



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

Another successful conference is in the books. Kevin Wood and his wife, Joanne, served as wonderful hosts for ALP in Kalamazoo in April. Everything was planned perfectly and ran on schedule all weekend long. We had an impressive group of local scholars who served as lecturers on some very interesting topics such as "Lincoln's Winning Smile," "Lincoln and Native Americans," "Why Did Lincoln Come to Kalamazoo?" "Jackson, MI, and Its Role in Founding the Republican Party," and "Engineers in the Civil War." Of special interest to me was "Lincoln's Winning Smile." Our speaker did extensive research and quoted every statement he could find from Lincoln's contemporaries where they commented on Lincoln's smile (which we know is never recorded in a photo).

We concluded the conference with a guest presenter with Sojourner Truth and then the chronological Lincoln stories with 14 of our members (8 Abrahams, 4 Marys, and Jefferson Davis and Gen. Grant) sharing five-minute vignettes of Lincoln's life. This evening was open to the public, and we may have had about 60 people present from the community. The fact that the local Lincoln Society were excited to have us with them was obvious. Many of their members spent most of the weekend with us and they rolled out the red carpet.

It's not too early to begin thinking about next year's conference. Larry and Mary Elliott will be hosting us in Bardstown, KY next April 9-12th. Although the schedule is still being planned, expect visits to Hodgenville (Birthplace) and Knob Creek (second home) as well as a Civil War Museum, a railway museum, and My Old Kentucky Home (Stephen Foster).

Once again, let me remind the members about our virtual meetings. Laura Keyes has made a great effort to plan these and to find speakers for these meetings. We have been averaging about 15 members each time. Not only do we get an educational presentation on a subject of interest to us, but we also get a 30-minute social visit with our friends who we used to get to see just once a year. You should all be receiving a few emails within the two months leading up to each virtual meeting. Next meeting is in August. It would be nice to see attendance up to 20-25 or more members. Contact Laura Keyes if any of you have questions.

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

MEET YOUR FELLOW LINCOLN WHIT MCMAHON

Whit McMahon of Murfreesboro, TN (where the battle of Stones River was fought) has been an ALP member since 2004 and upgraded to life member in 2006. He was recently elected to a three-year term on the ALP board. He was also presented with the ALP Excellence Award at our Dayton conference in 2024. Whit has performed as Lincoln for 22 years and now often performs jointly with his wife, Julie Cope-McMahon as Mary Lincoln. They have appeared as many as 22 times in a given year. Whit



and Julie have been married since 2022. He acquired two stepsons and two step granddaughters with Julie.

Whit currently serves as an Account Coordinator with CBIZ Benefits and Insurance Services of Tennessee where he is licensed in the insurance industry. He aids remote service teams in providing employee insurance benefits to employers. Whit holds a B.S. Degree in Computer Science (1986) and has completed post-graduate work (1988). He enjoys gardening, developing printable puzzles, hik-

ing, kayaking, croquet, and pickleball. Of course, this is in addition to his enjoyment presenting Abraham Lincoln to adult and children's groups. A long time ago he played piano and sang in the church choir.

Whit has attended 18 ALP conferences. He uses the knowledge gained from attending these conferences to further develop his presentations. Walking in Lincoln's footsteps helps him to better understand his character

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One of his favorite Lincoln stories he used at the 2023 “Lincoln Days” in Hodgenville, KY. As Abraham Lincoln, he touted Lincoln's wrestling skills before the audience and challenged “any man in town” to take him on in a wrestling match on center stage for a five-dollar award. No doubt, Lincoln loved to wrestle, and his favorite style was grappling. One account stated that out of the 300 times in which Lincoln wrestled over a 12-year period, he only lost once to Private Lorenzo Dow Thompson. This was a skit, so he had already chosen a mock wrestling competitor in advance.

In 2019 in Hodgenville, he did a portrayal of Abraham Lincoln at the Disney World Hall of Presidents where Lincoln is portrayed by an animatronic robot. But instead of the robot playing Lincoln, Lincoln was playing the robot. At the end, the robot malfunctioned and was forced to abort and reboot. It won him 2nd place. At a another one, while making a speech, his “Lincoln character” was interrupted by a foot soldier carrying a telegram message from the War Department that the rebels were gaining ground at the Battle of Perryville. He was forced to suddenly abort his speech and inform the audience that he must return immediately to Washington City. He won 1st place that year.

It is a challenge to portray Lincoln because there are many facets to Lincoln's personality. The longer he portrays him, the better he feels he knows him and can better portray his likeness before audiences.

Whit recommends two books about Lincoln: *Killing Lincoln*, by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard, and *Team of Rivals*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Finally, Whit states that he has been fascinated with Abraham Lincoln since he was a 12-year-old boy, visiting his birthplace in Hodgenville, KY with his family on several occasions during his youth. In the early 1970s, he had no knowledge of presenting Lincoln and looked nothing like him, but he continued to be drawn to Lincoln during his college years. Since God is always busy molding our characters, it seems that portraying Abraham Lincoln has become a divine calling.

Respectfully submitted by John Cooper, 740-862-6373

EARLY LINCOLN PORTRAYERS

Rev Lincoln Hollister Caswell (1872-1939)

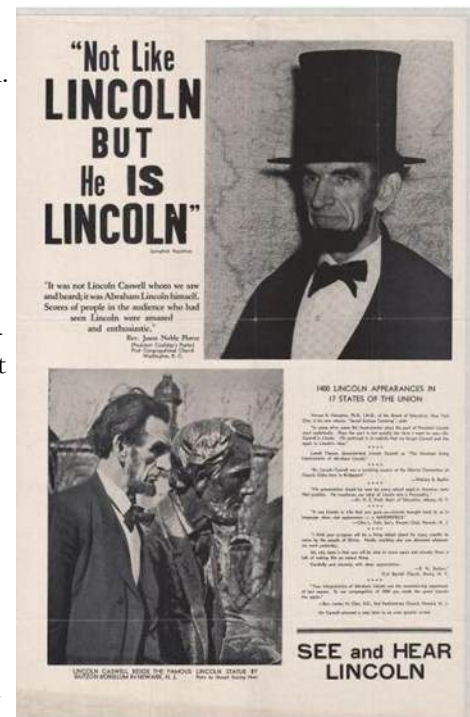
I first heard of Rev. Caswell after joining ALP, and only then knew very little. After I decided to research him for our newsletter, I learned that his effect on portrayals rivaled those on stage and screen. I wish to share with you an overview of his life, his impact, and perhaps his crowning moment portraying the Great Emancipator.

Lincoln Hollister Caswell was born on May 3, 1872, in Plymouth, New York, to the Rev. Edwin Caswell, a leading minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the former Mary Hollister. He was their only child. His father accepted a call to serve in Southern California, bringing his family with him. Young Lincoln grew, reaching 6'4". His lean frame did not necessarily suit him for athletics, but he did earn a Ph.B. at the University of Southern California in 1896. He later met Mabel Chamblin whose family moved from Galesburg, IL; she had earned a degree in speech from Northwestern University's Cumnock School of Oratory (now School of Communications), graduating in 1897. They married later that year.

The couple then moved to the Northeast where he attended Drew Theological Seminary, earning a diploma in English. He was ordained a minister and served as pastor to a succession of congregations over the next few years in the New York Metropolitan area. In 1903, their first child was stillborn. A few years later they had another child, and despite her promise as a musician, died after brief illness in 1929. They had adopted a daughter who grew to adulthood and died over a decade ago. She had a daughter with whom I have corresponded.

He was a powerful orator in the pulpit, active in church causes, and attentive to his congregants' needs. While he made references to Presidents Lincoln and Garfield, these were in context with President McKinley's assassination. The earliest known sermon dedicated to the 16th president was on the centennial observance in 1909. While he repeated this for a few more years, the spread of motion pictures was beginning to reach larger swaths of people. Caswell would use the entertainment of the stage and cinema to engage his parishioners, foreseeing its potential for educational purposes. While Frank McGlynn, Sr., was performing in Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* on Broadway, Ralph Ince made his final appearance as the President in *The Highest Law*. Not only was the film shown in Caswell's church, Ince also gave a lecture about it afterwards. Perhaps meeting this actor and director made him think about his potential to reach audiences in a different way.

On Monday evening, February 13, 1922, Rev. Caswell appeared before his congregation dressed as Abraham Lincoln to commemorate his birth. His presentation was a monologue, affecting not just the speech, appearance, and manners, but also his humanity and warmth. People marveled at his performance, and within a short time, he was giving performances first within the greater metropolitan area, but in other states as well. Arrangements were made through the White Entertainment Bureau, and he would travel to audiences at churches, civic clubs, schools, conventions, and theaters. He acted for Fox studios in educational films and gave a performance and interpretation of the Gettysburg Address on film using Vitaphone in 1927. A veteran seeing the film stated that he sounded like Lincoln. That film would be repeated every Lincoln Day, Decoration Day, Independence Day, and Armistice Day through 1932. He also gave that speech live on radio starting in 1926.



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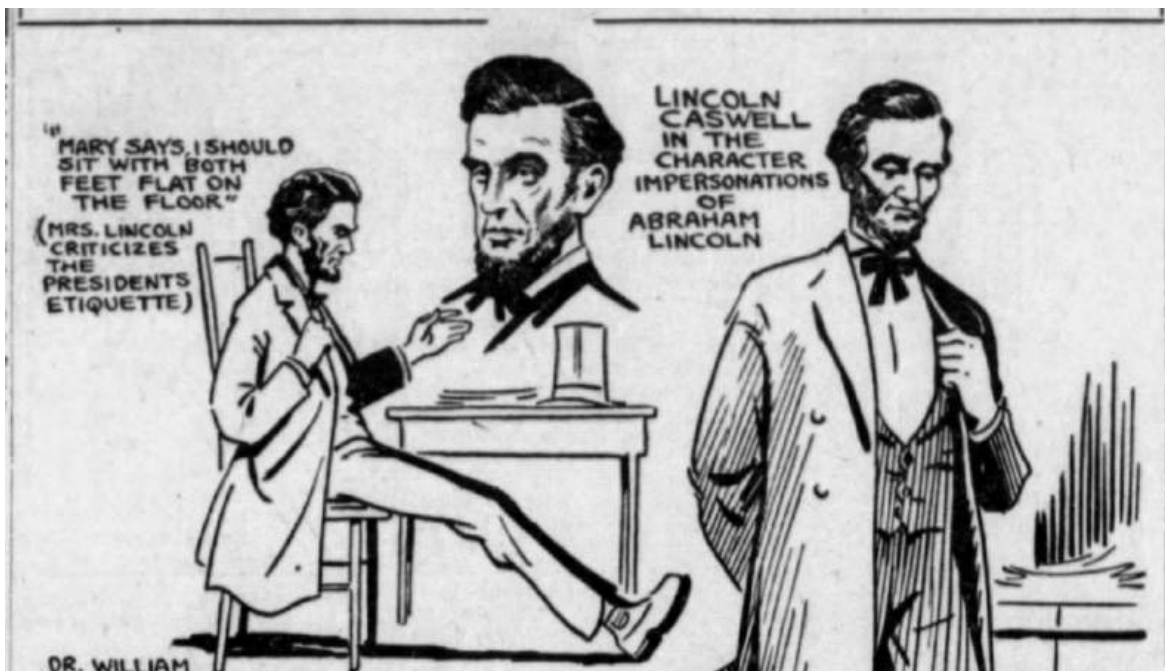
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His performance was strictly monologue with no co-star or props (except those provided by the venue). He based his research on speeches and a few published works. He used his words to express his ideas. He had a few different subjects. One was "In the White House of Abraham Lincoln," which covered his administration in three acts – the first year of the war, the Emancipation Proclamation, and 1864 during the run-up to the election. Another monologue covered his religion.

His greatest moment occurred on November 19, 1933. He was selected to recite the Gettysburg Address at the 70th Anniversary Commemoration of the National Cemetery Dedication. Present also were the grandsons of President U.S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, General George G. Meade, and President Lincoln – Robert Todd Beckwith. After he gave the Address, Col. U.S. Grant III spoke on the Address's significance for modern America, pleading for the "intelligent and faithful exercise of the ballot," and the re-establishment of the "old-fashioned basic principles of honesty, good faith and loyalty on which the greatness of our country in the past was founded."

While not appearing as the President, he did support causes he deemed were important. These included supporting "Uncle Robert" Spero's crusade for "Parents' Day," various evangelists for local crusades such as Billy Sunday, Uldine Utley, and John S. McConnell, Sr., and his congregation's Emergency Food and Support during the worsening days of the Great Depression, which the City of New York took over after the congregation shuttered its doors in 1936. Afterward, he took a pulpit at Stepney M.E. Church, where he continued to preach until he died on October 13, 1939.

A lot more could be said about him, but I believe that Rev. McConnell's son, John, Jr. had the best description was that he was an early influence on him when they met in 1929. In later life, John, Jr. would lead the movement to institute Earth Day observance. Let us remember that we too can influence the youth to act for improving our world.



From "Lincoln Termed Greatest President by Fess in Talk," Dayton Daily News, p. 25, Jun 22, 1928.

John M. McKee

THE LINCOLN QUESTION and ANSWERS

QUESTION:

Assume that you are proposing to host a location for an ALP convention. (And this may be anywhere in the United States.) Identify the location, noting around three key places of interest relating to the Lincolns, and what takeaways do you want the attendees to have from the event.

For example, one of my fantasy Lincoln conferences would be in Clinton, MD - formerly known as Surrattville. The theme is Lincoln's last year in DC, with staff rides to the Lincoln Cottage at the Old Soldiers' Home, the White House, and Fort Stevens, and doing the grand tour conducted by the Surratt Society in 2015 - the National Museum of Health and Medicine, Ford's Theater, the places of the other attempts, and the route of the assassins all the way to the site of Garrett's Barn. The idea of a posse of Lincolns (and others) chasing the assassins would be poetic justice.

You may elaborate more than what my example demonstrates.



Frederick Douglass' home and The People's House Museum could also be part of that tour, as well as the First Ladies exhibit in the Smithsonian. So much to see and do around Washington DC. Antietam is not far away too, as well as Harper's Ferry and Shepherdstown (John Brown trial). I like it.

JoAnn F. Peterson

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Peoria, IL. Main takeaway - Peoria County now celebrates Lincoln, as do many places around Illinois. However, during Lincoln's lifetime he was not very welcome, as Peoria County was very pro-slavery.

Laura Keyes

Visit Historic Voices on Facebook



Bloomington, IL: Located in central Illinois, Bloomington was very important to Lincoln's life and career. It was and still is the county seat of McLean County, one of only two counties which were part of the Eighth Judicial Circuit during all of Lincoln's 20 years riding the circuit. It was the home of Lincoln's friends and political associates/supporters David Davis, Jesse Fell, and Leonard Swett, among others. It was a major stop on the Illinois Central Railroad and the focus of one of Lincoln's most important legal cases. It was the site of the first IL state Republican convention in 1856, where Lincoln gave his famous "Lost Speech". Its sister city Normal ("North Bloomington" in Lincoln's day) is the home of Illinois State University, chartered in 1857 as Illinois State Normal University with the help of Lincoln. In fact, Lincoln spent so much time in Bloomington that it bills itself as "Lincoln's home away from home". It is a place which is very proud of its Lincoln connections, and which would welcome the ALP with open arms. Places to visit would include the McLean County Museum of History, the David Davis Mansion, and Evergreen Cemetery, where many of Lincoln's local friends and legal and political associates are buried. A conference in Bloomington would provide a better understanding of the importance for Lincoln's career of the legal circuit, of his friends and associates, and of the political movements of the 1840s and 50s. There would also be the possibility of conducting a joint Bloomington/Peoria conference, as the two cities are located only 40 miles apart.

Kevin Wood

CURIOSA

(Note: I am introducing a new feature about historical items connected to the Lincolns and other historical figures portrayed by members found at unexpected places. Please submit any examples you find interesting.)

Museums in areas not associated with a particular historical character might provide an interesting item (or more) that might make the visit worthwhile. The Missouri Civil War Museum, located on the grounds of the former Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis, MO, has a few items that members should find interesting.



First is the statue of Abraham Lincoln signing the Emancipation Proclamation, which is one of two sculpted by Stanley Watts. The other sits outside Stevens Hall at Gettysburg College. The statue is located on the north side of the building (the street side does not afford much room), and is surrounded by pavers (yes, plenty of pavers left to buy).



Second is the Ostendorf bronze of Lincoln's Life Mask (mask #7 out of 15), which Ostendorf made from the plaster mask presented from Theodore Mills to John Hay in 1889. Ostendorf purchased the plaster mask in 1969 from the Hay family, and made a mold based on that plaster mask. After making 15 copies, he destroyed the mold.



Third, and most interesting, is the dueling saber that Lincoln might have used in his duel with James Shields. A story published in 1906 stated that both swords were taken by two secret societies – the one held by Lincoln taken by the Oddfellows of Belleville, IL, and the other held by Shields by the Freemasons of Belleville. As the source was a prominent citizen, no one disputed the claim, but no record has been presented for its support. In 2013, Curt Lindauer of the Belleville Oddfellows stated that he purchased this and two ceremonial swords in 1955. The family donated two of the swords. One matches the specifications that Lincoln required – a cavalry saber used by the militia at Jacksonville, IL. This pattern matches those issued to that militia company.

See <https://mcwm.org/> for information about the museum if you are planning to be in the area.

MAJOR THOMAS ECKERT – LINCOLN’S TELEGRAPHER

April 23, 1825 - Oct 20, 1910

(The following is abstracted from a presentation by member Gerald Payn.)

Though born in St. Clairsville, OH, Thomas Eckert grew up in the town of Wooster. He learned telegraphy and the Morse code in 1844, and by 1849, was appointed Postmaster of Wooster and its telegraphy due to his Whig affiliation. Proving to be a promising leader in the telegraph industry, he was immediately appointed in 1861 as Captain to lead the military telegraph office under Major General George B. McClellan. The following year, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton assigned him to the military telegraph headquarters in the War Department building next to the White House. And he was nearly dismissed during the Peninsular Campaign later that year.

Stanton believed that he was neglecting his duties by withholding information from McClellan’s forces to the War Department; denying the charges, Eckert offered to resign, except a hand was placed on his shoulder from behind him. That hand was President Lincoln’s, and he declared: “Mr. Secretary, I think you must be mistaken about this young man neglecting his duties, for I have been a daily caller at the telegraph office for the last 3 or 4 months and I have always found the Captain to be at his post and I never observed any reporters or outsiders in the office.” A quick investigation determined that McClellan was withholding news from the front. Stanton reassigned him to the War Department under his command with the rank of major. From then on, every message coming from the armies all went through him.

President Lincoln was the first American president to communicate directly to his generals through telegraph rather than using messengers and the mail. By sitting in the telegraph office, the President could hear the news directly from the war front and send messages directly back out to his officers. What took weeks or even months could be relayed in a few hours using Morse code. Eckert and fellow telegraphers Charles A. Tinker and Albert Brown Chandler devised ciphers that enabled them to send and receive secret messages (per Hagerman’s biographical entry). Stanton called the telegraph service his “right arm” and said the military telegraph has been of inestimable value to the service and no corps has surpassed - few have equaled - the telegraph operators in diligence and devotion to duties. The cipher-operators had the privilege of seeing the President at close range and in his most anxious hours amid the excitement of great military movements. They also met him during the calmer but no less trying hours of patiently waiting for the slow development of far-reaching plans for the preservation of the Union.

President Lincoln spent much more time in the telegraph office than any place other than the White House where he could get away from all the confusion and hustle and bustle. He seldom failed to come over late in the evening before retiring (walking by himself) and frequently Major Eckert would accompany the President on his walk back to the White House. They became trusted friends with Eckert never breaking a confidence with the President. The operators greatly enjoyed Lincoln’s stories, who often read aloud humorous articles by Orpheus Kerr, Petroleum Nasby, or Artemus Ward. The operators could discern that telling stories and the reading droll articles gave him the needed relaxation from the severe strain and heavy burden resting upon him. Mr. Lincoln was overheard saying that “if it were not for this occasional vent I should die”.

Notable messages he received for and sent from Lincoln and Stanton included:

May 24, 1861 - the death of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth in Alexandria, VA.

Oct. 21, 1861 – the death of Colonel Edward Baker at Balls Bluff, VA.

11 Mar 1862 – message to General McClellan relieving him command as Commanding General of the United States Army (that he may concentrate on the Army of the Potomac and the Penin-

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sular Campaign), and receiving his ungraciously worded response, deeming it unsuitable to report to the President.

Jun 1862 - Pres. Lincoln spent many hours penning his drafts of the Emancipation Proclamation while sitting at Eckert's desk. The President asked Eckert to lock his papers in the desk while he was not there working on them and to show them to no one.

Apr 9, 1865 – the Surrender of General Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox.

Eckert recalled the President fondly, emphasizing that personal trait of Lincoln's which has impressed him more than any other - his kindly, charitable disposition, which was especially shown toward his political opponents and his country's enemies. He also recalled that Lincoln was fascinated by a huge spider web that had become an "institution" in the window by Eckert's desk that harbored a large colony of exceptionally big spiders that were called Eckert's lieutenants. Lincoln was very interested in their performances.

His last memory was the most bittersweet. The President asked him to accompany him and Mary to see a production in Ford's Theater. Stanton was doing all he could to keep the President from attending the theater that evening. He refused to allow Eckert to go with the excuse that he had other work for him. Lincoln's last words to Eckert were "I shall take Major Rathbone along, but I should much rather have you." Eckert deeply regretted that he was not at Ford's Theater on that fateful night of April 14, 1865, when he might have been able to prevent the assassination.

After being appointed Assistant Secretary of War in 1866, he later left the Federal service and led several telegraph companies, finally becoming president of Western Union in 1893. He died in 1910 at the age of 85.

His character was portrayed in two films – by Robert Ruffin in *Lincoln* (2012), and by Damian O'Hare in AppleTV+'s *Manhunt* (2024).



Robert Ruffin



Damian O'Hare

Association of Lincoln Presenters 29th Annual Conference

April 24-27, 2025

Kalamazoo, Michigan

The 2025 Association of Lincoln Presenters (ALP) Conference, our 29th annual conference, was held in Kalamazoo, Michigan from April 24-27. Kalamazoo was chosen as the conference site because it is the only city in Michigan where Abraham Lincoln gave a speech and because there is a local organization called the Kalamazoo Lincoln Institute (KLI) which has been promoting Lincoln's visit for many years, including recently commissioning and installing a new statue of Lincoln in Bronson Park. The KLI not only extended a warm welcome to the ALP for us to hold our conference there, they also sponsored the conference with a generous donation which covered most of our venue and speaker expenses. The conference was also supported by the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, the Ladies' Library Association of Kalamazoo, and Discover Kalamazoo (the Kalamazoo County Convention and Visitors Bureau). The conference host was Kevin Wood, who lives in Adrian, MI, about a two-hour drive from Kalamazoo.



Conference attendees listen to KLI President Cameron Brown speak about the Lincoln statue in Bronson Park (photo by Tom George Davison)

We had 40 attendees, including a score minus one (19) of Abrahams, a dozen plus one (13) of Marys, and one each of Ulysses Grant, Jefferson Davis, and Annie Oakley, along with three family members of presenters, a photographer, and a freelance journalist/student. We enjoyed 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 was excited to host the ALP.

Our host hotel was the Home2 Suites by Hilton / Hilton Garden Inn located in downtown Kalamazoo, with most of the other event venues located within a few blocks of the hotel. We enjoyed a hot breakfast buffet at the hotel each morning, and we also had our Friday and Saturday evening buffet dinners at the hotel. Apart from Friday morning and Sunday morning, most of the presenters wore period attire during the entire conference.

Conference activities began on Thursday afternoon with the ALP Board meeting and then in the evening with the opening session, to which the public had been invited. We were welcomed by the conference host (Kevin Wood), a representative of Discover Kalamazoo (Viviana Vidal), and Cameron Brown, KLI president. We then had "Trivia with the Lincolns", with eight teams consisting of one "local" and a few "Lincolns" (and others); some

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questions were about Lincoln and his times, while others were about Kalamazoo and Michigan. We then heard a lecture entitled “Lincoln’s Winning Smile”, about Lincoln’s humor, by KLI President Cameron Brown.

On Friday morning, we returned to the hotel conference room for a 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). We then traveled by carpool on our only “road trip”, to the town of Schoolcraft about 15 miles away, to visit the Dr. Nathan Thomas home, an Underground Railroad Museum.



Conference attendees and a few friends in front of the Lincoln statue in Bronson Park, with First Baptist Church in the background (photo by Tom George Davison)

Attendees were on their own for lunch, and then we met again for an afternoon session at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum in downtown Kalamazoo. We had a tour of the museum, especially items associated with Lincoln’s 1856 visit, then had some time to explore the museum on our own. We then gathered in the museum theatre for a lecture by KLI Vice President Tom George, to which the public was also invited, on “Lincoln’s Visit to Kalamazoo in 1856 - Recent Discoveries” to learn more about why Lincoln made his visit

and even whom he had tea with. We finished the afternoon’s activities with a “bull session” entitled “Talking Shop: The Fine Points of Being Lincoln (or Any Other Historical Character)”, moderated by ALP members John Voehl and Tina Baldrige, to share ideas about all aspects of historical re-enacting.

That evening, we enjoyed a buffet dinner at the hotel restaurant followed by a Civil War Ball led by dance callers Jim & Loretta McKinney.

On Saturday morning, we enjoyed a series of lectures at the Ladies’ Library Association, also located downtown. We learned about “The Role of Jackson, MI in the Founding of the Republican Party” by Linda Hass (local historian/author based in Jackson, about 65 miles away); a new Lincoln book entitled *Texting Lincoln: A semi-true tale of an Illinois prairie lawyer’s return to Kalamazoo* by local author Tony Ettwein; “The Ladies’ Library Association of Kalamazoo and Kalamazoo Ladies Soldiers Aid Society and their Sanitary Fair” by Sharon Carlson (local historian/archivist); and “Kalamazoo County and the Civil War – How One Michigan County Supported, and Didn’t Support, the War Effort” by Gary Gibson (local author).

We then moved to the Kalamazoo Nonprofit Advocacy Coalition (KNAC), located in First Baptist Church, the only building downtown still standing from the time of Lincoln’s visit in 1856. The men and women had separate luncheon sessions which included a boxed lunch and

the men hearing about “Engineers in the Civil War”, namely the First Michigan Engineers and Mechanics, by Brian Conroy (historical re-enactor), and the women having their Mary Lincoln Business Meeting followed by a portrayal of Mary Harlan Lincoln (Robert Todd Lincoln’s wife) by ALP member Laura Keyes.

We then walked to Bronson Park, just one block away, where we gathered around the new Lincoln statue and heard from KLI representatives about the history of the statue. This was followed by a series of group photos in front of the statue.

We then returned to KNAC for our annual Business Meeting where we conducted the normal business of the organization, including the approval of Buffalo, NY as the site of our 2027 conference with Glenn Murray as host, and the election of board members and officers with two new board members (Whit McMahon and Danny Russel) and a new 2nd Vice-President (Laura Keyes). Larry and Mary Elliott received the ALP Excellence Award for their many services to ALP over many years.



Larry and Mary Elliott receive the ALP Excellence Award from Joan Howard and ALP President John Cooper (photo by Tom George Davison)

We returned to the hotel for another buffet dinner and then made our way to the Judy K. Jolliffe Theatre in The Epic Center, also in the downtown area, for our “grand finale”, to which the public had been invited. We were treated to a portrayal of Sojourner Truth, who lived in nearby Battle Creek, MI, by Madelyn Porter, and then a play we called “The Chronological Lincoln”, featuring 14 ALP members: 8 Abrahams, 4 Marys, and one each of Ulysses Grant and Jefferson Davis.

We finished the conference on Sunday morning with a worship service in the hotel conference

room with guest speaker Chaplain Edward Hass (Linda Hass’s husband).

During the conference we held both a silent auction and a consignment shop to help cover conference expenses, both set up in the hotel conference room.

Our conference photographer was Tom George Davison; to view and/or purchase photos of the conference, visit <https://www.davisonimages.com/Events/Association-of-Lincoln-Presenters-Kalamazoo-MI-724-2625>.

According to the 25 respondents to a post-conference survey, attendees greatly enjoyed the conference, especially noting the high level of engagement with the local community.

Kevin Wood, Conference Host

Looking Back and Stepping Forward: Reflections on Kalamazoo and the Road to Kentucky

As the echoes of heartfelt conversations, stirring presentations, and shared laughter from our **2025 conference in Kalamazoo** still linger, we pause to reflect on the meaningful time we spent together this April. The historic charm of Kalamazoo, paired with the energy and dedication of Kevin Wood and our presenters, made for a truly memorable gathering. The camaraderie that defines our ALP family, this year's conference once again reminded us of the strength of our shared mission—and the joy of being in each other's company.

Looking ahead, our journey continues in **April 2026** as we set our sights on **Bardstown and Hodgenville, Kentucky**—two towns steeped in Lincoln history and rich with storytelling opportunities. As we walk the grounds of Abraham Lincoln's birthplace and explore the culture and heritage of Kentucky, we'll continue honoring both the man and the woman who brought us all together.

We are grateful for every member who makes these gatherings meaningful, and we look forward to reuniting again in Kentucky.

Susan V. Miller
108 Hidden Meadow Lane
Nicholasville, KY 40356

TRIVIALITIES

How many different portrayals were used in a film? First, the film was *Land of Liberty*, released in 1939, then revised in 1941. Given the editing over different editions, **four** different portrayals from four different films were used: Frank McGlynn, Sr., from *Hearts in Bondage*, Walter Huston in *Abraham Lincoln*, John Carradine in *Of Human Hearts*, and Raymond Massey from *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*. In the revised version, John Carradine's portrayal was edited out.

Next Quiz: D.W. Griffith's *Abraham Lincoln* was not Walter Huston's first film portrayal as the Sixteenth President. The prior year, he portrayed him in a shorter film *Two Americans*, focusing on Lincoln and General Grant. Griffith reportedly auditioned over 40 people for the part.

Did female actors also audition for the part?

True

False

(Answer in next edition)

John M. McKee

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Those of us familiar with the Civil War and Lincoln era are aware of some similarities between issues of today and issues during Lincoln's time. Immigration is one of those issues, and I as I was looking for material for a recent presentation, I came across another issue now in the news that Lincoln brought up in his annual message to Congress, and that was Citizenship. In each case the issues he mentioned were a twist on the concerns that we hear today. I found in the *Annual Message to Congress* (December 8, 1863) the concern that there were those who immigrated, become citizens, but not for the advantages it gave them here, but rather for the advantage U.S. Citizenship gave them in their native land. Lincoln said:

There is also reason to believe that foreigners frequently become citizens of the United States for the sole purpose of evading duties imposed by the laws of their native countries, to which on becoming naturalized here they at once repair, and though never returning to the United States they still claim the interposition of this Government as citizens. Many altercations and great prejudices have heretofore arisen out of this abuse. It is therefore submitted to your serious consideration. It might be advisable to fix a limit beyond which no citizen of the United States residing abroad may claim the interposition of his Government. (*Collected Works*, vol. VII, p. 38)

(I read "duties" to mean responsibilities rather than taxes.)

Another issue raised with the Congress in that message referred to immigration of workers, but again, with a different twist on today's issues.

The mineral resources of Colorado, Nevada, Idaho, New Mexico and Arizona are proving far richer than has been heretofore understood...I again submit to your consideration the expediency of establishing a system for the encouragement of immigration. Although this source of national wealth and strength is again flowing with greater freedom than for several years before the insurrection occurred, there is still a great deficiency of laborers in every field of industry, especially in agriculture and in our mines, as well as iron and coal as of the precious metals. (*Collected Works*, vol. VII, p 40)

Growing the economy, especially in industry, required manpower. The railroads would help with the rapid development of the West, but foreign workers would be needed to help that happen. Perhaps Lincoln thought that having the workers needed would help rebuff arguments for extending slavery. We do not know that, but we do know he was concerned enough about the need for laborers to bring it to congressional attention, apparently for the second time.

One hundred sixty years ago, just as today, it appears some came to this country for the advantages citizenship provides to them. However, the difference between then and now seems to be where those that obtained citizenship planned to use it for their advantage.

Murray Cox,

(with thanks to Laura Keyes and John McKee for their input)

LINCOLN DAYS AT HODGENVILLE, KY

October 4-5, 2025

(from <https://lincolndays.org/>)

Enjoy two days of history, heritage, and hospitality in the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln and learn why readers of Kentucky Living Magazine chose Lincoln Days as Kentucky's Best Festival for four consecutive years.

Lincoln Days is a two-day festival in Abraham Lincoln's birthplace featuring pioneer games, an art show, Lincoln Look-Alikes, a parade, live music, food booths, an ice cream eating contest, the 5k and 10k Railsplitter Run, a classic car show, activities for kids and families... and much more!

(from <https://www.facebook.com/LincolnDaysCelebration/>)

This year's Art Show info is online. Learn about the \$1,000 purchase prize and how you can enter at <https://lincolndays.org/events/art-show>



ALP VIRTUAL MEET-UPS

2025

17 August

The Lincoln Miracle: Inside the Republican Convention That Changed History

Author Ed Achorn. This book won the Harold Holzer Lincoln Forum Book Prize for the best book about Abraham Lincoln published in 2023.

12 October

Lincoln/Net, a digital project of Northern Illinois University

Drew E. VandeCreek, Director of Digital Initiatives of the University Libraries

7 December

Robert Todd Lincoln's Hildene

Stephanie Moffett-Hynds, Programming Director and Gary Parzych, Exhibits Manager

Social time: 6:30pm Central

Program begins: 7pm Central

Subjects, dates, and times are subject to change. Contact Laura at LFKeyes@gmail.com for more information and to obtain registration link.

Laura Keyes

Visit [Historic Voices](#) on Facebook

DID MARY LINCOLN HAVE A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR?

The Lincolns enjoyed their four boys: Robert, Eddie, Willie and Tad. Eddie passed away before he turned four, becoming traumatic for this family of four. Then there was Willie and Tad. Willie passed away before he turned twelve while living in the Executive Mansion. Those were very dark times. Tad bringing up the rear loved to make people laugh and was a character as well as a little minx. As a Mary Lincoln presenter I could just imagine Tad with his antics. Recalling what I have read about him brings a smile to my face.

In 2018 Jim Crabtree and I were guests at one of Camden's city celebrations. We left very early to get there in time to be in their parade. The day was wonderful. The city was quite beautiful, being decorated with flowers and signs. We were to ride in the parade and then speak in the town square's small bandstand before taking a guided walk around the center of town and to their museum. President Lincoln addressed the crowd and said that he would like to be a gentleman and asked his wife, Mary to say a few words first. I stepped up and was as gracious as a first lady could be thanking all those who were involved in the momentous occasion.

After I finished, I gracefully backed up to be seated. Ladies of that era would know where their seat was before being seated so as not to swirl their skirts and make any distractions and that's exactly what I did. Well, the seat was a folding chair. And FOLD it did! I hit the floor so hard my wig flipped to the right side with one pin keeping it hanging on and all 12 lbs. of flounce was spread around me in a most unladylike appearance. The lady who invited us, and most likely was on the city council, jumped over the railing of the bandstand from the rear and got my skirt, petticoats, hoops etc. situated and then tried to help me with my wig. Once I got situated, I sat back down and smiled so politely as if nothing had happened. I have no idea what the President said but I'm sure it was great as I told him to go ahead without me. The rest of the day was still very pleasant.

As we drove the 2 ½ hrs. home I started to see the humor of it all. I just imagined Little Miss Muffet sitting there spread eagle on the floor with what looked like a French coonskin tam hanging on the side of her face. The more I thought about it the more I giggled. I laughed so hard all the way home that at times I was wheezing. The two-week black-and-blue bum was worth the laugh.

Did Mary Lincoln have a good sense of humor? Well, I may not know about that, but I bet if Tad had seen it, he would have had a good, jolly laugh.

Teena Baldrige

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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. Thank you, Tom!

You can find his images at:

<https://www.davisonimages.com/Events/Association-of-Lincoln-Presenters-Kalamazoo-MI-724-2625>. There is a green tab over to the right where you can purchase photos.

Donna McCreary's *Mary Lincoln Demystified*

An amended edition of Donna McCreary's award-winning book, *Mary Lincoln Demystified: Frequently Asked Questions about Abraham's Wife*, was recently released by Southern Illinois University Press. Copies may be ordered directly from the publisher (<https://www.siupress.com/>), at local bookstores, or directly through Donna (mtlincoln@hotmail.com).