



# THE COTTAGE COURIER

Vol. 21

www.lincolncottage.org

Fall 2013

*Ring in the New Year at  
Freedom's Eve!*



Celebrate with live music, drinks, and desserts at a party with meaning. More info on p. 2.

## HOLIDAY HOURS

Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Open: Christmas Eve, 9:30 am-1:30 pm. Last tour begins at 12 pm.

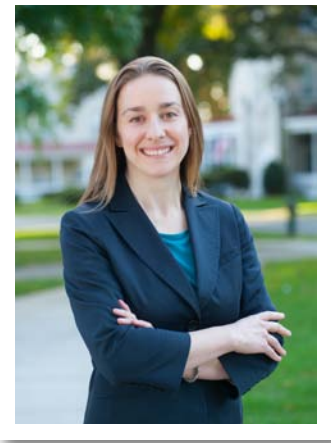
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## From the Director

Dear Friends,

Many of you have asked how we were impacted by the Federal Government shutdown. We appreciate your concern and support. Our friends and neighbors, especially those at the Armed Forces Retirement Home, experienced significant impact. Though the Cottage remained open and welcomed many new visitors, we felt the shutdown consequences, including a sharp decline in DC tourism. Most people were surprised we were even open, and their surprise is understandable. We are, in fact, the only National Monument in the country that does not receive government operating support.



Instead, we rely on your support to save Lincoln's beloved home and to make it available for those that seek to meet the true Lincoln and continue the fight for freedom. Your support makes new work possible, including our current restoration projects, our Gettysburg 150th Commemoration featuring DC Poet Laureate Dolores Kendrick, and our international Students Opposing Slavery initiative. It also means we can continue our practice of bringing DC Public School students here for transformative programs at no cost to their schools. And it lets us continue to bring you high quality research and education whether you visit us onsite or online. With your donation – which the Robert H. Smith Foundation will generously match, doubling your impact – we can keep Lincoln's beloved home protected and open for the benefit of all, come what may on Capitol Hill.

In this issue, we are featuring the final installment of Dr. Douglas Wilson's series on what Lincoln read here. How better to end this landmark series than with Shakespeare? We also are excited to bring you a special interview with Dr. J. Spencer Dryden, the Soldiers' Home eye surgeon during World War II. I was fascinated by his personal recollections of the Home 70 years ago. We thank Dr. Dryden and his daughter Kay for their willingness to share this story with us and all of you.

Let us know what you think by joining our conversation on Facebook and Twitter, or drop me a line by email. I would be delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes for a joyous and peaceful holiday season!

Erin Mast  
EMast@savingplaces.org

*A Lincoln*  
PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S COTTAGE  
AT THE SOLDIERS' HOME



# FREEDOM'S EVE



You are invited to celebrate the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at Freedom's Eve—a New Year's Eve party with meaning. Enjoy live music, a dessert buffet, and an open bar. Advanced ticket purchase required. 9:30 pm - 12:30 am.

*Tickets: Railsplitter (under 40 yrs), \$100; President, \$150; Emancipator (incl. limited edition gift), \$250. Ticket sales support President Lincoln's Cottage, a private non-profit. For ticket purchase or more information, contact Hilary Malson at 202-829-0436 x31228 or [HMalsen@savingplaces.org](mailto:HMalsen@savingplaces.org).*



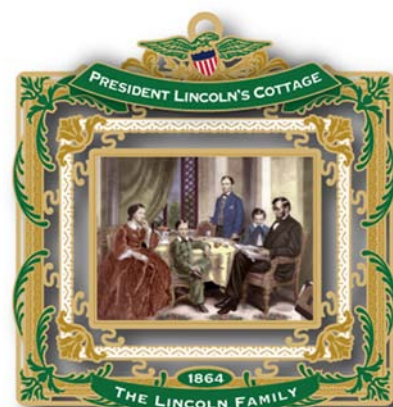
## Host your holiday gathering at President Lincoln's Cottage

*"If you want to give your guests an unparalleled taste of historic Washington, check out Lincoln's Cottage..."*  
- The Washington Post

*Contact Sahand Miraminy at (202) 829-0436 x31232 or [SMiraminy@savingplaces.org](mailto:SMiraminy@savingplaces.org) for more information.*

## Bring the Lincoln Family Home for the Holidays

The 2014 edition of the five piece Civil War Sesquicentennial Ornament Series features a mezzotint print of the Lincoln family. Complement your ornament collection with this charming piece, or collect the whole series! *Only* available in the President Lincoln's Cottage museum shop. Purchase yours online or in the store today.



# My Life at the Soldiers' Home: An Interview with James Spencer Dryden

Edited by Erin Carlson Mast, Executive Director, President Lincoln's Cottage, from an interview with Dr. James Spencer Dryden conducted by E. Mast and Christine Baldwin, Librarian, Armed Forces Retirement Home.

*James Spencer Dryden was born in York County, Virginia on January 10, 1910. We recently had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Dryden about his time as an eye surgeon at the Soldiers' Home during World War II, and what he knew about President Lincoln's Cottage while he lived there.*

Several months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, I was stationed at Walter Reed [Army Medical Center]. General Marietta was the Commanding Officer for the entire Medical Corps headquartered at Walter Reed. He had been the physician for General Pershing during World War I. He foresaw that Walter Reed would have space complications if the U.S. became involved in [World War II]. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, we became very focused on getting the personnel and bed space in order to receive the anticipated large influx of casualties. General Marietta asked me to set-up an eye department at the Soldiers' Home to perform surgeries. There were about 3,000 retired non-commissioned officers living at Soldiers' Home at that time. Most of the men were at an age for which cataracts are a very common problem and they typically came to Walter Reed for that surgery before the U.S. entered the war. The idea was that if we kept those surgeries at the Soldiers' Home, it would free up bed space at Walter Reed for casualties of war. That's how I came to the Soldiers' Home.

At that time, the Soldiers' Home was financed by having about \$1.00 collected out of each serviceman's paycheck. The residents were all Army non-commissioned officers. Most of



*James Spencer Dryden, pictured here in 1941.  
Courtesy of the Dryden Family.*

the men had served anywhere from 25-30 years. So they had contributed a large amount of money to the Soldiers' Home during their service. Most of the residents had reached retirement age and were too old to reenlist when war broke out — though some would have loved to reenlist. They were good, down-to-earth citizens. They were not fly-by-nights or alcoholics. They had led successful lives and contributed to society.

When I first arrived at the Soldiers' Home, before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Chief Medical Officer was Colonel Pipes. General Coleman was the Commanding Officer and the line of command included General Seaman, Colonel Matt Bristol, and

Colonel Lynne. Colonel Bennett was the Treasurer. All the officers were in residence on the grounds. There were no schools on the grounds — everyone either had children who had grown-up and left home or who were still too young for school. I had only been there a few weeks before Colonel Pipes died suddenly of a coronary. General Coleman, who was the Commanding Officer at the Soldiers' Home, requested that I be promoted and placed in Colonel Pipes' position temporarily, until they could find a more senior officer for the position. I was the Chief Medical Officer for six months. My typical day involved keeping the surgery clinic going and keeping all the medical wards serviced. I had two Army and two civilian physicians working for me fulltime in the hospital. That kept me pretty busy. Then they sent in Colonel John Wallace to assume the Chief Medical Officer position. Colonel Wallace was a physician in the Army with 30 years of service at the time. When he arrived it was just a matter of transferring my duties over to him and resumed my surgery duties. My office was right across the hall from Colonel Wallace. We had a good relationship. We handled surgeries together, golfed together, and hunted together. We golfed on the grounds with General Coleman, General Seaman, and Colonel Bennett. We hunted quail

on the 500 acres of Soldiers' Home grounds. A portion of the grounds were planted with corn. There were three to four coveys of quail. Colonel Wallace had a bird dog named Don that came with us. We always arranged it so we had our backs to the neighborhood. We didn't even need to have a license. We were probably the only people who hunted quail in the District. You couldn't hunt anywhere else in the District at that time. (In those days the district was still controlled by the House District committee, appointed by the President.)

I lived in the Barnes Building, which was part of the same complex as the hospital on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home. My wife and I had one whole wing on the first floor for our living quarters. Our quarters had a big front porch all down the front of the building and a big kitchen and dining room. There was a long corridor connecting to two or three bedrooms. And there were separate living quarters for live-in help. It was very comfortable. I worked in the hospital in the same complex. The hospital had a surgery observation room, where I performed many surgeries. All the teaching hospitals had them at the time. That was a common practice.

The grounds of the Soldiers' Home were wonderful. Given that the Soldiers' Home was on a hill, the view was particularly great. It was especially spectacular at night, when the Capital building and monuments were lit up, and during the fireworks on the Fourth of July.

The Soldiers' Home was fenced in with an eight-foot high wrought-iron fence. There were four points of entry. There was not much of a relationship with the neighbors and



*The old barracks and hospital building of the Armed Forces Retirement Home. Courtesy of the Wallace Family.*

I knew very little about them. It was a good section of town where ordinary folks lived and they never gave us any problems. There was very little communications between the Soldiers' Home and the rest of the community; we were pretty isolated.

The Soldiers' Home would occasionally open the grounds to colleges and civic partners around the city for events. They had certain days for that and the Soldiers' Home police would escort them for sight-seeing tours or field days. There were several bandstands on the grounds including one by the hospital complex. The resident band would play two afternoons a week. They attracted quite a gathering of people from the Soldiers' Home. They also attracted some civilians from outside the grounds. Civilians could get permission to come in for the band music if they applied at the gate.

Lincoln's Summer Cottage was not open to the public. The first floor had been used as a barbershop at the Soldiers' Home for 50 years or maybe more. While I lived on the grounds, General Coleman said they wanted to clean the Cottage out and told me

there was some old furniture in the attic that was not on the inventory. He was going to have it hauled away and asked me if I wanted any of it. I took two of the tables. I don't remember where any other furniture went. There was not a whole lot of stuff. I believe it came from the attic. It had been up there so long. One of the tables had been painted a dirty gray. It looked like it was laying up there collecting cobwebs and dirt daubers for about a hundred years. You can imagine what it looked like. My wife recognized the potential so we sent the tables out to be restored while we were still living there at Soldiers' Home. We kept them on the premises until we left. We called them the "Lincoln tables" because we knew Lincoln had lived in the Cottage. It was common knowledge there that Lincoln had lived there and I had read about it in the Soldiers' Home records.

I entered the service as a Major and left as a Lieutenant Colonel. I lived and worked at the Soldiers' Home for almost four years. When the war ended, I was discharged from the Army and opened a private medical practice in Washington, DC. I tried to keep up with what went on at the Soldiers' Home after I left because I had a personal interest in it. As a matter of fact, I used to visit on a few occasions. It was good to know the current hospital personnel. I was always interested in the Soldiers' Home. I think it was a great asset to the military service. The non-commissioned officers who lived there were well-served there.



Editor's Notes: *Dr. Dryden was asked but did not recall anything of note about a so-called "witness tree" that died around 2002 but was reportedly here when Lincoln drafted the Emancipation Proclamation. Nor did he remember anything about the other U.S. Presidents who resided on the grounds during their administrations. He also indicated that he*

never witnessed commemorative events at the US Soldiers' Home National Cemetery (now the U.S. Soldiers' & Airmen's Home National Cemetery), visits by notable individuals or the construction or demolition of any buildings on the grounds while he was in residence. While the Home was officially desegregated in 1963,

Dr. Dryden noted that segregation was not an issue while he was there, asserting that without question, everyone was treated the same at that time. After researching the two "Lincoln tables," the findings suggest that the tables are more likely from the 1870s-80s when President Hayes or Arthur would have been in residence.

As a point of interest, Colonel Bennett's step-grandson donated two prints to the site in 2009. Research supported that the two prints were very likely in the Cottage while the Lincolns were in residence.



## *"Give Freely"*

A message from supporter F. James Tennies

"The Cottage is a place of stunning historical authenticity and its themes are timeless and essential... Here we find a transcendence that speaks to us across the ages. In this house, Lincoln met destiny. These walls do speak, and what a story they have to tell. So give freely to the Cottage to preserve Lincoln's Sanctuary, his place of rest and one of his sources of inspiration and happiness. Your contributions allow the Cottage to tell this amazing story so that, from generation to generation, the story of Lincoln, of freedom, and of national survival can be told from this hilltop to every hilltop in America."

# *Double Your Impact!*

If you donate to President Lincoln's Cottage, the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation will generously match your contribution. For example, a gift of \$250 would become \$500.

Your support is critical because President Lincoln's Cottage:

- *is the only National Monument in the country that receives no government operating support;*
- *has no endowment (but budgets responsibly and has no debt either); and*
- *is making a substantial difference through original, transformative programs such as our international Students Opposing Slavery initiative, Emancipation Anthology, and effort to bring every DC public school student to Lincoln's beloved home free of charge.*

*Click here to*  
**DONATE**

Help us build a sustainable future for this historic treasure by making a gift today!

## Special Thanks

Thank you to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for volunteering on our preservation projects this summer.

If you are interested in sponsoring a Preservation Day at President Lincoln's Cottage, please contact John Davison at [JDavison@savingplaces.org](mailto:JDavison@savingplaces.org) for more information.

*Clockwise from bottom left: volunteers applying fresh paint, beautifying the garden, scraping old paint off the rails, and starting the day with a greeting from Executive Director Erin Carlson Mast.*



## EXEMPLARY STEWARDSHIP



President Lincoln's Cottage is diligently addressing several critical restoration and preservation priorities.

We will soon begin work on a project to improve the character and sustainability of the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center by restoring its original Spanish-style tile roof and first floor awnings. Thank you to the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation for funding this exciting, impactful project.

With the help of artisans and masters of specialized crafts, we will also soon be studying the Cottage's stucco and brick to pinpoint why stucco is pulling away from the north wall and chimney, and how moisture and salts may be contributing to the deterioration of historic plaster and, notably, the Lincoln-era decorative painting in the vestibule. Visitors will get a glimpse of history when the decorative painting conservator removes over 150 years of accumulated paint in select areas of the vestibule wall. This project is funded in part by the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. We are also grateful to the Civil War Dance Foundation for supporting the vestibule restoration.

Contact John Davison at [JDavison@savingplaces.org](mailto:JDavison@savingplaces.org) for more information about how you, too, can support the preservation of President Lincoln's Cottage, or click [here](#) to donate today.

*Pictured: (L) Catherine Myers of Myers Conservation in the vestibule, stabilizing loose plaster on the walls. (R) The roof at the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center will undergo restoration work in early 2014.*

# Inspire Your Students

A visit to President Lincoln's Cottage gives young minds an opportunity to consider the example of Lincoln's leadership and character and his impact on their lives today, in the very place he developed transformative ideas. All programs include a hands-on component in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center and a modified tour of President Lincoln's Cottage.

Contact the Education Department and schedule your class field trip to President Lincoln's Cottage today! Call 202-829-0436 x31232 or email [LincolnEd@savingplaces.org](mailto:LincolnEd@savingplaces.org).



raising awareness of human trafficking

Don't miss updates on the SOS blog!

[www.studentsopposingslavery.org/blog](http://www.studentsopposingslavery.org/blog)



Student leaders who attended the inaugural Students Opposing Slavery Youth Summit at President Lincoln's Cottage this past summer have taken the fight against modern slavery back to their home communities. Six schools in the DC area now have SOS chapters, and SOS participants joined hundreds of abolitionists at President Lincoln's Cottage in October for UNBOUND, a rally uniting the movement to end human trafficking.

For more information on SOS, contact Callie Hawkins at [CHawkins@savingplaces.org](mailto:CHawkins@savingplaces.org).

# COTTAGE CONVERSATIONS



Learn about Lincoln and the Civil War at *Cottage Conversations*, the signature lecture series at President Lincoln’s Cottage. Mingle with the authors at the reception and at a book signing after the lecture.

November 21: Chris DeRose, *Congressman Lincoln: The Making of America’s Greatest President*

Reception \$10, lecture \$10. Free for \$250+ members.  
Reception: 6:00pm. Lecture: 6:30 pm

December 5: Kenneth Winkle, *Lincoln’s Citadel: The Civil War in Washington, DC*

For reservations, contact Sahand Miraminy at 202-829-0436 x31232 or [SMiraminy@savingplaces.org](mailto:SMiraminy@savingplaces.org).

We are grateful for the following sponsors for their generous support of the 2013-2014 Cottage Conversation Season: Northern Trust Corporation, David Bruce Smith, and F. James Tennies.



**Northern Trust**

We recently welcomed Richard Moe, President Emeritus of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, back to the Cottage. Moe, author of *Roosevelt’s Second Act*, gave a talk at the first Cottage Conversation of the 2013-2014 season.



*Pictured, L-R: Callie Hawkins, Richard Moe, Alex Moe, and Erin Carlson Mast.*

Follow @LincolnsCottage and...



...Stay Connected!



# 150th Anniversary of the Gettysburg Address

## NOVEMBER 19TH, 2013

Featuring DC Poet Laureate Dolores Kendrick



*Join us for mass public recitations of the Gettysburg Address on the Cottage veranda at 10:45 am, 11:45 am, 12:45 pm, 1:45 pm, and 2:45 pm.*

*No memorization is necessary - cards will be provided. Groups are welcome.*

*Ms. Kendrick will perform solo at 10:30 am. All are welcome to witness her performance before taking part in the public recitation at 10:45 am.*

*Register for this free program today at [www.lincolncottage.org/GettysburgAddress150](http://www.lincolncottage.org/GettysburgAddress150).*



## On View: The A. N. See Diary

OBSERVATIONS OF LINCOLN'S PRESIDENTIAL GUARD

The Civil War Diary of Albert Nelson See is on display through December 31st, 2013 as part of the new exhibit series "originALS" at President Lincoln's Cottage. See, a member of Lincoln's Presidential Guard, lived at the Soldiers' Home in the summer of 1864. Learn more about See, an ordinary man who lived in extraordinary times, in this exhibit review from [PreservationNation](http://www.PreservationNation.com).

*"originALS" is a series of exhibitions highlighting an original or small group of objects at a time. The objects in "originALS" speak to the importance and complexity of the Lincoln story and relate directly to Lincoln's time here at the Soldiers' Home.*

# Lincoln and Shakespeare

By Douglas L. Wilson

*This is Part III in a three-part series of articles about Abraham Lincoln's affinity for reading and how it influenced his ideas. In each part, historian Douglas L. Wilson describes moments of Lincoln's life in which what he read here offers a new understanding of his frame of mind. For Parts I and II, read our [Winter 2013](#) and [Summer 2013](#) Newsletters.*

Modern American Presidents are reportedly so deeply immersed in matters of state and so burdened by enormous responsibilities that it is hard for us to picture them sitting alone in the White House and quietly reading a book. However, but in fact a number of recent presidents succeeded in doing just that on a regular basis. In this they are following (perhaps knowingly) the example of our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, who was a notorious reader. In truth, the reported reading of our modern presidents — heavily weighted, it would seem, toward history and biography — is in many respects more serious than was Lincoln's, with two notable exceptions: the Bible and Shakespeare, which were Lincoln's mainstays. Lincoln's regular recurrence to the Bible was mostly private, but in company he would often read aloud from or recite Shakespeare by the hour.

Lincoln's devotion to the writings of William Shakespeare began very early, when the future president was an eager young student of literature. His love of Shakespeare was noted by many of his closest friends, including his law partner, William H. Herndon, who allowed that Shakespeare "was scarcely ever out of his mind."<sup>1</sup> His son, Robert,



*Lincoln and Hay visited the old Naval Observatory before returning to the Soldiers' Home (stereograph circa 1867-1869). Courtesy Library of Congress.*

said that his father always had a copy of Shakespeare at hand.<sup>2</sup> This was true at the White House, and it was just as true at the Soldiers Home, his summer residence now known as President Lincoln's Cottage. One of his private secretaries, John Hay, who sometimes stayed with his chief at the Soldiers Home, wrote years later that Lincoln "would there read Shakspeare for hours with a single secretary for audience."<sup>3</sup> He recorded one such occasion in his diary:

*Last night we went to the Observatory with Mrs Young. They were very kind and attentive. The Presdt. took a look at the moon & Arcturus. I went with him to the Soldiers' Home & he read Shakespeare to me, the end of Henry VI and the beginning of Richard III till my heavy eye-lids caught his considerate notice & he sent me to bed. [23 August 1863]<sup>4</sup>*

This passage from John Hay's

diary has been cited to illustrate the way the President liked to spend his idle hours reading aloud to his guests, but what is never noticed is that this particular scene also tells us something important about his dissatisfaction with the way Shakespeare was presented on the stage. That Lincoln should read from the beginning of Richard III is not surprising, for it was not only one of his favorite plays — and incidentally the most performed of all Shakespeare's play at that time — but it opens with one of the speeches Lincoln most liked to recite, the famous soliloquy that begins:

*Now is the winter of our discontent  
Made glorious summer by this son of York.*

Henry VI, on the other hand, is one of the least familiar and least read of Shakespeare's plays, and is divided

into three parts, but its ending has no particular distinction. While the play Richard III continues the historical narrative begun by Henry VI, Lincoln's reason for reading from the end of one and the beginning of the other is, in isolation, something of a puzzle.

We come now to the crux of the matter, for what Lincoln had perhaps only recently discovered was that the text used in performing Richard III, both in England and America, was not Shakespeare's original but an 18th-century adaptation. As a reader, Lincoln knew Shakespeare's text from constant reading and re-reading in the standard editions, but when he went to the theater, he found himself confronted by a much different play with an entirely different beginning. Rather than opening with the famous monologue that Lincoln loved to recite, the adaptation of Richard III begins with scenes derived from the play that chronologically precedes it, Henry VI Part 3. Lincoln once had an occasion to explain this phenomenon to a visitor:

*... the acting plays which people crowd to hear are not always those planned by their reputed authors. Thus, take the stage edition of Richard III. It opens with a passage from Henry VI., after which come portions of Richard III., then another scene from Henry VI.<sup>5</sup>*

As one who knew the text of Shakespeare's Richard III thoroughly from frequent readings and re-readings, Lincoln would have recognized that the adaptation by Colley Cibber made drastic changes to the play, eliminating many characters and scenes, revising a substantial portion of the dialogue, and inserting new speeches and whole new scenes. Moreover, some of the most memorable lines for which the play was known in Lincoln's day were drawn

from the introduced material, not from Shakespeare's original. A notable example is a then-famous soliloquy in which a despondent Richard, pulls himself together and cries out "Richard's himself again!" Referring to this speech, Lincoln told his visitor:

*... the finest soliloquy in the play, if we may judge from the many quotations it furnishes, and the frequency with which it is heard in amateur exhibitions, was never seen by Shakespeare, but was written... after his death, by Colley Cibber.*

What is at issue here is the conspicuous fact that Lincoln was primarily a reader and expected dramatic performances to follow Shakespeare's text. Since its introduction in 1700, actors and theater managers had much preferred Colley Cibber's version of Richard III. It was easier to follow than Shakespeare's version, less complicated and played more smoothly. The theater-going public, which judged performances by their entertainment value, fully agreed. But as a reader and a devotee of Shakespeare, all of this for Abraham Lincoln was beside the point. It wasn't Shakespeare's text. This is clearly what he was trying, with limited success, to get across to his young Secretary that August night at the Soldiers Home, and it underlies something Lincoln had written to a prominent American actor, James Hackett a few days earlier. "I should like to hear you pronounce the opening speech of Richard the Third," a circumstance that would force the famous Shakespearean actor to choose between Shakespeare and Colley Cibber.<sup>6</sup>



1. William H. Herndon, manuscript of his first lecture on Lincoln, delivered Dec. 12, 1865; Ward Hill Lamon Papers, Huntington Library.



*Shakespearean actor James Hackett, pictured here as Falstaff in King Henry IV (engraving circa 1859). Courtesy Library of Congress.*

2. Robert T. Lincoln to Isaac Markens, Nov. 26, 1917, in Paul M. Angle, ed., *A Portrait of Abraham Lincoln in Letters by His Son* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1968), 48.
3. John Hay, "Life in the White House in the Time of Lincoln, The Century, 41:1 (November 1890), 36.
4. Michael Burlingame and John R. Turner Ettliger, eds., *Inside Lincoln's White House: The Complete Civil War Diary of John Hay* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1997), 75-76.
5. William D. Kelley in Allen Thorndyke Rice, ed., *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of his Time* (New York: North American Publishing Company, 1886), 267.
6. Abraham Lincoln to James H. Hackett, Aug. 17, 1863, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler et al (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 6:392.



*Dr. Wilson is Co-Director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College and a member of the President Lincoln's Cottage Scholarly Advisory Group.*

