



LINCARNATIONS

“Would I might rouse the Lincoln in you all”

Association of Lincoln Presenters



Dan Bassuk,
ALP Founder



Stan Wernz,
President
Emeritus

If anyone has any events or activities that should interest us as historic portrayers, living historians or researchers, please share this (semiannual) newsletter, our Facebook, or webpage.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we enter 2025, we are preparing to visit Kalamazoo, MI for our annual conference on April 25-28. Kevin Wood has a full schedule of lectures, activities, and visits planned for us. More details are elsewhere in this issue. The registration form is on our website. Put the dates on your calendar and plan to join us this year.

We are still seeking sites for future conferences. Larry Elliott will host us in Bardstown, KY (near Lincoln's birth area) in 2026. We will take presentations for 2027 in Kalamazoo. And years beyond that are wide open. If you have an interest in exploring the possibility of hosting in your area, contact our conference committee (composed of Kevin Wood and Joe Woodard). You can also discuss the idea with me.

I continue to encourage all members to be on the lookout for potential new ALP members. Talk to any re-enactors for any historical character regardless of period. Since our Dayton conference, we have only officially added one new member (as Abraham Lincoln). But we are pleased to report that six of our annual members have decided to make the commitment to become life members since Dayton.

We have started a new program this year called Virtual Meetings conducted via Zoom. Laura Keyes volunteered to begin and host this program. Purposes of these meetings are to keep members connected throughout the year while also learning additional facts about the Lincolns and the Civil War era. We also have a 30-minute virtual visit among the members before the official 45-minute presentation. The conversation period at the beginning is a real treat to be able to see and talk with members we usually only see once a year. First three presentations were (August) "Ten Worst Civil War Generals." (October) "Musical Instruments and Sheet Music from the ALPLM Collection," and (January) "Civil War Letters to Dedham from the Lathrop Brothers." We have been averaging between 10-15 members attending, but there is plenty of room for more. About three weeks before each presentation, information will be sent to all members via email with access information and registration request to Laura Keyes. We express our appreciation to Laura for taking on this responsibility.

John Cooper, (740) 862-6373, 12-10-24

MEET YOUR FELLOW LINCOLN

DANNY RUSSELL

Danny Russell, of Indianapolis, IN, has been a life member of ALP since 2009 (recruited by Larry Elliott). He has spent 40 years as a professional actor, appearing in dozens of regional productions, limning a variety of parts before landing upon Mr. Lincoln. Danny credits his brilliant wife, Teresa, who sat him down about 20 years ago and said, "Honey, you're knocking about with plays, musicals, commercials and print ads. You've done considerable work with Shakespeare, and all his dramas are five acts. If you can memorize that much dialogue, you can certainly learn Lincoln speeches? Besides, you're tall, very thin, and you could grow a beard." Shortly after, her tremendous insight led to lucrative funding to conduct research, and the rest is history. Danny says, "So the moral of this story? Listen to your wife!"

Danny now has roughly 225 performances each year (schools, libraries, museums, nursing homes, Civil War events, fairs, and festivals). But pre-COVID he was blessed to capture almost 300 shows annually! Some of his appearances include the National



Council for Social Studies in New Orleans, Dubuque Area Arts Council (30 Catholic schools in 30 days), Missouri State University, and the National Cowboy Museum in Oklahoma. Danny occasionally performs with ALP member Mary Anne Mathews of Indiana, as Mary Lincoln.

He enjoys being Lincoln because you will not find a more heroic and revered character, so it is extraordinarily gratifying not to mention humbling, embracing this portentous opportunity to embody one of our greatest Americans. For him, a valid emotion is the key to a strong connection, not to mention historically accurate material that is both informative and entertaining.

He states it is also helpful to have a tailored costume, authentic props, coiffed hair, and beard colored appropriately. He feels an enormous responsibility to combine hilarity, heart-break, and humanity with theatrical, historical, and educational components, while the payoff is dependent on audience response, nourishing the performer, dictating pre-

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cious timing. Pure approbation!

Danny enjoys reading (studying the 19th century in general, focusing on Lincoln and the Civil War in particular -- learning never ends). He also plays the guitar and has engaged in songwriting.

He has attended four conferences beginning with Greeneville, TN in 2011 and most recently Dayton, OH in 2024, as his schedule allows him to attend. He considers them fantastic! They are filled with knowledge and a surfeit of speakers and activities, well worth the time and travel to get a "brain dump" on our favorite president with like-minded friends!

Danny and his wife, Teresa, have two sons. Teresa, who is an accountant, is his biggest fan (see above how she suggested he become Lincoln). When they first met and she realized he was an actor, she immediately became his financial manager, even though she first said, "You have no finances to manage." After many years as a "starving artist" as an actor, it was only after morphing into Lincoln that he reached a lucrative level. Lincoln's profound legacy and universal appeal bring forth boundless opportunities. Danny is however a proud seven-time grant recipient honored by the Indiana Arts Commission for theatrical achievement. He also received advanced training from the Chicago Actors Studio.

During his starving artist's period, he also was an on-air radio personality for stations in Florida, Connecticut, and Indianapolis before acting opportunities opened and he became Lincoln.

One of his favorite stories to tell concerns Lincoln's appearance. He will state, "They say opposites attract. Mary and I were both born in Kentucky, but she's short, pudgy and cute, while I'm tall, skinny, and ugly." It is usually followed by cascades of laughter, but frequently a student will yell out, "You're NOT ugly!", or on occasion, "You're not THAT ugly!"

He is fascinated that Lincoln never owned a comb or hairbrush, and never cleaned his teeth until after his marriage. He finds kids are rather amused by goats frolicking in the White House (Nanny and Nanko) as part of those infamous shenanigans committed by Lincoln's boys.

His first recommended book is the magisterial, two-volume *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* by Michael Burlingame. He shines a microscopically detailed spotlight on every aspect of Abe's life and career. Two ethical biographies from William Lee Miller (*Lincoln's Virtues* and *The Duty of a Statesman*) are refreshing tonics, illuminating and intriguing.

Respectfully submitted by John Cooper, 740-862-6373

MEET YOUR FELLOW ROOSEVELT

TED ZALEWSKI

Ted Zalewski, life member of ALP, has portrayed Teddy Roosevelt for 30 plus years. He currently lives in Cambridge, MA. He views his part-time portrayal of Teddy Roosevelt as a grand adventure. His odyssey has imbued him with an abundance of passionate feelings held together by joy. Theodore Roosevelt also viewed life as a great adventure.

Ted grew up in the Land of Lincoln in Stone Park, IL. Once as a little boy, he gazed up to the statue of Lincoln, standing tall in Lincoln Park, Chicago.



He attended Grant Elementary School, where he saw the portraits of Grant and Lincoln hanging side-by-side. At his Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School, they called themselves “Rough Riders.” In his father’s greenhouse workshop, a metal plaque of Roosevelt’s profile hung on a wall. He memorized TR’s words: “Aggressive fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords.” Is it any wonder, he

later began to portray Teddy?

At the University of Illinois in Chicago he originally focused on pre-med. But he realized his temperament was better suited for other paths. After college he served two years in the National Teachers Corps, working in challenging urban schools, then earned his M.Ed. degree from Loyola University.

Over the years he has been involved in all aspects of education, especially special education. He remembers most vividly his work with angry boys. Most of his career has been in education as a teacher, counselor, and administrator. His focus was on special education. He is now retired.

Ted has two daughters and four grandchildren.

In his mid-thirties he embraced the exciting world of acting and entertainment and performed in many productions and became a method actor. He then created a one-hour dramatic presentation, “Teddy Roosevelt: Mind, Body and Spirit.” While writing

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and doing research he became aware that he might look like the Trust Buster. So, he shaved his beard and left his mustache, put on a pair of spectacles and looked in a mirror. Voila! There was Teddy!

Ted also has developed a one-man play where he plays an acquaintance of Vincent Van Gogh. During this play, he shares the life of Van Gogh.

In 1993 he founded Solo Together—a guild of one-person historical performers based in New England. They are now in their 32nd year. ALP members, Steve and Sharon Wood of New Hampshire, as Abraham and Mary Lincoln, are also members.

When starting Solo Together he became friends with ALP founder, Dan Bassuk, and talked about parallel organizations and exchanged ideas. He would go on to become a life member of ALP.

He attended the first ALP conference in Lexington, KY. He states, “One Lincoln stands tall. Many Lincolns together stand like a grove of sequoias.” He remembers the Lincoln quartet singing Gospel songs. He attended subsequent conferences in Hodgenville, Gettysburg and Springfield, IL. He cherishes his dual membership in ALP and Solo Together.

Below are some of his better experiences:

Shaking hands with fellow Americans in 33 states. He feels their deep appreciation for Teddy’s conservation gifts as well as his love of country.

Shaking the hand of an older Jimmy Stewart.

Speaking before 10,000 citizens at Mt. Rushmore, the heads of Abe and TR side-by-side carved in the rock.

A letter from Idaho from the uncle of a special needs child who wrote, “I want to thank you for saying that my niece is beautiful and that she has the heart of a child. She will treasure your gift of a Teddy bear forever.”

Dressed as TR with his top hat and spectacles at an amusement park in New Hampshire, where the soon-to-graduate high school students thought he was the Monopoly Banker. (He only wore a monocle!).

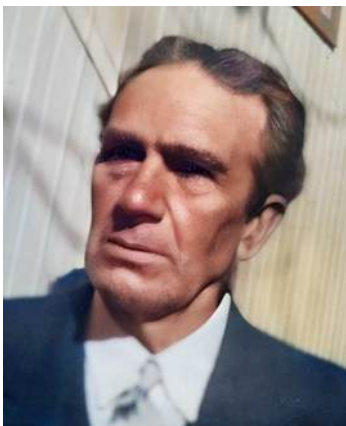
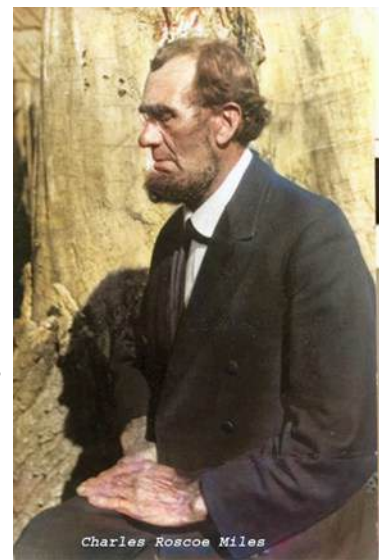
EARLY LINCOLN PORTRAYERS

Charles Roscoe Miles (1871-1951)

Many men have portrayed the Great Emancipator on the legitimate stage and silver screen, even on radio and television, and through other media. While many had started out as actors and readers performing various roles, they included Lincoln as one of their performance credits. Other men would present themselves as Lincoln as part of a social function or public celebration, only taking out their special outfit when called upon. A good number of people fall into this last category, rarely noted outside their respective communities. One man, Charles R. Miles, did attain some national recognition, and was celebrated as such until his death.

Miles was born on 22 November 1871 in Coldwell, OH, the oldest of five children to William H. Miles (1837-1911) and the former Mary Amelia Pepper (1838-1888); he also had three older half-siblings. His father served as a private in Company "T", 176th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and fought at the Battle of Nashville, Tennessee. The family moved to West Virginia, around 1880. Miles would first marry Clara Green in 1891 (no issue), then Anna Viola Scherf (one daughter) in 1900; Hazel May Simmons in 1906 (three sons, three daughters) and finally Lesa Nelson in 1949 (no issue).

With his second marriage, he lived in Chicago, Illinois, as a chauffeur, and by 1921 he lived in Long Beach, California, as an automotive mechanic with his own garage. By 1930, he was divorced and lodging at a boarding house. He had sold his business as well, and the country was entering the Great Depression. These circumstances probably factored into his great decision to be a Lincoln portrayer.



The earliest mention of Miles as Lincoln dates to February 1929, when he appeared at a Knights of Pythias regional function in California presenting interesting bits of Lincoln's life, and later at a high school. He stated that he grew the beard in 1928 after the local Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) post urged him to give a presentation. He was 56 years old. From then on, he traveled the country giving lectures about Lincoln. Actors such as George A. Billings and Judge Bull were also giving presentations across the country. He claimed that he was a second cousin through his maternal

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grandmother to Nancy Hanks, though unproven. Another claim was that he was originally selected to portray the Sixteenth President in Griffith's *Abraham Lincoln*, but was replaced by Walter Huston because he refused to drink liquor from a barrel in one scene, noting that Lincoln was a teetotaler.



Will Rogers, Charles R. Miles and Henry Ford
 Courtesy: HenryFord.org

He traveled over much of the country with his \$20 Studebaker, reciting the Gettysburg Address or giving a lecture on the life of Lincoln. He was at the Chicago World Fair "Century of Progress" celebration, where Judge Charles E. Bull was also presenting Lincoln. He then went to Washington, DC, where people were surprised to see Lincoln still "alive." From there, he went to New York City, giving speeches and auditioning for Lincoln roles. His circumstances required him to share an abandoned bus near the railyards with a Scotchman and a dog. His plight did gain some national press. By July 1934, he had enough money for him and the dog to return to California. In October 1934, he was at Greenfield Village, where his picture was taken with Henry Ford and Will Rogers. Supposedly, Ford gifted him a new car.

By 1940, a review of Lincoln players had listed Charles Roscoe Miles along with Raymond Massey, Henry Fonda, Ralph Ince, Dr. Lincoln Caswell, George Billings, and Leslie Hunt. Keeping his performances more local, he worked in the Southern California area for the rest of his life. He died on 4 September 1951 and was interred at Westminster Memorial Park in Los Angeles. He was a member of the Knights of Pythias and the Lutheran Church.

John M. McKee



THE LINCOLN QUESTION and ANSWERS

QUESTION:

Herndon stated that Lincoln's "ambition was an engine that knew no rest." Describe how that ambition brought him to the presidency and how it evolved during his term of office. Mary and their son Robert also had their respective ambitions. You may also answer the question based on any of your other character portrayals.



Abraham Lincoln's ambition to achieve and excel was nurtured by his stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnson Lincoln and by his voracious reading, which included historical accounts about our nation's founding fathers. His rise to political greatness might have floundered in 1849 after his unimpressive one-term in Congress, however the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 ignited his fading political ambition. Lincoln abhorred the Act's principle of "popular sovereignty," promoted by the Act's sponsor, US Senator Stephen A. Douglas, because it allowed an expansion of slavery. This offended Lincoln's devotion to inalienable rights expressed in the Declaration of Independence. Lincoln knew he could best fight what he called the "monstrous injustice of slavery" if he was a political success. His political resurrection found an audience when he gave a speech opposing the Kansas-Nebraska Act on October 16, 1854, in Peoria, Illinois, followed by his seven debates with Senator Douglas in the 1858 US Senate contest. Lincoln lost that contest, however, those debates led to his Cooper Union Speech, propelling him to the Republican nomination and attaining the Presidency in 1860.

As President, Lincoln was more than just one of the many opponents of slavery, he became the emancipator. His ambition was to not only save the Union, but to fulfil its promise of universal equality. In his Gettysburg Address, he harkened back to the fundamental rights embodied in the Declaration of Independence and called for devotion to a "new birth of freedom." It was the pro-slavery Kansas-Nebraska Act that ignited Lincoln's relentless ambition and launched his political path to becoming our greatest President.

Mr. Glenn Murray

Adjunct Professor

University at Buffalo Law School



Understanding the role of ambition in Lincoln's behavior would change the popular misconception about his apparent fatalism. In Sherwood's *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, and Ford's *Young Mister Lincoln*, the young lawyer is shown as someone being pulled against his preferences and toward greater destiny. In fact, the French title for Ford film was *Vers Sa Destinée (Toward His Destiny)* directly alluded to the theme of destiny that pervaded the movie. In the Sherwood play/film, William Herndon even chastises Lincoln for trying to avoid marrying Mary Todd and thus his destiny for greatness. Lincoln's sorrows were likened to Christ's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, wanting to avoid

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the reckoning but willing to accept it for the greater good.

Yet, ambition was a driving force in not just Lincoln's life, but the spirit that animated most Americans of every economic status. While the typical description of his pre-presidential life was one of a series of failures, one should view his life as one of the constant applications of innovation, of never giving up. He tried military service, being a postmaster, merchant, surveyor, and a state legislator. (The best sales representatives are not those who give up when a door shuts in the face, but immediately goes to the next house, and continues the process until they have realized their sales quota.) Recalling the success of his first experience with the legal process at age 18, he believed that as an attorney he could realize the reward of honest labor, wealth, and public esteem. In Mary, he found a willing partner, one who not only believed in his potential, but worked to polish the roughness of his manners, maintain financial discipline, and prepare him for higher office.

By 1851, the Lincolns had paid off their debts and he earned respect as a trial and appellate attorney, and desired as a public speaker. Even his dying father had to acknowledge that he achieved more success than he had. His father-in-law, Robert Todd, was the model of the man who realized his ambitions, and in that respect was the one to imitate. He might have continued this path of being a wealthy practicing attorney, had not the Kansas-Nebraska Act stirred a different restlessness in his soul – the abolition of slavery, so that his children would never have to come of age in a society divided between slave and free.

He began by campaigning for other Whigs who opposed slavery but left that party in favor of the more radical Republican Party that was emerging in the Midwest. He worked in that state political system, first trying to get the party's nomination for public office, then would support another candidate for better chances of a party victory, thus building his influence. He ran twice for the U.S. Senate, though losing, was playing the "long game." He weakened his Democratic opponent's base in the South, and taking a more moderate position of not allowing the extension of slavery in the territories, he was able to secure a broader base of support across the nation than what any other Republican contender could have garnered.

His ambition was not just to become President, but to use the presidency to make those changes he felt were necessary for a society to offer greater opportunities for its people. In that respect, I believe he did realize his ambitions.

John M. McKee

DAYTON CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS

Lincoln's Leadership Ideas – A Source?

Those who attended the ALP Convention in Dayton got the book *Lincoln: The Servant Leader* by Kim Villalva and had the chance to hear the author's presentation drawn from her book. I would like to have asked the author – Did Lincoln get his ideas on how to be a leader from any source beyond his intuition or natural genius?

I do not know how Kim Villalva would answer (I missed my chance to pose the question). If I were answering that question, I would say that a likely source was the Bible, specifically what Jesus taught his disciples about leadership. We know that Lincoln was familiar with the Bible. Kim Villalva emphasized the humility of Lincoln. Jesus taught by precept that leaders ought to be humble, as recorded at Luke 9:46-48 and Mark 9:33-37 and Matthew 18:1-6, and Jesus taught humility by example as recorded in John 13:2-16. Jesus performed an act of hospitality customary in that time and place usually performed by low-status individuals, often by slaves.

Jesus taught that a leader ought to be a servant, as recorded in Mark 10:35-45 and in Matthew 20:20-28 and that greatness demands service to others –

“... whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister ...” Matt 20:26-28

By Joe Woodard

A new, unique bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln is added to the Dayton VA campus. (Spectrum News 1/ Alese Underwood)

Abraham Lincoln statue unveiled on Dayton VA campus

By Alese Underwood, Dayton

PUBLISHED 5:20 PM ET Sep. 16, 2024

DAYTON, Ohio — After years of planning, a new and unique bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln now has a permanent home on the grounds of the Dayton VA Medical Center Campus.

What You Need To Know

A large bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln was unveiled at the Dayton VA Medical Center campus. The statue depicts Lincoln signing the legislation that established a network of national facilities to care for Civil War soldiers.

The work was created by Dayton artist Mike Major.

The VA broke ground on the project this past February.

The statue depicts Lincoln signing the legislation that established a network of national facilities to care for Civil War soldiers.

The Dayton VA Medical Center is one of the three oldest health care facilities in what is now the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The ripple effect is the more than 170 VA Hospitals that followed.

“So it really represents centuries of taking care of our veterans and so celebrating our past and really looking forward to the future and all of our current veterans, future veterans, and all of the great things that we can do to support them and their families,” said U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Chief of Staff Meg Kabat.

The statue was sculpted by Dayton artist Mike Major, who studied hundreds of images of Lincoln to help get it right.

This project came to life thanks to the American Veterans Heritage Center, the Lincoln Society of Dayton and more than \$750,000 in private donations.

Article (w/video) at <https://spectrumnews1.com/oh/columbus/news/2024/09/16/abraham-lincoln-statue-unveiled-on-dayton-va-campus>



Dayton VA celebrates new Lincoln statue

Credit: Jim Noelker Hundreds of people watched the unveiling of the Lincoln statue at the Dayton VA Medical Center Monday September 16, 2024. Jim Noelker/Staff

Dayton Daily News

By Thomas Gnau and Jim Noelker

Sept 17, 2024

Friends of the Dayton VA Medical Center and its surrounding 450-acre campus gathered Monday to unveil a statue of the architect of the nation's VA system.

A statue of President Abraham Lincoln, created by Urbana sculptor Mike Major, is now at home at the campus, near Ohio and Kentucky avenues.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Chief of Staff Margaret Kabat, who was in Dayton for the unveiling, enjoyed the moment.

"I'm excited to see the real thing," Kabat said of the statue. "We're doing this really to celebrate the entire Dayton community coming together to support veterans."

The Dayton VA campus is one the nation's oldest centers of care for veterans. Lincoln in 1865, in the Civil War's waning days, signed the legislation creating a system of soldier's homes to care for veterans, and the Dayton Soldier's Home was one of the first three initially authorized.

Credit: Jim Noelker Sons on the American Revolution attended the unveiling ceremony of the Lincoln Memorial Statue at the Dayton VA Monday September 16, 2024. Jim Noelker/Staff



That home became what today is the Dayton VA Medical Center and its surrounding array of services and residences. Today, the campus cares for more than 60,000 veterans in the Dayton area, western Ohio and Indiana. "We're celebrating our past and really looking forward to our future," Kabat said.

It was in Lincoln's second inaugural address that he charged the nation with the responsibility of caring for veterans and their families — saying we must “care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan.”

The statue has been years in the making. In 2018, an organization called the American Veterans Heritage Center, working with the Lincoln Society of Dayton, launched its efforts to erect a bronze statue of Lincoln on the campus.

***A statue of President Abraham Lincoln awaits a Monday unveiling.
Dayton VA photograph.***

Major has depicted Lincoln, pen in hand, signing legislation establishing the National Soldiers' and Sailors' Asylum for Civil War veterans.

“This is the second Lincoln monument that I've had the privilege to do,” Major said Monday. “I feel like Dayton is sort of my home city. I was born here ... and I went to the Dayton Art Institute for six years. This is something that was really personally important to me.”

Major also created the Lincoln statue that was placed on Dayton Courthouse Square in 2016.

American Veterans Heritage Center president Bill DeFries said the statue will be a place for reflection and a place to attract tourists to see the National VA History Center and the Dayton National Cemetery on campus. (see <https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/project-to-build-va-history-center-in-dayton-has-61-million-fundraising-target/7U253F4BCFGR3JULTH5PHKUWH4/>)

Article at <https://www.daytondailynews.com/local/dayton-va-celebrates-new-lincoln-statue/5JCSYTANVEVG43JCHMVI72HWKBQ/>



The Association of Lincoln Presenters
2025 Annual Conference
April 24-27, 2025 * Kalamazoo, MI

From late September 1855 through late July 1857, during a time when Abraham Lincoln was clearly concerned about the increasing political tensions in the nation, not to mention being very busy with his law practice, he apparently only left Illinois on one occasion. That one trip was to **Kalamazoo, MI** in late August 1856. Lincoln obviously felt that a trip to Kalamazoo was important, and you are likewise invited to visit Kalamazoo in April 2025 for the ALP's 29th annual convention. We will enjoy learning together about the Lincolns and their times, renewing old acquaintances and friendships while also making new ones, and engaging with a local community which is proud of its Lincoln connection and excited to host the ALP.

Conference Host: Kevin Wood: abe@mrlincoln.com, 708-979-3093 (cell), 517-920-4849 (home)

Registration: The registration fee for the full conference is \$150 for ALP members or \$175 for non-members. You may access the online registration form directly at <https://forms.office.com/r/am44Aag0fr> or via the ALP website and Facebook page. If you are unable to register online, please contact Kevin Wood. Registration closes on **March 31** (note that this is for the conference registration; the hotel registration cut-off is earlier on March 24). If you will be attending only part of the conference and would like a discounted fee, please contact Kevin Wood to discuss.

To pay your registration fee by check, please make the check out to "Association of Lincoln Presenters" and mail it to:

Association of Lincoln Presenters
Attn.: Mr. Murray Cox, Treasurer
3979 S. Bailey Rd.
Wabash, IN 46992-7984

To pay by credit/debit card, please contact Murray at 260-563-7126 or indianalincoln@hotmail.com to discuss, but note that there may be a service fee with this option.

Hotel: Our host hotel will be the **Home2 Suites by Hilton** located at 303 N. Rose St., Kalamazoo, MI 49007, tel. 269-276-0699 (shared entrance with the Hilton Garden Inn). Hotel reservations may be made until **March 24** at the link below in order to get the group rate of \$149/night plus 5% tax = \$156.45/night. The price includes a hot breakfast buffet, free WiFi, free use of the fitness center and indoor swimming pool, and a discounted parking fee of \$10/day with in/out privileges.

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/azokdht-abe-fabfc8c7-1a93-489b-82df-7d88607f5cb8/>

IMPORTANT: The default setting for this link is for arrival on Wed., April 23 (the day BEFORE the conference begins) and departure on Sun., April 27. If your arrival and/or departure dates are different, you will need to change these; after selecting your room option, click on "Edit Stay" to change the dates. Also, the room rate shown will include both a 6% sales tax and a 5% accommodation tax; when actually making the payment at the conference, you should only be charged the 5% tax, thus a total rate of \$156.45/night rather than \$165.39.

If you will be traveling solo and would be interested in having a roommate, please note this on the conference registration form and we will put you in contact with others seeking the same.

Travel: Kalamazoo is served by train (Amtrak) and bus (Greyhound, Trailways, and

Indian Trails) service, with direct routes from/to Detroit and Chicago; the train/bus station is located just two blocks from the host hotel. The closest airport is the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek International Airport which is served by Delta and American. Other airports include Gerald Ford (Grand Rapids) (50 minutes away), Detroit Metro (2 hours), and Chicago O'Hare and Chicago Midway (2.5 hours).

Meals: Your hotel registration fee includes a free hot breakfast buffet each morning. Dinner on Friday and Saturday evenings will be buffet-style with various options and will take place in the hotel restaurant (reserved for our group). Lunch on Saturday will be a boxed lunch. Thursday dinner and Friday lunch will be on your own, and a list of local restaurants will be included in your welcome packet. If you have dietary restrictions (allergies, vegetarian/vegan, etc.) please note them on the conference registration form.

Silent Auction/Consignement Shop: We will have both a silent auction and a consignment shop to help cover conference expenses. For silent auction items, 100% of the funds will go to the ALP; for the consignment shop – generally period clothing and accessories – 25% of the funds will go to the ALP with 75% retained by the seller. Both will be set up in the hotel conference room, the silent auction as of Thursday late afternoon and the consignment shop as of mid-day Friday. Both will end on Saturday evening at 10:00 pm.

Weather: Late April in Michigan can bring beautiful spring weather, but it can also bring cold and snow, so please check the forecast ahead of time and come prepared.

Photographer: Tom George Davison will again be our official conference photographer and is expected to be present at the entire conference. He will make photos available for sale after the conference via his website.

Local Sponsors/Collaborators: The conference is being sponsored in part by the Kalamazoo Lincoln Institute, which has provided a generous contribution which will cover many of the conference expenses. The conference is also being supported by the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, the Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo, and Discover Kalamazoo (the Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau).

Conference Schedule

Thursday, April 24, 2025

*Note on attire: Period attire is optional on Thursday but encouraged for the evening session.

Beginning at 3:00 pm: Hotel check-in and conference check-in (hotel lobby)

3:00 – 5:00 pm: ALP Board Meeting (hotel conference room)

5:00 – 7:00 pm: Dinner (on own at local restaurants); free time

7:00 – 9:00 pm: Welcome; Trivia with the Lincolns; Lecture: “Lincoln’s Winning Smile” by Cameron Brown (KLI President)

Friday, April 25, 2025

*Note on attire: Modern (non-period) attire is recommended for Friday morning, especially for the ladies, as the two morning venues are limited in space. Attendees may wish to change into period attire for the afternoon session at the museum and/or for the ball in the evening.

7:00 – 8:30 am: Breakfast (hotel breakfast room)

8:30 – 9:45 am: Lecture/Panel on “Lincoln and Native Americans” by Dr. Scott Stabler, Professor of History and Social Studies at Grand Valley State University (Allendale, MI) and Matthew Zwart, Associate Attorney, Lennon Miller PLC (Kalamazoo)

9:45 – 12:00 noon: Trip to Schoolcraft, MI to tour Dr. Nathan Thomas home (Underground Railroad Museum)

12:00 noon – 1:30 pm: Lunch (on own at local restaurants) / free time

1:30 pm – 5:00 pm: Kalamazoo Valley Museum: tour; Lecture on “Who Had Tea with Lincoln; Why Did Lincoln Come to Kalamazoo?” by Tom George (KLI Vice President); and “Talking Shop: The Fine Points of Being Lincoln (or Any Other Historical Character)”: a discussion (“bull session”) to ask questions, share ideas, etc. about all aspects of historical re-enacting

5:00 – 6:00 pm: free time

6:00 pm – 7:00 pm: Dinner (hotel restaurant)

7:00 – 7:30 pm: free time

7:30 – 9:00 pm: Civil War Ball (hotel restaurant)

Saturday, April 26, 2025

*Note on attire: Period attire is appropriate (and expected) for this day, especially as we will be having group photos taken.

7:00 – 8:30 am: Breakfast (hotel breakfast room)

9:00 am – 12:15 pm: Ladies’ Library Association (LLA): Lecture: “The Role of Jackson, MI in the Founding of the Republican Party” by Linda Hass (local historian/author based in Jackson); Introduction of new Lincoln book: “Texting Lincoln: A semi-true tale of an Illinois prairie lawyer’s return to Kalamazoo” by the author Tony Ettwein; Lecture on Ladies’ Library Association of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Ladies Soldiers Aid Society and their Sanitary Fair by Sharon Carlson (local historian/professor/librarian/archivist); Lecture: “Kalamazoo County and the Civil War – How One Michigan County Supported, and Didn’t Support, the War Effort” by Gary

Gibson (local author); optional tour of LLA building

12:30 – 2:00 pm: Kalamazoo Nonprofit Advocacy Coalition (KNAC): separate men’s and women’s luncheons/sessions:

Men: Lunch; Lecture: “Engineers in the Civil War” / “The Story of the First Michigan Engineers and Mechanics” by Brian Conroy (historical re-enactor)

Women: Lunch; Mary Lincoln Business Meeting; and portrayal of Mary Harlan Lincoln by Laura Keyes

2:00 – 3:00 pm: Bronson Park: tour including group photos in front of Lincoln statue

3:00 – 5:00 pm: ALP Business Meeting (at KNAC)

5:00 – 5:30 pm: free time

5:30 – 6:30 pm: Dinner (hotel restaurant)

6:30 – 7:00 pm: free time

7:00 – 9:00 pm: The Joliffe Theatre in the Epic Center (public invited): Sojourner Truth portrayal by Madelyn Porter; “Chronological Lincoln” play featuring various ALP members

The silent auction

and consignment shop will both close at 10:00 pm.

Sunday, April 27, 2025

*Note on attire: Period attire is optional on Sunday

7:00 – 8:30 am: Breakfast (hotel breakfast room)

9:00 – 10:00 am: Worship Service (hotel conference room “Rose 3”)

*hotel check-out by 11:00 am



TRIVIALITIES

The Ensign was performed in Chicago 1899 featuring a young actor to play the role of Lincoln. As the part had very few lines, his performance was noted by his effective use of “registering.” He would later become a producer and director, and this experience influenced his use of Lincoln in a show he produced. This person who would later become more well known was **David Wark Griffith**.

Griffith was performing as a cast member of the Neill Alhambra Stock Company performing in Chicago. Mr. Neill was impressed by Griffith’s use of pantomime, or “registering.” In *Birth of a Nation* (1915), the actor portraying Lincoln had to express a range of emotions, especially in a pardon scene. Griffith felt that the balance of action and speech was achieved in *Abraham Lincoln* (1930).

Next Quiz: Films covering the life of Lincoln would have different actors portraying him as a child as well as an adult. A standard film would retain the same actor for all adult portrayals. As an adult, the same actor, with make-up artfully applied, would portray Lincoln as a young man, then later aged with a full beard. Raymond Massey, Hal Holbrook and Benjamin Walker would portray him in the different adult phases. From the silent era through the Second World War, Hollywood studios would recycle a typical scene, such as the Gettysburg Address, rather than hire an actor to portray the President when producing short subject films (between 30 and 60 minutes) covering American history. One such narrative in 1939 recycled scenes from different Lincoln portrayals. The film’s original estimated length was 138 minutes but was reduced to 90 minutes in a re-release.

If you can identify the film, how many different portrayals were used in this film?

- a. Two
- b. Three
- c. Four
- d. Five
- e. Eight

(Answer in next newsletter)

John M. McKee

SUMMARY OF LINCOLN DAYS AT HODGENVILLE, KY

October 5-6, 2024

The Lincoln Days Festival was held on October 5. The weather was perfect, and the crowds were tremendous.

The Look-Alike contest was good, with 6 Mr. Lincolns and 5 Mrs. Lincolns.

The winners of the Abraham Lincoln Look-Alike contest were:

1. Carl Swick - (West Virginia)
2. Whit McMahan - ALP Member
3. Tom Wright - ALP Member

The winners of the Mary Lincoln Look-Alike contest were:

1. Mary Elliott - ALP Member
2. Susan Miller - ALP Member
3. Debbie Grise - (Kentucky)

Both newcomers were recruited to be ALP members.

Other ALP Members that were present were: Julie Cope-McMahan, Sue Wright, Dennis Boggs, Vern Risty, Joan Howard, Larry Elliott, Rick Yarbrough, Jacob Truax, and Laura Schlesinger. If I have omitted any ALP members - my apologies.

Susan V. Miller

108 Hidden Meadow Lane

Nicholasville, KY 40356



Did the Slaves Free Themselves?

by Kevin Wood * December 12, 2024

A common trend among modern historians is to assert that the slaves in the United States “freed themselves” during the Civil War, as opposed to “being freed” by external forces such as the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union victory in the war, and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution. For example, a historian whom I know said in a radio interview in 2020: “You study the history of the Civil War, African-Americans freed themselves. So many slaves kept escaping into Union lines that it forced Lincoln to have to deal with ... the issue of slavery.”

Some slaves did “free themselves” is true, even before the outbreak of the war, either by purchasing their freedom or – as people such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman did – by fleeing their masters. But for every slave who was successful in running away, many others were not and were recaptured or even killed. It is also true that once the war began and as the Union forces advanced, more and more slaves were able to gain their freedom. The slaves who escaped harmed the Confederate slaveocracy in myriad ways: by transferring their manpower to the Union, by joining the Union military, by serving as guides and spies, etc., all of which helped to bring about an end to slavery and thus gain and preserve their own freedom.

But this brings us back to the question: *Why* were they able to do all this, at this time? Why hadn't they escaped in large numbers in the 1840s or the 1740s or the 1640s? The reason they were able to do all this during the Civil War was that the political, social, and military situation had dramatically changed. External forces which had previously prevented their escape from bondage had evolved so much that the slaves were now enabled to “free themselves”.

Beginning with Lincoln's election in November 1860, followed by the secession of the first seven Confederate states, the outbreak of the war in April 1861, and then the secession of four additional states. As the war intensified, Congress passed two Confiscation Acts in August 1861 and July 1862 which authorized Union forces to seize rebel property, including slaves. This meant that slaves escaping to Union lines would no longer be returned to their owners, and therefore provided a huge incentive for them to make the attempt. Congress also abolished slavery in the District of Columbia in April 1862, freeing about 3,000 slaves.

Lincoln issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862, giving notice to the Confederate states that if they didn't return to the Union by January 1, he would declare their slaves to be free. On January 1, he issued the final Proclamation, in which he also dropped references to compensation for slaveowners and to voluntary colonization of the slaves, and added the provision that freed slaves could serve in the Union military in non-combat positions. The war was no longer just about preserving the Union; it was now also about ridding the nation of slavery. Lincoln's proclamation declared that the “government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of” the slaves. There is no evidence that the slaves objected to the government “recognizing and maintaining” their freedom; they didn't say: “don't bother, we can free ourselves”.

The next step was to allow black men to serve in combat, which as Frederick Douglass noted, would be a sure path to eventual citizenship. All the while, the Lincoln administration was prodding the border states to emancipate their slaves. And the final blow would be the 13th Amend-

ment, abolishing slavery and involuntary servitude from the whole nation; this was passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and sent to the states for ratification.

As all these events transpired, making a successful escape from slavery increasingly more likely, more and more slaves made the attempt. But again, the critical point is that *without* these events, *without* these external forces, nothing would have changed from the situation of the 1850s, when relatively few slaves were able to escape their bondage. It wasn't that the slaves in the 1850s, or the 1840s, or the 1830s, or all the way back to the 1620s, didn't want to be free or didn't know that they could be free if they would simply "free themselves". No, the fact is that they were not *able* to free themselves; what was missing was those external forces.

Consider the Hebrew slaves in Egypt in the time of Moses. Why were they enslaved for more than 400 years? Didn't they know that they could just "free themselves" any time they wanted to? No, it took some kind of external force; in their case, a miraculous intervention on the part of God.

Saying that slaves can free themselves masks the horror of slavery, and in particular American chattel slavery as practiced in the English colonies and later the newly formed United States. After all, if slaves can free themselves any time they want, then slavery must not be such a horrible thing.

In all this, historians love to talk about "agency", that by taking matters into their hands, the slaves had some degree of control over their situations, that they still had some dignity. Otherwise, it seems so demeaning, so dehumanizing. But that is precisely the point: slavery truly is dehumanizing; it does reduce one's dignity; it does mean that one doesn't have control over one's life. The job of a historian isn't to make people feel good about themselves or their situations; it is to discover and impart the truth about history, discomfiting as that truth might be to modern sensibilities.

When it comes to learning about the hard truths about slavery, about what it really meant to be a slave, and about what it meant to be delivered from bondage, it would be best to learn from those who experienced both the horror of slavery and the joy of deliverance. I would learn from those very people who had experienced it all for themselves, such as those former slaves who funded the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, DC (a copy of which was removed by the City of Boston in 2020 following protests) and who understood that without the outside assistance of others – Lincoln, the Congress, the abolitionists, and millions of Union soldiers and sailors, 350,000 of whom would give their lives for the cause – they would still be in the shackles of slavery, for they could not "free themselves".

In addition, it should be noted that inaccurate ideas about our history don't just affect our understanding of the past; they can also distort our understanding of our own times. It is extremely well documented that various forms of slavery exist in our own day, from forced child labor to human trafficking. And someone who believes that slaves in the past did or could have freed themselves will be more likely to think: why don't these people in our own times just free themselves? They could do so if they really wanted to. Adopting such a view would naturally lead to a belief that the vital work of governments, non-governmental organizations, and individual people to fight against modern forms of slavery aren't really needed, as they could just "free themselves". And that would be a great tragedy.

[This is an abridged version; to read the whole article, see <https://www.mrlincoln.com/blog>.]

VIRTUAL GATHERINGS

As was announced at the ALP Conference in Dayton, OH, earlier this year, our Association will host virtual gatherings about once a quarter. These gatherings, which will be hosted on Zoom, will keep our Members connected throughout the year, as well as giving us the opportunity to continue learning about the Lincoln Family and the Civil War Era. Laura Keyes will be the first hostess/moderator.

The first virtual meet-up was held on Sunday, 18 August, and we welcomed Dr. Bruce Allardice, historian and author. He gave us a presentation entitled "Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory: The Ten Worst Civil War Generals."

Our second virtual meet-up was held on Sunday, 13 October, and we welcomed Jade Kastel, Director of Library Services for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Her presentation was called "Tales from the Vault: Music Instruments and Sheet Music in the ALPLM Collection."

The third virtual meet-up will be held on **Sunday, 5 January at 6:30pm CENTRAL**. There will be time to visit with your fellow ALP members for a short time before the program begins promptly at the top of the hour. Our guest speaker will be Stuart Christie of the Dedham Museum & Archive. One set of Civil War battlefield letters, from the three Lathrop brothers, have been compiled into a book entitled *My Dear Mother: Civil War Letters to Dedham from the Lathrop Brothers*. Stuart Christie, who transcribed these letters, will talk about this amazing family, whose members were the descendants of the first Puritan minister in Situate and some of whom continued to live in Dedham into the mid-20th century. He will also discuss the letters themselves and will read some of the highlights of these letters and share the findings he made while going through these letters.

Once again, **you must register for this event**. It will not be recorded for later viewing. Follow the link below to register. If you have questions, please contact Laura Keyes: LFKeyes@gmail.com

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: Jan 5, 2025 06:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7598612345>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Laura Keyes

Visit [Historic Voices](#) on Facebook

ITEMS FOR PURCHASE

Patches

The Association has two patches that are available to ALP members. The newest patch pictures Mary Lincoln in profile with her signature flower wreath in her hair. It is a 100% embroidered patch with a lovely lavender background. The logo of the Association of Lincoln Presenters is available in a multicolor patch. The distinctive pose of Lincoln is wearing a blue frock coat, vest, white shirt, and black tie.

Both these patches can be sewn onto shirts, polos, hats, and jackets. They cost \$4 each. Email Susan Miller at susanviolamiller@gmail.com to order the patches.



Conference Pictures

Once again, Tom Davison was our “official” conference photographer. He started taking photos on Thursday evening and didn’t stop until the last minute of the conference. Thank you, Tom!

You can find his images at:

<https://www.davisonimages.com/Events/Abraham-Lincoln-Presenters-Conference-Dayton-April-27th-2024>

There is a green tab over to the right where you can purchase photos.

Lincoln Statue for Sale

I was contacted by Jan Nossal from Independence, Ohio (near Cleveland) about a statue that belonged to her late brother, Ken Cash. This statue is one of two made by the artist (one for himself and one for Ken). It is life size and very lifelike. The face and hands are made of hard material while the body is made of soft but firm material. The statue comes apart in the middle for transportation. It is mounted on a board, but also detaches from the board.

I visited Jan and viewed the statue up close. It is an excellent likeness and quite impressive. It is definitely at least 6 foot 4 inches (with size 14 feet). Jan is asking \$850.00 for the statue.

If you are interested in acquiring this statue, please contact Jan directly. Email: jann4433@gmail.com or phone: 440-567-1500.

You could purchase the statue for yourself or if you wish, buy it and donate it to a museum of your choice. It would be a great addition to a history museum.

If anyone wishes to purchase it but cannot go to pick it up any time soon, I am willing to pick it up and store it until you can retrieve it. I could also arrange to bring it to the conference in Kalamazoo if that would be a convenient meeting place.

I live three hours from Independence. If you are interested, try to call as soon as possible. She will hold it for one of our members for a couple of weeks, before deciding on some other way to dispose of it. She thinks her brother would like to see it go to a Lincoln or a museum.

If you have questions, please contact Jan directly.

John Cooper, 740-862-6373, 10-26-24



c/o Dean Dorrell
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If anyone wishes to host the 2027 conference, we need your ideas by end of January so we can prepare to have you present it at the Kalamazoo conference in April. You need to contact our conference committee as soon as possible to make your proposal known. Our conference committee is Kevin Wood (517-920-4849; abe@mrlincoln.com) and Joe Woodard (217-932-5378; jvwoodard@proton.me). The Conference Committee must review your preliminary proposal to assure you are on the right track. They can also offer suggestions to help you plan. At present we have one possible site in Buffalo, NY. It would be nice to have a few sites to consider.

John Cooper, 740-862-6373, 10-15-24