



NEWS FROM

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE

LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL EDITION

Vol. 7

www.lincolncottage.org

Fall 2009

Upcoming Programs

Cottage Conversations

*January 14, 2010

*(Please note this date has changed since the last newsletter)

Gerald Prokopowicz

April 15, 2010

Craig Symonds

All *Cottage Conversations*:

6:00pm - Reception

6:30pm - Lecture

7:30pm - Book signing

GENERAL ADMISSION: \$10

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION: \$25

COTTAGE DONORS \$100+: FREE

Reservations: alison_mitchell@nthp.org
or (202)829-0436 x31228

Introducing OUR ONLINE Museum Store



Interpreting the Emancipation Proclamation at President Lincoln's Cottage

By Frank Milligan, Director

A major interpretive goal for us here at President Lincoln's Cottage is to help our visitors better understand the process that led President Lincoln to enact the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. We want our visitors to gain an appreciation for the countless political and military forces that played upon Lincoln in the months leading up to and following the issuance of his September 1862 Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation's decree that slaves in rebellious states or parts of states should be "then, thenceforward, and forever free."



Tour in progress at President Lincoln's Cottage

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by Frank Milligan, Director

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A CLOSER LOOK...

AT Abraham Lincoln



ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Paul Conrad, late 20th century
This sculpture by a noted cartoonist exaggerates Lincoln's tall, lanky physique and is one of 24 limited edition pieces.

The Kahn Collection

On view in the "My Abraham Lincoln" exhibit.

Paul Conrad is best known for his political cartoons. A three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning (1964, '71, and '84), Conrad served as chief editorial cartoonist for the *Los Angeles Times* for 29 years. In addition to being a celebrated cartoonist, Conrad is also an accomplished sculptor. In the late 20th century, Conrad created a series of small scale sculptures, most of them satirical, of political icons, including John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Martin Luther King, Jr., both Presidents Bush, the Clintons, and Abraham Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln was no stranger to political satire and editorial cartoons—positive and negative. In this bronze sculpture (shown on left), Conrad created a classic caricature of Lincoln, one in which his height and lankiness is exaggerated. The image refers to the Harper's Weekly political cartoon of Lincoln titled, "Long Abraham Lincoln, a Little Longer" (shown on right) printed a few weeks after Lincoln's successful run for reelection in 1864. Unlike the cartoon of 1864, a comical celebration of Lincoln's victory, Conrad's sculpture is meant to convey the "dramatic, yet fragile attitude of Abraham Lincoln."

- Erin Mast, Curator

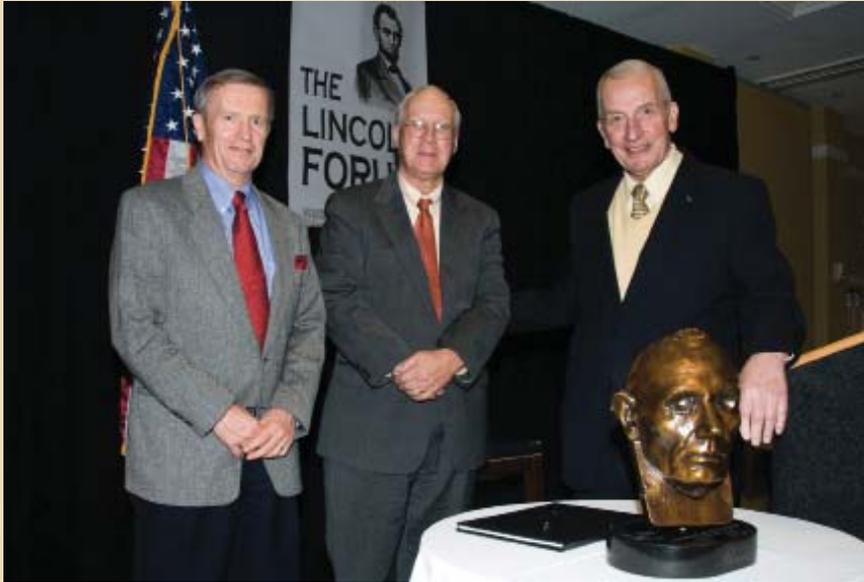
The exhibit "My Abraham Lincoln" is located in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center for President Lincoln's Cottage. Due to popular demand, the exhibit has been extended through July 31, 2010. You may view highlights of the exhibit on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com



LONG ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
A LITTLE LONGER
Harper's Weekly, November 26, 1864

Library of Congress

COTTAGE RECEIVES LINCOLN FORUM'S VOLK AWARD



On November 18, President Lincoln's Cottage was awarded the prestigious Volk Award from the Lincoln Forum, which "honors excellence in advancing Lincoln history and preserving his memory."

Left to Right: Frank Milligan, Director of President Lincoln's Cottage, Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Frank Williams, President of the Lincoln Forum.

Attention Teachers!



President Lincoln's Cottage welcomes students of all ages, and from around the country, to participate in its school programs. Education programs include an interactive program component which meet state and national standards of learning and a specialized tour of the Cottage. Programs are offered for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Experiences for college and graduate students are also available.

Come see where Lincoln lives!

To **schedule a school program** contact Education Coordinator, Callie Hawkins
callie_hawkins@nthp.org / 202.829.0436
x31223

Click here to learn more

LEED Gold Certification

The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at President Lincoln's Cottage is the first National Trust Historic Site to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. The Visitor Education Center received 44 credits, earning LEED Gold in April 2009.

The Visitor Education Center is an Italianate Renaissance Revival style building designed by architect William Poindexter. The building was constructed in 1905, as the Administrative Building for the Soldiers' Home. In 2007, the National Trust sustainably rehabilitated the building and adapted it for use as a welcome center, exhibit space, and staff offices for President Lincoln's Cottage.

Thanks to a \$1 million contribution and technical expertise provided by United Technologies Corporation, green practices became an integral part of the rehabilitation of this building.

A special self-guided Eco Tour will be available in the building for visitors in December 2009.

To learn more visit us online at
www.lincolncottage.org





'Tis the Season...

Visit our Museum Store in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at President Lincoln's Cottage or online at www.lincolncottage.org.

for holiday shopping!



President Lincoln's Cottage is a Toys For Tots participant! Come to the Museum Store to purchase and/or drop off toys!

*President
Lincoln's
Cottage is on
Facebook
and
YouTube!*



*Events
at President Lincoln's Cottage*

Perfect for Holiday Gatherings!

Cottage rooms glow with soft evening light during the fall and winter seasons, lending a magical quality and Victorian ambiance to any celebration. Two historic buildings and landscaped grounds offer many options for large and small gatherings, and formal and casual entertaining. Call now to reserve space for your private or corporate event.

To learn more visit:

[http://www.lincolncottage.org/
events/index.htm](http://www.lincolncottage.org/events/index.htm)

For questions contact
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Interpreting the Emancipation Proclamation at President Lincoln's Cottage...continued

By Frank Milligan

The issue of slavery, and Lincoln's views about it, is complex and challenging and needs to be seen through the prism of a mid-nineteenth century America that was not familiar with the 'Great Emancipator's' as enshrined in the awe-inspiring Lincoln Memorial. Such is not the case with today's visitors.

From the start, we at the Cottage were committed to helping our visitors understand that interpreting Abraham Lincoln's personal views on the right to hold persons as slaves needed to be seen within the broader issues of race and to a lesser degree colonization - the voluntary relocation of former slaves to Africa or Central America that would ensure the permanent separation of the two races. How do we actually interpret such a complicated story

within the confines of a sixty-minute guided tour in which emancipation itself is but one part of a larger picture?

Our emancipation story begins to unfold in earnest in the Cottage where, according to accounts written by the men who guarded him and the friends who visited him, Lincoln spent a great deal of time reading and contemplating many issues, but in the spring and summer of 1862

probably no issue so dominated his thinking as did emancipation. It was here at his rural sanctuary where the beleaguered President increasingly turned to his Bible "to know the will of Providence" in ending slavery. As historian Matthew Pinsky writes, "the origin of his emancipation decision in July [1862] appears to have been an acutely solitary moment."¹



"The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation Before the Cabinet"
Painted by F.B. Carpenter; Engraved by A.H. Ritchie.

Here, we emphasize Lincoln's strong personal commitment to the principle of equality as embodied in the Declaration of Independence. In fact the foundation for Lincoln's eventual success in transforming a war for Union into a war for freedom was his wholehearted belief that freedom was the one natural right of every human being: "There can be no moral right in connection with one man making

a slave of another," he argued in his October 16, 1854, speech in Peoria, Illinois.² But according to historian H.W. Brands, Lincoln had no desire early in his presidency to "conduct a revolutionary crusade."³ Emancipation would emerge as a military necessity, not as a moral compass.

Clearly slavery was morally incompatible with the spirit of the Declaration. But Lincoln also knew the importance of calming Northern sentiments and so he cleverly maintained in letters and conversations that the maintenance of the Union represented his true war aim, and not the dismantling of slavery. This Lincoln held to even as he wrote his preliminary emancipation decree and then awaited the military victory that allowed him to

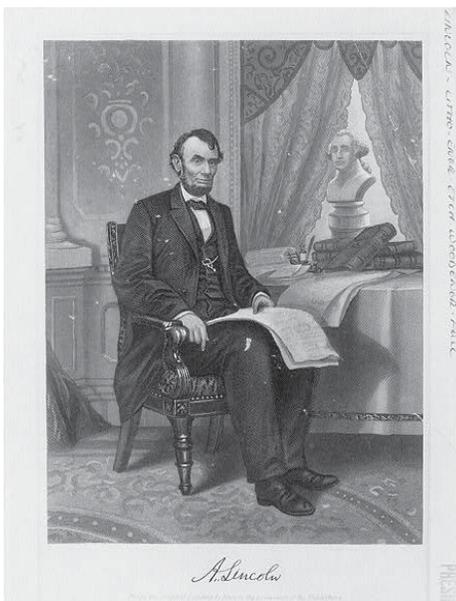
announce the proclamation from a position of military strength.

To fully understand the nuances relating to the emancipation story, we believe that our visitors should have a basic understanding of Lincoln's changing personal views on race and the reality that Lincoln's long-held opposition to slavery did not initially, as Brands puts it, "make him

a believer in racial equality.”⁴ In that regard the President shared some of the racial prejudices held by many mid-nineteenth century Americans.⁵ As mentioned, Lincoln supported equality at the highest level of the “natural rights” embodied in the Declaration. But while all men have been created equal, the real question for Lincoln remained, as historian Louis Gates posed, “who was a man and what being ‘a man’ in fact, meant.”⁶

Unlike many of those Illinoisans whose votes he needed to win elective office, Lincoln favored equal citizenship rights for all Americans – that is the right to own property and enjoy due legal process including habeas corpus. But when it came to political and social rights, Lincoln steadfastly upheld the rights of states to enact state-wide discriminatory restrictions on issues such as voting privileges, public office holding, jury service, and intermarriage⁷ between blacks and whites.

For us it is less important to spend our valuable tour time discussing where Lincoln might have actually

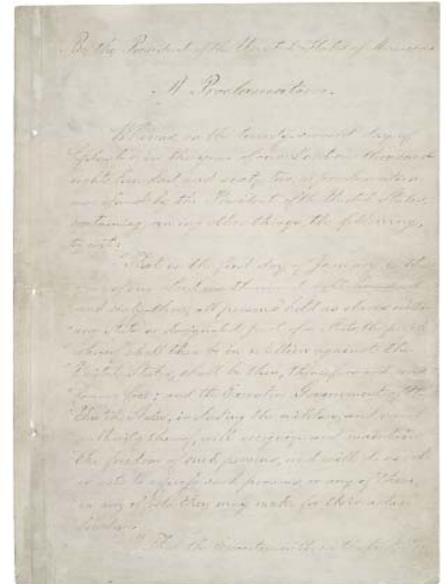


Abraham Lincoln, Pres. U.S., c1866

written the Proclamation.⁸ We much prefer to help our visitors appreciate the complexity of the emancipation process, and its necessity as a military measure to stem the rising opposition to the war by northerners who in the summer of 1862 saw only Union military impotence on the eastern and western fronts. Clearly Lincoln needed a bold political and military measure to turn public opinion in favor of continuing and ending the war. As a result of the Emancipation Proclamation, over 180,000 African-Americans took up arms within Union ranks, and as Lincoln predicted, that valor and bravery helped turn the tide of war for the North. Furthermore, it was that valor that eventually led Lincoln to propose giving these warriors the right to vote – a decision that directly led to his assassination.

But the story does not end on January 1, 1863, with the implementation of the final Proclamation. Rather it, and our tour, ends in the summer of 1864 amidst dire conversations that took place at the Soldiers’ Home retreat regarding Lincoln’s plummeting political fortunes for the 1864 presidential election. To his credit, the President dug in his heels and rejected the advice of political advisors and influential War Democrats to drop his intention to make the end of slavery, enshrined in a constitutional amendment, the centerpiece of his 1864 re-election campaign. It was a courageous decision that cemented both Lincoln’s political legacy and his emancipation policy.

Our increasing Cottage attendance mirrors the growing public and professional museum and scholarly



Emancipation Proclamation (first page)
Courtesy of the National Archives

interest with our honest and engaging presentation of the emancipation story. Over the past six months, I have delivered papers on the subject to conferences in Oxford, the District of Columbia, Richmond, Rochester, and Indianapolis. Interpreting emancipation is a challenging and exhilarating process; just as creating and enacting it was for Abraham Lincoln.

¹ See Matthew Pinsker, “Lincoln’s Summer of Emancipation,” in Harold Holzer and Sarah Vaughn Gabbard, eds., *Lincoln and Freedom: Slavery, Emancipation and the Thirteenth Amendment* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007), 79-99.

² For the full text of this remarkable speech see Lewis Lehrman’s excellent new book *Lincoln at Peoria: The Turning Point* (Stackpole Books, 2008), 289-328.

³ See H.W. Brands, “Lincoln’s Genius” (Weider History Group Inc, 2009), p. 40.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See James Oakes, “Natural Rights, Citizenship Rights, States Rights, and Black Rights,” in Eric FONER ed. *Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World*, p. 111.

⁶ Henry Louis Gates Jr. ed, *Lincoln and Race* (Princeton, 2009), xxiii. See Gates’ Introduction for an excellent overview of Lincoln’s writings and speeches on the issue of slavery and race.

⁷ Oakes, “Natural Rights,” 115, 127-128.

⁸ Historians differ on this but I remind our staff that regardless of where the document was finally drafted, Lincoln most certainly thought through his options and, as was his practice, jotted notes on the subject, while staying at the Cottage during the spring and summer of 1862.