If Abraham



Frank J. Williams

Lincoln had pursued the law rather than politics, what kind of judge might he have made?” Even though there has been little discussion by historians regarding this question, he said, Lincoln would no doubt have become a judge if it hadn't been for his first love—politics. Perhaps not surprisingly, he suggested that the best judges are those with “both head and heart,” and that Lincoln would certainly have been that kind of judge. Even early in Lincoln's career, according to the chief justice, Lincoln had demonstrated his abilities as a judge. **continued on page 7**

Why Lincoln?

by Rob Kaplan

A few years ago I had the opportunity to visit the Lincoln Cottage on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home in Washington, DC, for the first time. Waiting in the Visitor Education Center for the tour to start, I fell into conversation with some of the guides, which I enjoyed very much since they were, as one would expect, extremely knowledgeable about Lincoln. In the course of the conversation I described myself as a “Lincoln freak,” a phrase that, although they may not have heard it before, they certainly understood. Sometime later, when the tour began in the center's small theater, the tour guide, one of those with whom I'd been speaking, began her presentation by gesturing toward me and saying, “This gentleman told me a little while ago that he was a ‘Lincoln freak.’ Can you tell us why you are so interested in Lincoln?” I felt very much on the spot, and was at a loss as to what to say. After an uncomfortable moment or two, I answered, “I've been trying to figure that out for fifty years.”

It was intended to be a clever answer, or at least as clever as I could come up with at the moment, and it seemed to satisfy her. Actually, though, it wasn't true. The fact is that although I have been fascinated with our sixteenth president since I was a child, I don't think I had ever really thought about why. It was just something that was there, and had been there for as long as I could remember. When I began to think about it, there were two possible explanations that occurred to me. The first, a right-brain explanation, was that I was enamored of him because he was a

person with virtually no formal education, and no apparent experience to guide him, who somehow managed to keep the country together through four years of a devastating Civil War that was unlike anything any living American had ever seen. The truth is, however, that I was not that precocious a child, and I don't know that I was even conscious of all that when I was 10 years old.

The other explanation, a decidedly left brain one, has to



Statue at the Lincoln Cottage by StudioEIS

do with his face. As we know from the 100 or so photographs we have of Abraham Lincoln, he was not a handsome man. Certainly, he would have been—in fact he was—the first one to say that. But one can't look at that face, particularly the lined, prematurely old, world-weary face we see in pictures taken near the end of the war, without seeing its intelligence, kindness, honesty, integrity, and warmth. And those are things that even a 10-year-old child can sense. It

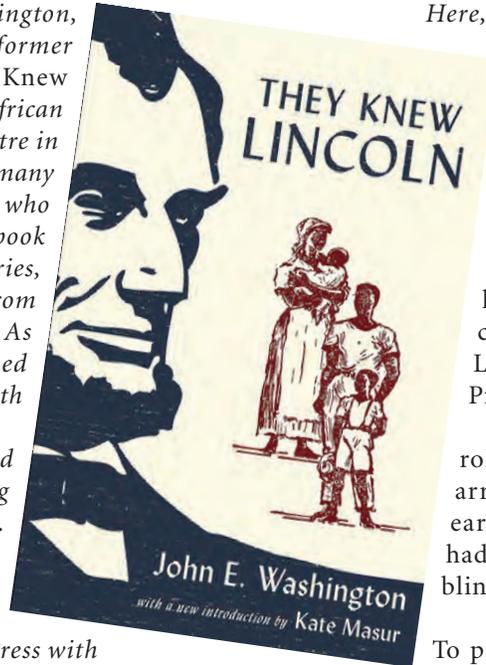
may be, of course, that what we see in his face is what we believe was in his heart. But having grown up with that image, it is in all likelihood impossible as adults to determine whether or not it's true or we are simply superimposing our belief onto that extraordinarily familiar face.

Ultimately, though, *why* we are so interested in Lincoln is probably not as important as the fact that we are. I am sure, in any case, that even if we don't know exactly where this fascination came from, it has immeasurably enriched our lives. ~

Celebrating the Emancipation Proclamation: An Excerpt from *They Knew Lincoln*

Early in 1942, John E. Washington, the 61-year-old son and grandson of former slaves, published a book titled *They Knew Lincoln*. Having lived as a child in an African American community near Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, the author had heard many stories from his grandmother and others who lived there during Lincoln's time. The book was essentially a collection of their stories, as well as others the author gathered from additional research and interviews. As such, it was the first book ever published specifically on Lincoln's relationships with African Americans.

Although the book received positive reviews, once its first printing was sold out it was never reprinted. However, at the prompting of Kate Mazur, Associate Professor of History at Northwestern University, in 2018 it was republished by Oxford University Press with a new introduction by Professor Mazur. We are including an excerpt here because, although it does not deal directly with Abraham Lincoln, it is an extraordinary portrait of the effect of what Lincoln himself considered his most important act, the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. "If my name ever goes into history," he said, "it will be for this act, and my whole soul is in it." In addition, as Carl Sandburg wrote of the book in his introduction to the first edition, "Quite aside from its special interest in Lincoln, it is an important human document."



Here, then, is what John E. Washington remembered of the story Old Aunt Phoebe Bias told him about the "Big Watch-Meeting" held at the Union Bethel Church on M Street in Washington, DC, on New Year's Eve, 1862.

During the Christmas Holidays of '62, she heard people everywhere talking about the Big Watch-Meeting to be held in her church where important white and colored men would speak about President Lincoln and the Emancipation Proclamation. She made up her mind to go.

When the last day of the old year rolled around, people from all over the city arrived early in order to get seats. She went early to get her seat on the front row, which had been reserved for the lame, aged, sick, and blind who wished to attend.

Before sundown the church was filled. To pass away the time until the services should begin at 10 o'clock, the brothers and sisters sang, prayed and spoke of their earthly experiences, just as they had done in class meetings.

Exactly at the appointed hour the pastor opened the Bible and began this memorable service **continued on page 7**

Lincoln Group of New York photographs, as well as many others of Lincoln and the Civil War, can be seen on Henry F. Ballone's website at: www.civilwarnut.com.

A "Return Visit" to Chicago for Lincoln

by Steven R. Koppelman

You never know who you might run into while walking down the street. During a visit to Chicago a couple of years ago, walking south down Michigan Avenue toward the river, directly across from the Wrigley Building I came upon this 25-foot-tall statue of Lincoln and a very modern-looking individual. I immediately recognized it as the same as a sculpture that stands outside the Wills House in Gettysburg—although that version is life-size—and wondered what it was doing there. Well, it turns out that Mayor Rahm Emanuel having said, "There is no question that art is vital to a neighborhood's spirit and the quality of life for residents," the city had designated that year as "The Year of Public Art."



The large bronze sculpture, titled *Return Visit*, was created by Seward Johnson, the 86-year-old artist whose original version in Gettysburg was dedicated in 1991. In that version, Lincoln is gesturing towards the room he stayed in at the Wills House, where he may have put the finishing touches on the address he was to give at the new cemetery the next day. In the Chicago version, or at least so it seemed to me, he might be directing a tourist toward the site of the Wigwam, the temporary building erected for the 1860 Republican convention where Lincoln was first nominated for president. Regardless, it's certainly a "return visit" to Chicago for Lincoln, and it's always nice to see a familiar and friendly face while traveling! ~

The editor would like to express his appreciation to Steven R. Koppelman, Paul Ellis-Graham, and Henry F. Ballone for their assistance in preparing this issue of *The Wide Awake Bulletin*.

A Lincoln Site in New York: The Lincoln Depot Museum in Peekskill

by Rob Kaplan

Abraham Lincoln is known to have visited, or at least passed through, the New York City area six times—in 1848, 1857, 1860, 1861, 1862, and 1865. His first visit of any significance was in February 1860, when he came East at the invitation of Henry Ward Beecher and spoke at Cooper Union, a speech that is considered to have been instrumental in making Lincoln a viable candidate for the Republican nomination for president. Some of the buildings Lincoln visited during his several trips to the area are still standing, including Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, St. Paul's Church on Broadway in Manhattan, and of course Cooper Union, but their primary significance has little to do with Lincoln's visits. There is, however, one place in the area which, although regrettably little known, is commemorated by a museum dedicated to it—the Lincoln Depot Museum in Peekskill, just about fifty miles up the Hudson River from New York City.

It was at two o'clock on the chilly afternoon of February 19, 1861, that the special train carrying the president-elect pulled into the Hudson River Railroad station in Peekskill. Since leaving Springfield on February 11th, the train had traveled more than 1,000 miles, making nearly 80 stops along the way. Leaving Albany that morning at 7:45, it had stopped at Troy, Hudson, Rhinebeck, Poughkeepsie, and Fishkill before arriving in Peekskill. The original schedule hadn't called for a stop in Westchester County—the train was supposed to go all the way through to New York City, and then on to Trenton, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Baltimore before arriving in the nation's capital for Lincoln's inauguration.

However, Judge William Nelson, a former colleague of the president-elect's from their days together in Congress, had asked if the train might make a stop in his hometown of Peekskill. And no doubt aware that he would need all the political capital he could gather, Lincoln had agreed. When Lincoln stepped off the train, as had been true all along the route, there was a substantial delegation of local dignitaries to greet him. Perhaps more interesting, however, is that even though Peekskill's population, as reported in the previous year's census, was only 3,560, according to an article in the *Highland Democrat*, the local newspaper, "a large assemblage, about 1,500 or thereabouts was gathered, all quiet, orderly and curiously expectant" to hear what the president-elect had to say. And, as were all of the speeches Lincoln made during that inaugural trip, this one was short, simple, and hopeful.

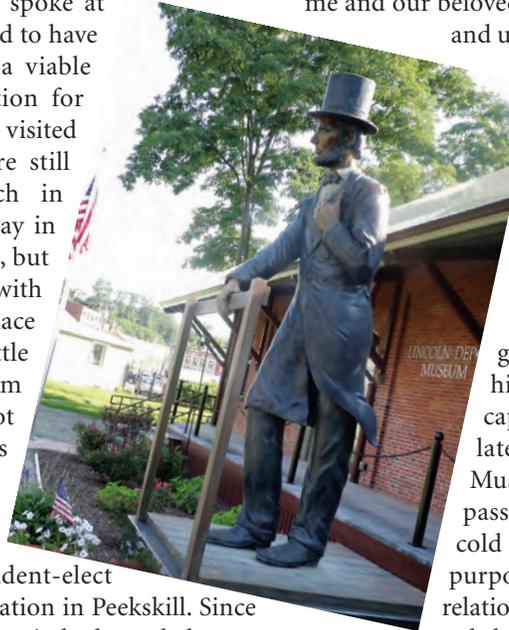
"Ladies and gentlemen," Lincoln said, "I have but a moment to stand before you to listen to and return your kind greeting. I thank you for this reception, and for the pleasant manner in which it is tendered to me by our mutual friends. I will say in a single sentence, in regard to the difficulties that lie before me and our beloved country, that if I can only be as generously and unanimously sustained as the demonstrations

I have witnessed indicate I shall be, I shall not fail; but without your sustaining hands I am sure that neither I nor any other man can hope to surmount these difficulties. I trust in the course I shall pursue I shall be sustained not only by the party that elected me, but by the patriotic people of the whole country."

Once he finished speaking, Lincoln got back aboard the train and continued on his way to Washington, arriving in the nation's capital on February 23rd. More than 150 years later, on October 18, 2014, the Lincoln Depot Museum, the 3,000-square-foot freight and passenger rail depot where Lincoln spoke that cold February day, was opened to the public. Its purpose was to "illuminate and celebrate Lincoln's relationship to New York and to New Yorkers before and during the Civil War," as well as to "explore, remember, and educate audiences about the place that our local history played on the national stage." Located on the east bank of the Hudson River, a short walk from Metro-North's Peekskill station, the museum was created with the help of then-New York State Governor George Pataki (a former mayor of Peekskill), who provided a state grant to restore the building, and County Legislator John G. Testa (the then-current mayor of Peekskill), who led a volunteer board of directors to incorporate the Lincoln Depot Foundation in 2007.

The museum's primary exhibit, "New York and Abraham Lincoln: The Indispensable Relationship," shows how Peekskill, the Hudson Valley, and New York State in general contributed to Lincoln's—and the Union's—success during the Civil War. As such, it contains hundreds of historical items from a variety of sources including the museum's own collection as well as artifacts on loan from other local institutions, among them the Peekskill Museum and the Field Library. A substantial number of items are also on loan from the collection of Brian D. Caplan, director of the Lincoln Depot Foundation. In addition, the museum provides information about local figures of the time, such as Chauncey Depew (at one time a United States Senator from New York), and local organizations, like the Peekskill Military Academy.

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Award Committee: *A special thanks to our dedicated members who served on the 2018 award committee.*
 Paula Hopewell, Chair • Tom Dames • Rob Kaplan

2018 Meetings Review, continued

While serving on the 8th District Circuit in Illinois, Judge David Davis had often appointed Lincoln to serve in his place when he was unable to do so, and it is clear from the court records that Lincoln was a good judge.

In more general terms, Chief Justice Williams said, there are four essential traits that are shared by all good judges—character, leadership, a strong belief in justice, and a commitment to excellence. And given what we know of Lincoln, it is clear that he possessed all of these. He also, of course, had a strong sense of ethics, as demonstrated in the notes he made for a law lecture that are dated July 1, 1850

(although probably written earlier). Discussing the importance of honesty in a lawyer, and presumably, by extension, a judge, he wrote, “Let no young man choosing the law for a calling for a moment yield to the popular belief [that lawyers are necessarily dishonest]—resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer.” While we all agree that Abraham Lincoln was a great president, as the chief justice clearly showed, had he chosen the law as a profession he would have certainly been an equally great judge. ~

Celebrating the Emancipation Proclamation: An Excerpt from *They Knew Lincoln*, continued

with prayers, after which he preached about God, old Satan, Lincoln and the coming day of eternal freedom. After the service, a white man spoke about freedom, and the war, and then read every word in the Emancipation Proclamation from a copy which he had brought in his pocket and told them just how Lincoln had fought for it.

Now the meeting was turned over to the congregation and oh! how it sang and prayed. The very roof of the church seemed to be tumbling down.

Five minutes before 12 o'clock the minister told everybody present that he wanted no one to pray standing up with bowed head; nobody sitting down, with bended necks praying; and no brother kneeling on one knee, because his pants were too tight for him, but to get down on *both knees* to thank Almighty God for his freedom and President Lincoln too.

At first all was still as death, then as the hands on the old church clock moved toward 12, you could hear some

brother or sister cry, moan or pray out loud for God to keep on guiding them when the hour of freedom came, just as He had led them out of bondage; and also they cried in loud voices for God to guide, support and strengthen the hand of the man who had brought to them their freedom.

When the city bells rang in the New Year—the year of their freedom, men and women jumped to their feet, yelled for joy, hugged and kissed each other and cried for joy. Many could not stand the excitement and fell into trances all over the house while the crowd yelled “Praise God,” and kept yelling “Freed at last,” “I’m so glad,” “I’m freed at last,” and “Before I’d be a slave I’ll be carried to my grave,” and many other old songs of freedom and hope. They had prayed for freedom. That night it came. One old brother who was blind as a bat yelled out aloud that he was thankful to God that he had lived to *see* the day of freedom come.

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A Lincoln Site in New York: The Lincoln Depot Museum in Peekskill, continued

Four years after that first visit to Peekskill, Lincoln was there again. In April 1865, the special funeral train carrying the president’s body from Washington back to Springfield followed the same route the inaugural train had taken in 1861. At a few minutes past 5:00 PM on April 25th, again according to the *Highland Democrat*, “The train stopped about ten minutes at the depot, and was witnessed with uncovered heads and solemn faces, and sorrowful hearts by the multitude. ...a solemnity never before experienced in Peekskill hung like a thick cloud over the place...and the solemn hour was generally observed as an expression of sorrow at the terrible calamity and the nation’s loss.”

Now, more than a century and a half later, not only does the Lincoln Depot Museum provide an opportunity to stand

where Lincoln stood, it is also, in the words of Lincoln Group of New York President Paul Ellis-Graham, “a superb little museum,” and one definitely worth visiting.

The Lincoln Depot Museum is located at 10 South Water Street in Peekskill, New York 10566, and the phone number is 914-402-4318. The museum can be reached from New York City by car, as well as by train from Grand Central Terminal, in about an hour. Open Saturdays and Sundays from April through November, the museum also presents numerous events during the year, including lectures by noted historians, musical performances, and films. More information is available on the museum’s website—www.lincolndepotmuseum.org and on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. ~

Lincoln Books 2018

Every year brings with it dozens of new books about Abraham Lincoln. As we did last year, in order to make sure members of the LGNY are aware of them, we have put together a list of new titles published in 2018. It's important to note, though, that this list does not include all the books dealing with Lincoln that were published last year. It includes only new—or new editions of—adult nonfiction books published in hardcover and/or paperback by traditional publishers (i.e., not self-published) that are primarily if not entirely about our sixteenth president.

There were, however, several books published last year which, while not entirely fitting these criteria, are related and worth noting. One of these is a reprint of the classic *A New Birth of Freedom: Abraham Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War* by Harry V. Jaffa, with a new foreword by Allen C. Guelzo (Rowman & Littlefield, 620 pages, paperback, \$29.95). The second is a reprint of a book first published in 1942 entitled *They Knew Lincoln* by John E. Washington, with a new introduction by Kate Mazur (Oxford University Press, 368 pages, hardcover, \$27.95). Essentially a collection of reminiscences by African Americans the author knew growing up in Washington, DC, it was the first book ever published that dealt specifically with Lincoln's relationships with African Americans. (An excerpt from the book appears on page 5.)

There are also two other books by well-known historians, one of whom is already very familiar to the Lincoln community, that deal with particular aspects of several presidencies, including Lincoln's: *Leadership in Turbulent Times* by Doris Kearns Goodwin (Simon & Schuster, 352 pages, hardcover, \$30.00) and *Presidents of War* by Michael Beschloss (Crown, 752 pages, hardcover, \$35.00).

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 Karl Marx in Dialogue (Dialogues in History) by Allan Kulikoff, Oxford University Press, 136 pages, paperback, \$18.95

Abraham Lincoln: The Ambiguous Icon by Steven Johnston, Rowman & Littlefield, 236 pages, hardcover, \$55.00

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