



## From the Director

Dear Friends,

There have been constant reminders this summer that the events of Lincoln's presidency and the Civil War reverberate through our daily lives. The tragedy in Charleston, SC and debates around the Confederate flag are particularly stark reminders of the "unfinished" work that we still have before us, but our conversations with middle school students visiting from Baltimore and research from our upcoming exhibit on Lincoln and Immigration are equally powerful demonstrations of how important it is to have the historical knowledge that empowers us to be involved, engaged citizens.



These conversations happen at President Lincoln's Cottage every day, amongst our team and with our visitors and you, our friends. For this issue, I'm pleased to share a conversation we had with two highly respected historians, Dr. Edna Greene Medford of Howard University and Dr. Vernon Burton of Clemson University, about perceptions and meaning of the Confederate flag as well as issues of race and equality. We have been honored to work with them for many years and I hope you appreciate their candor on these subjects as much as our staff has.

This issue is also full of information on a bevy of upcoming programs and opportunities, including our Family Day tomorrow and our second annual Freedom 5K on September 26th, with Olympic Champion Joan Benoit Samuelson joining us again. We are also excited to announce our new lineup of speakers for Cottage Conversations, a program that has grown and evolved considerably since we first opened to the public and launched it over seven years ago.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter. Let us know what you think by joining our conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or drop me a line by email. As always, I would be delighted to learn your thoughts.

Erin Carlson Mast  
[EMast@savingplaces.org](mailto:EMast@savingplaces.org)



## Family Day 2015

On Saturday September 12, enjoy live entertainment and creative activities inspired by the Lincoln family and their life at the Soldiers' Home! Details on page 2.

## In This Issue

### Upcoming Events

Family Day.....	2
Freedom 5K.....	2
Kennedy Center Sidewalk Sale.....	5
Cottage Conversations.....	6
Fall Fest.....	7

### Vestibule Preservation.....4

### New Exhibit:

American by Belief.....	6
Perceptions and Meaning of the Confederate Flag: An Interview with 2 Scholars.....	8-14

*This newsletter is funded in part by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an agency supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.*

## Join us for Family Day on September 12!

Explore a Civil War encampment, play with Tad's favorite animals at the petting zoo, make a stovepipe hat, tour historic Sherman Tower, and enjoy a day of FREE family-friendly fun on **Saturday, September 12 from 10 am-3pm** at President Lincoln's Cottage! [Register online.](#)



## Run in Lincoln's Footsteps at the 2nd Annual Freedom 5K with Joan Benoit Samuelson



Join Olympic champion and running icon Joan Benoit Samuelson at the first annual Freedom 5K at President Lincoln's Cottage! The Freedom 5K, a unique athletic event open to the general public, provides a rare opportunity for runners and walkers alike to race on the 250-acre Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) grounds. The race traverses the pastoral AFRH landscape, on roads and paths that wind past ponds, woods, and fields, before culminating at President Lincoln's Cottage.

**When:** Saturday September 26, 2015 at 8:00 am

**Register:** <http://lincolncottage.org/freedom5k2015/>

**Fees:** \$30 through race day

All proceeds and donations support preservation, award-winning programs, and innovative initiatives such as the Students Opposing Slavery program at President Lincoln's Cottage.



## Education Programs at President Lincoln's Cottage



Inspire your students at the Cradle of the Emancipation Proclamation! On-campus programs are available for K-12 students, and include a specialized tour of the Cottage and an interactive program that meets Common Core and national standards of learning. Teacher materials and lesson plans are available to prepare students for their visit and to continue the experience in the class room afterwards.

Admission is \$7 per student and \$10 per adult. For DCPS, DCPCS, and Title I schools admission is waived. Contact our Education Department and schedule your class field trip to President Lincoln's Cottage today. Call 202-688-3735 or email [LincolnEd@savingplaces.org](mailto:LincolnEd@savingplaces.org).

### What Will Your Legacy Be?

President Lincoln created a powerful, enduring legacy by confronting slavery and guiding the country through the Civil War. At President Lincoln's Cottage, visitors are able to explore that legacy 150 years later and are inspired to take courageous action in their own communities. Despite its profound significance, the site is the only National Monument that does not receive ongoing government operating support, and it lacks an endowment.

To keep the site accessible, protected, and relevant – to keep President Lincoln's Cottage a home for brave ideas – we ask that you consider leaving a bequest to the Cottage in your will.



For more information about using your will to protect President Lincoln's Cottage, please contact me at [EMast@savingplaces.org](mailto:EMast@savingplaces.org).

## Interns Help Preserve Cottage Vestibule

This summer President Lincoln's Cottage hosted preservation interns Sam Biggers and Mary Fesak of Mary Washington University. Their project focused on important preservation work on the Cottage's vestibule. Their efforts resulted in a set of drawings documenting the current conditions of all interior vestibule walls.

Their work complements our North Elevation Project, a series of efforts we launched in 2014 to reduce the amount of damaging moisture entering the Cottage vestibule. Going forward, we will be able to use these drawings as a baseline to track any changes that may occur to the plaster walls and decorative painting.



Thanks to Sam and Mary's efforts, we gained new insight into the vestibule such as the layout and color of the decorative painting that was possibly present on the walls during Lincoln's time. This was done by creating new exposures using existing decorative painting remnants as a guide and looking at paint exposures made by Myers Conservation in the fall of 2014 during previous preservation on the vestibule.



Preservation Interns  
Sam Biggers and Mary Fesak

### Double Your Impact!

When you donate to President Lincoln's Cottage, the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation generously matches your contribution. For example, a gift of \$250 becomes \$500. Your support is critical because President Lincoln's Cottage:

- is the only National Monument in the country that receives no government operating support;
- is preserving Lincoln's home so that future generations may experience and enjoy his legacy;
- is making a substantial difference through original, transformative programs such as our international Students Opposing Slavery initiative and our effort to bring every DC public school student to Lincoln's beloved home free of charge.

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

[Click here to donate](#)

## New Exclusive Ornaments Available!

We are excited to offer two new ornaments for the upcoming holiday season! Our newest ornament is a 3-D representation of the front and rear facades of the Cottage. This ornament captures signature architectural features in great detail.

Our “Lady Liberty” ornament commemorates Lincoln’s Second Inaugural and features the phrase “Let us strive on to finish the work we are in.”

These ornaments and other items are available for purchase online at [www.lincolncottage.org/museumstore](http://www.lincolncottage.org/museumstore).



## Museum Sidewalk Sale

**When:** Saturday September 12th, 10 am-5 pm

**Where:** Main Atrium in the Kennedy Center, 2700 F Street NW, Washington DC 20566

**Admission:** FREE. 2 hours free parking in the Kennedy Center garage

Join President Lincoln’s Cottage and nearly a dozen other museums at the Kennedy Center for the best selection of merchandise from Washington-area cultural centers. A selection of gifts, books, textiles, prints, jewelry, and holiday merchandise will be for sale.

Deals on clearance and one-of-a-kind items are available on a first-come, first-served basis, as long as supplies last.

## American by Belief Exhibit Opening

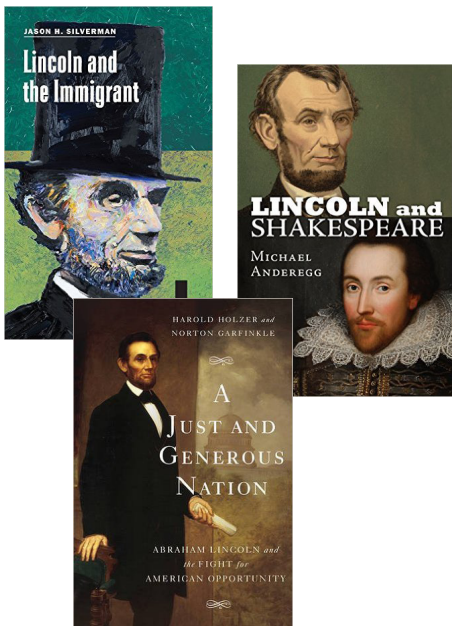
On July 4, 1864, the same day the Lincoln family moved to the Cottage for the last time, Abraham Lincoln signed into law An Act to Encourage Immigration.

*American by Belief*, a new special exhibit opening this fall at President Lincoln's Cottage, introduces the public to Abraham Lincoln's little known immigration policies. Lincoln believed that America offered immigrants the full realization of its founding promises and a fair chance to succeed. Some of these very principles continue to draw immigrants to the United States 150 years later.

AMERICAN  
BY BELIEF

American by Belief opens on **October 16, 2015**, in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center and will remain open for two years.

## Upcoming Cottage Conversations



Join us for the start of a new Cottage Conversations season! Cottage Conversations, the signature speaker series at President Lincoln's Cottage, offers relaxing evenings to socialize and learn something new about our 16th president from authors, collectors, and artists. Join us for wine, beer, and light appetizers at a reception in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center atrium before enjoying a lively conversation between scholars and leading experts from a wide range of topics. A book signing follows each program.

October 15 - Jason Silverman, *Lincoln and the Immigrant*  
 November 19 - Michael Anderegg, *Lincoln and Shakespeare*  
 December 3 - Harold Holzer and Norton Garfinkle, *A Just and Generous Nation*

Reception at 6:00 pm, \$10. Lecture at 6:30 pm, \$10. Free for \$250+ members: **JOIN NOW.**

RSVP and ticket purchase: Michelle Martz, 202-688-3735 or [MMartz@savingplaces.org](mailto:MMartz@savingplaces.org).

The 2015-2016 Cottage Conversations season is made possible with generous support from: Mr. David Bruce Smith, Mr. James Tennes, and Mr. Matthew Tennes.

## Enjoy Fall Fest at the Soldiers' Home!



We are delighted to participate in the Armed Forces Retirement Home's annual Fall Fest! Join us on Sunday, October 4th, for history tours, a petting zoo, a bake sale, an Antique Car Show, and more.

**When:** Sunday October 4 from 10 am-3 pm.  
Visit [www.lincolncottage.org/FallFest2015](http://www.lincolncottage.org/FallFest2015) for more information.

## Host Your Next Event at "a Stunning Gem"

You can trust President Lincoln's Cottage to give your special event the care and attention it deserves. One client recently raved about working with our team, writing "**President Lincoln's Cottage is a stunning gem steeped in charm and history. The staff and setting made our special day one to remember -- for us and everyone in attendance.**"

Click [here](#) to learn about site rentals at President Lincoln's Cottage. Contact Sahand Miraminy, Events Coordinator, at [SMiraminy@savingplaces.org](mailto:SMiraminy@savingplaces.org) or at 202-688-3732 with inquiries.



## Perceptions and Meaning of the Confederate Flag

*Editor's Note: In the wake of the massacre of nine African Americans in Charleston, S.C. on June 17, 2015, President Lincoln's Cottage sat down with historians Dr. Vernon Burton and Dr. Edna Medford to discuss perceptions and meaning of the Confederate flag currently and in popular memory. Using the University of Virginia's Miller Center for Presidential Oral History standards as a guideline, we present an edited and condensed transcript of the conversation. You can read the full conversation online.*

**President Lincoln's Cottage:** Is there anything about the events over the past few months, the massacre in Charleston, the Confederate flag being removed from the S.C. state house grounds, that surprised you?

**Vernon Burton:** When they asked me about the flag coming down I said I was not as optimistic as most people were. I actually thought it might not come down. It's something I had hoped for my whole life just about. I think I certainly was surprised. I think the difference, the real difference, wasn't so much outside forces or so much the influence of Governor Nikki Haley, or from business. But I really think it ironically was really part of Southern Heritage. We're so used to seeing the bad side of Southern Heritage with waving the flag and what it means.... But when the victims' families spoke about grace, forgiveness, for this horrible, horrible murder, and asking God to forgive him. And President Obama reflected those words when he gave his speech.... If you listened on both sides of the aisle,



*Confederate veteran c. 1913.  
Image from Library of Congress*

of the legislators again and again, people appealed to another Southern cultural tradition, the culture of faith. The other thing we have to remember and often forget is that when the flag went up on top of the State House Capitol, there wasn't a single African American state legislator... What a difference it made to have black and white views at the table actually having a dialogue about what this meant.

**Edna Medford:** I think I was most surprised with how quickly things changed.... Even so I'm concerned that this is not permanent, that it is the flavor of the month, that people were rallying around the idea



of removing the flag, because everyone was upset that nine people had been murdered.... It's easy to remove a symbol, it's not easy to change people's hearts. I've seen it. I was in Richmond [this July], and they were preparing for a rally in support of the flag in Petersburg. The reporters asked two young people, a young white man and a young white woman, about why they supported the flag. They both said it was the "heritage" and the reporter asked what it was about the heritage, and neither of them could answer that. They're just repeating what they've heard so often. But they really don't understand what it is that the flag and those symbols represent.... And I think it's because we don't understand who we are as a nation and what the [Civil] War really was about.

**PLC: What messages are you hearing about these symbols being removed or retained? Is removing these symbols enough? Is it symbolic, of change that has occurred, change that's to come, or is it simply symbolic of appeasement?**

**EM:** I think it does show that there has been some change, but I think this movement that we're seeing at the moment, I'm afraid it's not permanent. That's the big issue for me. I'm afraid people saw it as the right thing to do because the shooting was so horrific. But people will forget and go back to where we were. It's the underlying issues. That flag represents oppression [and] hate. It represents a heritage based, at



*Confederate reunion rally outside the White House in 1917.  
Image from the Library of Congress*

least in part, in slavery.... Once we get over the fact that a State Senator was murdered along with eight of his parishioners, we will go back to accepting the flag as a symbol that's okay.

We are also very resistant or reluctant to look at Confederate symbols as representing pride in what was done by a group of people to their nation. We tend to forget that this was disloyalty.... Unless we're willing to deal with that history, we're not ever going to change. Now what I'm saying is that we know that all of these issues were there before. Racism has always been there. Prejudice. Discrimination. Oppression. They've all been there. But the hate speech seems to have come out more since Obama was elected president. When we were talking in 2008 [about] "a post-racial" society, some people felt we'd turned a corner. But I think what this shows is that we're not there yet. Just because the flag has been taken down, doesn't mean we

have actually made a step towards reaching a post-racial society. Not at all.... [W]hat are we doing about all the rest of the issues in the African American community? It isn't just about the symbols.

**VB:** I think that was a terrific answer by Edna. You could look at it all three ways and give a valid answer any way. Some of the people in the legislature in South Carolina, who voted to bring down the flag finally, were some of the same people who were sponsoring and arguing for a strict photo voter ID law in South Carolina that I testified against in Washington, D.C. I think that some of the ambiguity that Edna is addressing as well - these issues are all related in our society. It's too easy to say we've solved the problem. That is my concern - [to say] that by bringing the flag down, we are no longer racist....That has not addressed the underlying issues. At the same time I think it's a significant step when you see how closely people were arguing and tied to this idea of heritage and not seeing or at least not admitting things to other people. I was struck that [Senator] Lindsey Graham was on national TV shows and saying that it was heritage and then a day or two later was standing with Nikki Haley and others arguing it should be taken down.

A lot of it had to do with how the victims' families reacted, the business Republicans, and Nikki Haley's hopes for a career outside of South Carolina since this is her second term and she can't run again. So there are a lot of things going on and I do share Edna's concern [about] taking the flag down and letting people say we've solved the problems.... [W]e haven't solved the

problems. That flag was just a symbol of what the problems are. In an ironic way I think the heritage people have a point in that it is just a symbol that means bad things to a large group of people, but it doesn't address the racism and white supremacy that has gone on in America for a long time and continues.



*"Fate of the Rebel Flag" by William Baully.  
Image from the Library of Congress*

**PLC:** People are so used to hearing and saying that the victors write history. How does the Lost Cause narrative play into 21st century understandings of the Civil War and its symbols?

**EM:** I've always been taken aback by how the whole nation, and how the North, is complicit in this whole Lost Cause thing. It's almost like at some point the North became embarrassed at having won the war, so in order to release themselves from their guilt they decided to allow the South to take pride in what they had done, even to the point where people have embraced southern heritage in a way one wouldn't expect. So I don't quite understand what's going on then. But when the North did that, it made it possible for these kinds of things to occur. For the flag, and all its symbolism to dictate how people would

respond to what the [Civil] War was about. It's not a Southern problem, it's a national problem, it does have to do with us not being willing to accept what the war was about. Everyone understands it's difficult to look back at what happened 150 years ago. It was a terrible time in American history. But if we can't acknowledge that people's lives were destroyed and the country was imperiled, we can't move forward. That's the responsibility of all of us. It's really easy to say that those who honor the flag are doing something wrong, but the reality is as a nation we have given people the right - almost encouraged them - to honor the flag and to honor Confederate symbols. So we're all responsible for that.

**VB:** I got in a lot of trouble at Fort Sumter at the beginning of the [Civil War] sesquicentennial [saying] that the flag represented treason and that they need to think about the difference of celebrating versus commemorating the flag at Fort Sumter. Actually, the Sons of Confederacy started to march away, they were part of the thing. But then they realized we were on Fort Sumter and they couldn't get away so they came back. What I said was we think of December 7th as a day of infamy, we think of September 11th as this horrible event. And it was very similar to the firing on Fort Sumter. This was an act against the United States. That's not something to be celebrated.

In the end, the Confederates came back in control, who through violent coup d'état overthrew legitimate interracial governments. So in some ways, they ironically became the victors of the Long Civil War.... As Edna said, the North was

supporting this; they literally didn't stop the overthrow of democratically elected governments. In that case, who does it mean actually won?



*Confederate veteran Alfred Wardell led the overthrow of Wilmington's (N.C.) integrated city government in 1898. Image from the Library of Congress*

**EM:** That's a good point.

**VB:** It dovetails nicely with Edna's comment about the North being complicit, in the sense that they didn't do anything [to stop] this terroristic campaign. I've always said that we think of terror and 9/11, but for African Americans, they have lived in a terroristic society and been victims of terror with someone like [Ben] Tillman advocating for lynching; churches and school burnings didn't start with this event in Charleston. There's a long history in that church itself, it has a long history of assassinations, of whites assassinating people, burning that church. So part of the African American experience in America is being subject to a terroristic society with very little ways to

appeal politically [and] legally out of that.

One of my PhDs wrote a little interesting piece that people misunderstood when he said people should remember that when the Confederates left the Union, they thought they were sort of the inheritors of America. They still thought of themselves as Americans. The sense of that is White Supremacy was very much an American value, that they were championing that... I think that gets at something of the complicity Edna was talking about.

**PLC: What role do or should historic sites play in today's narratives about race and equality?**

**EM:** Historic sites are doing a lot better job than they used to. I think the reason why African Americans even today, don't go to sites, especially sites that deal with the war, is because we don't feel that we're really a part of that history. We understand we're descended from enslaved people. But we don't feel a part of America. I remember telling people once that most of us don't go to Presidential Libraries. We don't even go to the Grand Canyon. I spent one day at the Grand Canyon, and there were hundreds of thousands of people at the Grand Canyon. I encountered six black people there that day, and three of them were from my own family.

We don't see ourselves as part of America, even after 150 years. We really don't see ourselves as part of the country. So we're not even going to these historic sites. For so long when I went to Civil War conferences, I might have been the only black person in the room. There would have been just

four or five other people of color. That hasn't changed very much over the years. It's wonderful that these historic sites are beginning to deal with some of these issues. But we still have the problem of trying to get black people into these places. We have to get them to feel they have a right to be there. And that they should be there. And that there's something there for them.

**VB:** I think Edna is right on target.... That's where people learn their history, just like on the State House ground [and] places like Fort Sumter. Particularly, plantations and such in Charleston - to understand exactly what those plantations were for: the forced labor [and] the constant threat of violence, if not the use of violence [and] what that's done to black and white Southerners and their culture. The emphasis on violence. I think all of that needs to be a part of our understanding because history is important. History is so important in a democracy, it's so important to understand it.

It's why we have so many issues today. Most [Clemson University students] totally don't understand that the Civil War was a war about slavery. And those who do admit it think that slavery wasn't that bad, a "Gone with the Wind," Tara plantation mythology and don't understand the horrors of slavery, the terrorism. It's not until after 1965, the Voting Rights Act, that you can honestly say African Americans in the former Confederate States didn't live in a terroristic society. And there are still vestiges of that, what Edna was talking about. All those instances from Ferguson to Baltimore, North Charleston, this particular horrible massacre at Mother Emmanuel, the church

of such significance fighting for black rights against terror that has been released on that church again and again.

**PLC: Where do we go from here?**

**EM:** In terms of your site, continue doing what you're doing because I think you've been very successful with that. In terms of what we do with symbols and how we want to commemorate our past, I think Vernon is right, it has to begin with discussions. I'm reminded that when Clinton was president he had a commission on race. It went nowhere. I think it just scratched the surface. And I think people didn't want to have candid discussions about what was going on in the country and what had gone on in the country to move forward. If we as a nation can do that, if we can acknowledge what the past has been, what the present is, and what the future could be if we work together, we can resolve those the opportunities that were there and the and

issues together. We're so afraid to talk. I understand that we're supposed to be politically correct, but maybe we should be less politically correct. Maybe we need to get in a room and say exactly what we need to say. And have the other person actually listen to what we're trying to say. And maybe that's the beginning.

**VB:** I think that we need to deal with the history of White Supremacy, what it's meant. We need to do that in history courses. We need to do that in terms of the horrors of our history, the sort of violent over throws of democratic governments. We're coming up on [the sesquicentennial anniversary] of Reconstruction. People argue that the identity of America is found in the Civil War. And yet I think what we became is in fact hammered out during Reconstruction. As I've argued you cannot separate one from the other. I hope we can use that as an opportunity to reconsider what Reconstruction was, what it meant,



*Confederate veterans' reunion in 1917. Image from the Library of Congress*

the opportunities that were there and the lessons.

We also need to deal with the real issues. The flag is a symbol, but it's what's underneath that really matters. How do we get to that very difficult place that we can get people to recognize what that flag



*First black Congressmen during Reconstruction, including Reps. Robert Elliott and Robert DeLarge of South Carolina. Image from the Library of Congress*

was a symbol of? It was part of a culture. It was a ubiquitous part of that culture. Why did it take this to remove something that had such a horrible connotation to a significant group of people? There are seven state flags that evoke the Confederate flag, which again, these flags are the flags of the state. Many of these states have significant African American populations in them, so that flag has a particular meaning for folks that is not a good one.

There is a lot to be done on both the real level, of dealing with the lingering and continued effects of an enslaved people, and then later at best a second class [of] citizens without the same privileges. The redlining, the denial of opportunity for African Americans. It was after I left at the mill that African Americans that were allowed to work in the cotton mill, which was the only job besides farming. How do we deal with all these effects? People don't understand how one layer of oppression builds upon another. Someone is starting with a heavy load on their shoulders and is ten yards behind in the race. So I think that's important, that we deal with those issues.

---

[Read the full interview with Drs. Burton and Medford on our website.](#)

---

*Dr. Orville Vernon Burton is Professor of History and Computer Science at Clemson University, the Director of the Clemson CyberInstitute, and a member of the President Lincoln's Cottage Scholarly Advisory Group.*

*Dr. Edna Greene Medford is Professor, current Chair, and former director of the Department of History's graduate and undergraduate programs at Howard University. She is also a member of the President Lincoln's Cottage Scholarly Advisory Group.*

## Follow @LincolnsCottage and Stay Connected

Get the latest updates from the Cottage by following our social media accounts:

