



THE COTTAGE COURIER

Vol. 9

www.lincolncottage.org

Spring 2010

Upcoming Programs

Lincoln's Shakespeare

June 3, 2010

6:30pm - 8:00pm

with

Michael Anderegg & Audra Polk

*Bring a blanket and picnic and enjoy
this theatrical evening!*

Admission: Free

[Click Here for Additional Information](#)

Deaf Appreciation Day

June 5, 2010

*Special Cottage Tours will include
ASL interpretation and are exclusively
reserved for deaf and hearing-
impaired visitors.*

*Advanced Ticket Purchase Required
Tickets: www.lincolncottage.org

[Click Here for Additional Information](#)

Cottage Conversation

September 30, 2010
with Daniel Weinberg

RSVP: alison_mitchell@nthp.org
Visit our website for full schedule

From the Director...

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to write to you as the new Director of President Lincoln's Cottage. In my seven years with the Cottage, most recently as Curator, I have been privileged to be part of the extraordinary transformation of the Cottage from hidden treasure to the vibrant center for learning about Lincoln's presidency that it is today.



Since opening in February 2008, over 55,000 visitors have come to the Cottage. And now in our third year of operation, we will welcome almost 3,000 school-age visitors who participate in a variety of curriculum-based programs as part of their Cottage experience. We also reach students of all ages through our website, and I am proud to announce that the online version of our award-winning Debating Emancipation program received the Platinum Best Practices Award from the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) in May 2010.

To our many members and friends around the country, thank you for your support. I hope that you enjoy this latest edition of our newsletter and I encourage you to explore our website and join us at upcoming programs here at the Cottage.

Sincerely,

Erin Carlson Mast
Director

Erin_CarlsonMast@nthp.org

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Being **Lincoln**

a special exhibition at President Lincoln's Cottage

Since his presidency, Lincoln has been resurrected on stage and the silver screen. Lincoln still appears on stage and screen, but today it's more common to find Lincoln posing for photo opportunities at private parties, waving to crowds from a parade float, or speaking to students in the classroom. While Lincoln's iconic image makes it easy enough to look like him, being like Lincoln means something else entirely.

This new exhibit opens August 2010

Mary Lincoln Room Garden Party

On May 17, 2010, the Mary Todd Lincoln Room in President Lincoln's Cottage was unveiled to members of the Cottage and the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA) who donated their time and secured donations for the project. This room will be used for our Specialty Tours and preservation related programs.



For more information on Specialty Tours at President Lincoln's Cottage, visit:

WWW.LINCOLNCOTTAGE.ORG



The Cause of Humanity

The Lincolns' Charity Throughout the War

On August 20, 1862, during his first summer in residence at the Soldiers' Home, President Lincoln opened a bank account at Riggs & Co. named simply, "A. Lincoln—Hospital Fund." The fund was started with two \$1,000 donations sent to Mary Lincoln, one anonymous and one that was apparently collected on behalf of Brigadier General Michael Corcoran, captured at Bull Run and celebrated as a hero upon his release a year later. The money was intended to benefit wounded soldiers recovering in the many area hospitals, including those the Lincolns passed and sometimes visited when traveling between the Cottage at the Soldiers' Home and the White House. Mary Lincoln primarily used the money to purchase provisions such as citrus fruit for the recovering soldiers. Mrs. Lincoln also delivered the produce herself during her occasional hospital visits or invited the hospitals to come pick-up provisions, including Christmas turkeys, at the White House.

Only once did Mary appear to use the hospital fund account for something other than the relief of U.S. Soldiers. In November 1862, Elizabeth Keckley, an independent business woman and former slave who Mary Lincoln employed as a dress maker, appealed to Mrs. Lincoln for funds for the Contraband Relief Association, an organization Keckley helped found in order to raise funds to benefit the flood of "contrabands" coming into the nation's capital following

DC Emancipation in April 1862. Contrabands were refugee slaves who lived in old army barracks or



Mrs. Abraham Lincoln
Mathew Brady, 1860-65

makeshift camps throughout the District, some along the Lincolns' route between the Soldiers' Home and the White House.

Keckley's words moved Mary Lincoln to action. In a letter to her husband on November 3, 1862, Mary details that the "immense number" of contrabands in Washington, D.C. are "suffering intensely, many without bed covering & having to use any bits of carpeting to cover themselves—Many dying of want—" Mary further indicates that Keckley was specifically having a hard time raising any money amongst white people in the District, and that the funds raised were insufficient

to provide adequate relief to contrabands. Mary informs her husband that she promised Keckley \$200 of a recent \$1000 deposit in the hospital fund account for bed coverings to be distributed to the contrabands and instructs him to write the check. She punctuates this decision with the statement, "The cause of humanity requires it—" To any inevitable argument about misuse of funds, Mary declares that the soldiers are, comparatively, well supplied and that \$800 will remain for the benefit of the wounded soldiers. The Lincolns' donation to the Contraband Relief Association represented the largest individual donation the association received that entire year, roughly one quarter of the \$885.64 total raised.

According to Roland T. Carr who wrote a history of George Washington Riggs (original occupant of President Lincoln's Cottage and co-founder of Riggs & Co. bank), activity on the A. Lincoln Hospital Fund account ceased after January 9, 1863. It is unclear why activity on the account ended (\$201.80 remained) but records indicate that the Lincolns continued to give to individuals and charities from their personal funds. Research into the Riggs Bank Archive ledgers confirms that activity on the hospital fund account was brief.

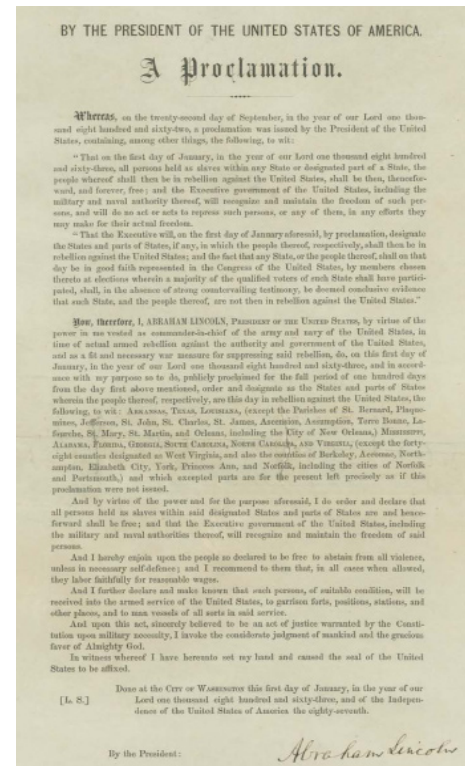
The Lincoln's contributions to hospitals did not end with the hospital fund account. President Lincoln received numerous

requests throughout his presidency to donate items that could be auctioned off by the women of the U.S. Sanitary Commission for soldiers' relief. Far and away the most requested documents were the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address. In one case, Lincoln hand-signed 48 copies of the Emancipation Proclamation printed by Charles G. Leland and George H. Boker to be auctioned off at the "Philadelphia Great Central Sanitary Fair" in 1864. Lincoln also acquiesced to sending original items, as he did in 1863 when he sent the North-Western Sanitary Fair in Chicago an original draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. Originals commanded a much higher price than mere copies. The original draft document sold for \$3,000, raising considerable funds for the Sanitary Commission. Unfortunately, this handwritten document burned years later in the Great Chicago Fire, though a photographic copy survives.

Perhaps the most unusual request for items to be sold at auction to benefit the hospitals came from a Miss Jennings of New York, who asked for a lock of hair from the President and each cabinet member. While human hair was not uncommonly incorporated into Victorian art and craft, the request deviates from the many that ask for documents

or other official, commemorative items. Jennings proposed to take the locks of hair and "embroider a device on velvet, and then to have it handsomely framed. The design and workmanship will be such as to make it very attractive, while the associations connected with the hair, will I am certain, render it a conspicuous and valuable, as well as salable, contribution to the Fair." Research does not indicate Lincoln complied with Miss Jennings request, though he did apparently send a copy of the Gettysburg Address to the fair to assist with the fundraiser.

Some of Lincoln's charity was more personal, like the check he wrote in August 1863 for \$5 to "Colored man, with one leg." However most of their giving seems to have been more structured, and channeled through the hospital fund or, increasingly, by request from the U.S. Sanitary Commission. The requests for donations increased in 1863 and 1864, which may indicate that as the war progressed and various groups such as the Sanitary Commission became more organized, the Lincolns were content to focus their efforts on donating to those organizations or giving to



Leland-Boker Draft Printing of the Emancipation Proclamation.
The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

hospitals and charitable causes directly, rather than maintaining the hospital fund account. What is clear is from the research on the hospital fund account and checks and donations of documents for auction is that, from the very beginning of the war, both Abraham and Mary Lincoln took a personal interest and role in easing the suffering of the thousands of sick and wounded soldiers in countless hospitals across the country. Living at the Soldiers' Home put the Lincolns in a situation to see the human cost of war, from the first national cemetery, to the disabled veterans living on the grounds, to contrabands and wounded soldiers they passed nearby. As the war went on, day by day, the Lincolns continued to give personal assets and time in an effort to offer some relief to those most in need.

Erin Carlson Mast, Director



Buildings of the Great Central Fair, in aid of the U.S. Sanitary Commission, Logan Square, Philadelphia, June 1864

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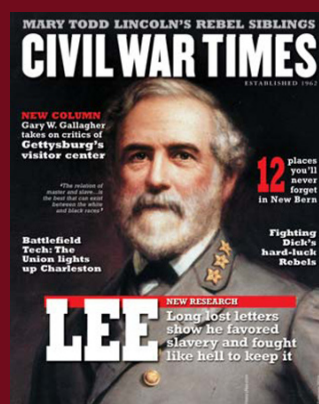
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<http://www.lincolncottage.org/events/index.htm>

For questions contact: lincolncottage@nthp.org, 202.829.0436 x31232

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