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). It 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 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

Becoming Lincoln by William W. Frehling, University of Virginia Press, 376 pages, hardcover, $29.95

A Fierce Glory: Antietam—the Desperate Battle That Saved Lincoln and Doomed Slavery by Justin Martin, Da Capo Press, 320 pages, hardcover, $28.00

The Last Weeks of Abraham Lincoln: A Day-by-Day Account of His Personal, Political, and Military Challenges by David Alan Johnson, Prometheus Books, 400 pages, hardcover, $28.00

Lincoln & Churchill: Statesmen at War by Lewis E. Lehrman, Stackpole, 544 pages, hardcover, $34.95

Lincoln and the Abolitionists by Stanley Harrold, Southern Illinois University Press, 168 pages, hardcover, $24.95

Lincoln and the Irish: The Untold Story of How the Irish Helped Abraham Lincoln Save the Union by Niall O’Dowd, Skyhorse, 224 pages, paperback, $24.95

Lincoln’s Last Trial: The Murder Case That Propelled Him to the Presidency by Dan Abrams & David Fisher, Hanover Square Press, 320 pages, hardcover, $26.99

Lincoln’s Planner: A Unique Look at the Civil War Through the President’s Daily Activities by Lamont Wood, Post Hill Press, 288 pages, paperback, $16.99


Mary Lincoln for the Ages by Jason Emerson, Southern Illinois University Press, 192 pages, paperback, $29.50

The Million-Dollar Man Who Helped Kill a President: George Washington Gayle and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln by Christopher McIwain, Savas Beatie, 312 pages, hardcover, $32.95

New York and the Lincoln Specials: The President’s Pre-inaugural and Funeral Trains Cross the Empire State by Joseph D. Collea, Jr., McFarland, 225 pages, paperback, $39.95

The Rhetoric of Lincoln’s Letters by Marshall Myers, McFarland, 277 pages, paperback, $39.95

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 from Washington 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 that continues to attract visitors from around the globe.

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, 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.
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 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 regrettable 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 a o’clock on the chilly afternoon of February 19, 1861, that the special train arrived at Peekskill—elec

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

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Lincoln said, “I have but a moment to stand before you. As the friends of the party that elected me, and uniformly sustained as the demonstrations I have witnessed indicate 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 is to celebrate Lincoln’s relationship to New York and to New Yorkers before and during the Civil War, as well as to “explore, understand, and remember, and educate about the place that our local history played on the national stage. Located on the west 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. 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—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 and events 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.

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

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2018 Meetings Review, continued

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 superlative speech. He spoke of how the Lincoln “of history” essentially emerged from the创

John Bodnar

Nicholas J.C. Pistor

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Although, as Mr. Pistor explained, Brady’s name is considered historically to be that of President Garfield’s, Gardner was 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 under Brady’s guidance. By that time Brady was already a famous photographer, with studios in New York City and Washington, DC. Paradoxically, Brady’s reputation was generally regarded more toward 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. Gardner contributed to Lincoln’s—and the Union’s—success during the Civil War, “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 superlative speech. He spoke of how the Lincoln “of history” essentially emerged from 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, 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 LNYC 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 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).

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 after consultations 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 helping him during the transition. Then, noting that it is a LNYC custom to have a member recite the Gettysburg Address by expressing regret at the resignation of President John Bodnar after consultations 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 helping him during the transition. Then, noting that it is a LNYC custom to have a member recite the Gettysburg Address.
Address at our November meeting, I introduced Co-Presidents Robert Langford, and Paul Ellis-Graham, who 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, who had 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 began by briefly reminding us of 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 current seat on the bench—and raised the unusual question “If Abraham 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 have 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.

2018 Meetings Review, continued

by Rob Kaplan

A few years ago I had the opportunity to visit the Lincoln Cottage 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 replied, “Well, it’s true, but it’s not that complicated. What I admire about Lincoln is his character, his kindness, honesty, integrity, and warmth. And those are things that I try to emulate.”

Why Lincoln?

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 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 first 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 go on but 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 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 man 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 I try to emulate.

Celebrating the Emancipation Proclamation: An Excerpt from They Knew 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 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 face.

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 as 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 face.

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

Early in 1942, John E. Washington, the 61-year-old historian and founder of the African American community arts organization Ford’s Theatre in Washington, DC, 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 non-fiction, 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 in it.” It is true that Lincoln wrote of the event in his introduction to the first edition, “Quite aside from its special interest in Lincoln, it is an important human document.”

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The wide Awake Bulletin

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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 contributed to, at least five sites in New York, and one of the most interesting of these is the Lincoln Depot Museum in Peekskill, about 50 miles north of New York City.

Although the museum is relatively little known, it is a true Lincoln site. In 2007, the museum’s board of directors, which included Legislator John G. Testa (the then-current mayor of Peekskill), State Governor George Pataki (a former mayor of Peekskill), who led a volunteer board of directors to incorporate the Lincoln Depot Foundation in 2007, and a United States Senator from New York), a brief discussion of some of its history, its collection, and its relationship to New York and to New Yorkers before and after the Civil War, was as follows. In 1860, Lincoln got a call from his family in Springfield, and on February 12th, he boarded the train to go to New York City. It was at this point that he realized 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 large assemblage, about 1,500 or thereabouts was present. Lincoln got back about 3:30 p.m., and on February 13th, he gave a speech in the Masonic Hall on West 23rd Street. President Brown opened the meeting with a brief discussion of some of his plans for the LNY for the coming year, and then invited the group to partake of dinner. After dinner, Mr. Pistor introduced the evening’s speaker, Nicholas 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 Ma of the A Murders of Saxton: The Unsolved Crime that Shocked a Nation (2014). Although, as Mr. Pistor explained, Brady’s name is considered by many to be 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 on 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 name is still associated with the Civil War, although, generally speaking, he took the pictures and Gardner contributed 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-disciplining 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. Although those who heard it left conflicting reports, it’s generally considered to be 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 much more matching his superlative work. He spoke of how the “Lincoln of “history” essentially emerged from that debate, as “a powerful logical analysis” of this period of Lincoln’s life. In accepting the award, Mr. Blumenthal stated that he was deeply honored.

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

by Paula Hopewell, Chair, Award of Achievement Committee

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, University of Virginia, and author of the two-volume Road to Disunion: Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1830-1836, 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 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 to this book, Dr. Freehling was on hand in Chicago recently to discuss his book during the 2018 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 Lincoln story. Of Kentuckians, he says, but Chicago itself, was “becoming.” Even while convention delegates looked on, the streets and buildings of the city were being literally lifted up 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 a 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 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 geo-political forces that made his “becoming” possible. The award committee for 2018 included Paula Hopewell, John Bodnar, and Rob Kaplan. The award will be presented to Dr. Freehling at our February 2019 dinner meeting, where he will speak about 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 a 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.”

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 William 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’s integrity, his ambition, and the trials he put himself through, it is clear these four traits were shared by this man.

At first all was still as death, then the hands on the old church clock moved toward 12, you could hear some touching speech thanking many individuals and the group as a whole for speaking the words that so many were happy to hear: “Thank you.”

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 Becoming Lincoln: 1849-1856. In making the presentation, Ms. Hopewell stated that although the book was part of a four-volume series, it “stands on its own” in having done the most this year to encourage the unfurling of the flag, Lincoln too. So, today, the solemn hour was generally observed as an expression of sorrow and one definitely worth visiting.

Four years after that first visit to Peekskill, Lincoln was there again. In April 1865, the special funeral train carrying the president’s body 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 museum sits in a beautiful depot building at the junction of Main and Railroad Streets in Peekskill. The massive structure was built in 1856 by the New York and New Haven Railroad. In 1987, the Lincoln Group of New York purchased the building and restored it to its Victorian glory. When Wellington-Cosmo II died in 1897, the museum was named after him. Soon afterwards, the museum opened to the public and has been a great success. Today, the museum is still open to the public and is a great place to visit.
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 sixteen 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). 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: in Leadership in Turbulent Times by Doris Kearns Goodwin (Simon & Schuster, 352 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.)

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 Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com. We hope you will find this list helpful, and that you will share your thoughts about it with us.

**Lincoln Books 2018**

- *A Fierce Glory: Antietam—The Desperate Battle That Saved Lincoln and Doomed Slavery* by Justin Martin, Da Capo Press, 320 pages, hardcover, $28.00
- *The Last Weeks of Abraham Lincoln: A Day-by-Day Account of His Personal, Political, and Military Challenges* by David Alan Johnson, Prometheus Books, 400 pages, hardcover, $28.00
- *Lincoln & Churchill: Statesmen at War* by Lewis E. Lehrman, St. Martin’s Press, 344 pages, hardcover, $34.95
- *Lincoln and the Irish: The Untold Story of How the Irish Helped Abraham Lincoln Save the Union* by Niall O'Dowd, Skyhorse, 224 pages, hardcover, $24.95
- *Mary Lincoln for the Ages* by Jason Emerson, Southern Illinois University Press, 192 pages, paperback, $29.50
- *The Million-Dollar Man Who Helped Kill a President: George Washington Gayle and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* by Christopher McIvain, Savas Beatie, 312 pages, hardcover, $32.95
- *New York and the Lincoln Specials: The President’s Pre-inaugural and Funeral Trains Cross the Empire State* by Joseph D. Collea, Jr., McFarland, 225 pages, paperback, $39.95

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**The Lincoln Group of New York**

**FEBRUARY 2019**

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

**President’s Letter**

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 not continue in his leadership role due to a combination of personal, family, and professional commitments. We are fortunate to 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, it is 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

**The Wide Awake**

**Bulletin**

**February 2019**

DEEDTO THE STUDY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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Paul Ellis-Graham

Acting President