SIXTH ANNUAL LINCOLN FORUM NOVEMBER 16-18 AT GETTYSBURG; TO EXAMINE “LINCOLN AND THE LEGACY OF FREEDOM”

The Lincoln Forum has announced plans for its sixth annual symposium — its first all-weekend symposium ever — November 16-18 at Gettysburg. This year’s gathering will feature a roster of leading American historians exploring and debating the crucial theme of “Lincoln and the Legacy of Freedom.”

Garry Wills, the prolific author whose best-selling, Pulitzer Prize-winning Lincoln at Gettysburg (1992) is considered the definitive study of Lincoln’s greatest address, will be the keynote speaker at the annual banquet — marking Wills’ long-awaited return to the village he wrote about so unforgettable in his acclaimed book. Also addressing the symposium will be Allen Guelzo, the 1999 Lincoln Prize winner who is currently writing a major book on the Emancipation Proclamation, and Lerone Bennett, Jr., long-time Ebony Magazine editor whose recent, highly critical study of Lincoln and the Proclamation, Forced Into Glory, has stirred more controversy than any Lincoln book in a generation.

Also making their first appearances at the Lincoln Forum will be Barry Schwartz, the award-winning authority on Lincoln’s reputation and image; Lucas Morel, a leading scholar on Lincoln’s religious beliefs; Catherine Clinton, author of several acclaimed studies examining the role of women in Civil War America; and Michael Vorenberg, who has completed work on a study of the Thirteenth Amendment — the Constitutional amendment that officially ended slavery throughout America.

Returning to the Forum are such favorite speakers as Grant expert John Y. Simon, naval historian Craig L. Symonds, Civil War historian and biographer John Marszalek, and Lincoln scholar and Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer, as well as Chairman Frank J. Williams.

Commented Judge Frank J. Williams, Chairman of the Forum, in announcing the 2001 symposium: “No legacy was more important to Lincoln, to his contemporaries, or to succeeding
C-Span's American Writers Series

This spring, the C-SPAN network launched a weekly series of telecasts devoted to major American writers, from Thomas Paine to Willa Cather. Each Monday, cameras have been visiting sites associated with these authors, exploring in depth their talent, their popularity, and their influence.

Only one American president made the list. To no one’s surprise—certainly to the surprise of no one who belongs to the Forum—that president is Abraham Lincoln.

To be sure, this is not the first time that Lincoln has been acknowledged for his skill as a writer. In our own generation, a seemingly endless series of books have been devoted to his speeches and letters. Harold Holzer and Mario Cuomo’s 1984 *Lincoln on Democracy* began the latest outpouring. Columbia University English professor Andrew Delbanco followed with a treasury of his own. Don Fehrenbacher’s two-volume *Library of America* version won accolades in 1989. Holzer has just edited a collection for young readers called *Abraham Lincoln, the Writer*. And so it goes.

Nor is recognition of Lincoln’s literary proficiency a particularly new phenomenon. The early 20th-century critic Edmund Wilson opined that “alone among American presidents, it is possible to imagine Lincoln, grown up in a different milieu, becoming a distinguished writer of a not merely political kind.”

Even earlier, Democrat Nathaniel Hawthorne became a reluctant admirer, Walt Whitman an enthusiastic one. And Harriet Beecher Stowe believed Lincoln’s words were so great that they were “worthy to be inscribed in letters of gold.” Even Leo Tolstoy revered him.

Today, sadly, most modern leaders, from local officials to national office-holders, rely almost exclusively on paid speechwriters to craft their messages. Manuscripts have yielded to note cards. Sound bites have all but replaced thoughtful discourse.

More than 15 years ago, Governor Cuomo, an avid Lincoln enthusiast and no slouch as a writer, either, wrote: “For me Lincoln’s writing—his unique ability to craft arguments of raw power and breathtaking beauty, to argue with the seamless logic of a great lawyer and the large heart of a great humanitarian—is among the best produced by any American, ever. I have read Lincoln’s words over and over…. I am always taken by the humor, the pathos, the determination, the compassion that resonate in those words.”

Perhaps that resonance can yet inflect the political discourse of the new millennium. Whatever our political beliefs or affiliations, who could not hope that our politicians search deeper into their hearts and minds to articulate their ideas and proposals?

They say TV has more influence than writing these days. Perhaps C-SPAN’s June 18 tribute to Lincoln the writer will inspire our leaders to express themselves better, and more personally. And perhaps it will inspire the public to expect nothing less. It is a lesson—an ideal—that Lincoln still represents.

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**Find The Lincoln Forum on the web at:**

**WWW.THELINCOLNFORUM.ORG**

- Membership and Symposium registration forms
- Purchases from Amazon and The Lincoln Bookstore benefit The Lincoln Forum
- Essay contest information

*If you wish to receive periodic information on Lincoln Forum activities via email, please advise administrator Annette Westerby (anetwest@uswest.net)*
And Justice For All

Frank J. Williams is not only the leader of the Lincoln Forum — but also the highest-ranking member of the Rhode Island judiciary.

Governor Lincoln Almond appointed the Superior Court Judge to the post of Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court on January 5, and both houses of the state legislature promptly confirmed his nomination unanimously. He was sworn in by the Governor at a ceremony in the State House Rotunda on February 9—his wife, Virginia, and his parents at his side, and two “Lincolns,” appropriately enough, sharing center stage: Governor Almond and Senator Lincoln Chafee.

Facing stiff competition for the nod after four highly regarded finalists were recommended by the state’s Judicial Nominating Convention, Williams emerged as Almond’s choice, the Governor told the press after announcing the nomination, because of “his passion, his energy, and his vision.”

The Chief Justice-designate immediately paraphrased Lincoln in his first comments to reporters. “I am not sure the public is aware of just how good a judiciary we have.” Williams declared. “Now...can we not do better?” During his 1995 confirmation hearings for the Superior Court, Williams had pledged to emulate Lincoln by being “politic without being unprincipled, patient without being resigned, flexible without being opportunistic, tough-minded without being brutal, determined without being fanatical, religious without being dogmatic, tender without being sentimental, and devoted to man without worshiping him.” His “overall judicial philosophy,” he reiterated when he was nominated for the state’s highest judicial post, “is to make justice accessible to all the people..... I think I would like to be remembered as the people’s judge.”

The entire Lincoln Forum salutes its chairman—the people’s Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

New Robes: Chairman Frank J. Williams, newly named Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

Below: The 2000 Symposium banquet crowd: bigger than ever for a night to remember, as Donald and Current — more than 120 years as professional historians between them — are honored.

(Ziegler Studio)
FORUM V:
A SPEAKERS’ GALLERY

(Photos: Ziegler Studio, Virginia Williams, David Walker)

Clockwise from top left: Doris Kearns Goodwin, Jeff Shaara, Jared Peatman, David Herbert Donald, Tracy Power, and the Lincoln family panel — (from left) Harold Holzer, Jean Baker, Frank J. Williams, Steve Carson, Al Jerman.
Clockwise from top left: Jean Baker, Mark E. Neely, Jr., Gary Gallagher, Iver Bernstein, Hans L. Trefousse, Michael Beschloss
Eleanor Stoddard: A Living Link to The Civil War White House

By Donald Pieper

Eleanor Stoddard's grandfather was a very old man and she was a very young girl when her infant brother crawled onto Grandpa's lap and yanked his beard.

"Take him away!" Grandpa Stoddard cried.

That may not be exactly the kind of oral history sound bite that Lincoln scholars hope to get from a man who served as a secretary on the 16th president's personal staff, but it does come from a witness who heard William Stoddard say it.

The incident, which occurred when she was about 4 years old, is Eleanor Stoddard's dominant direct memory of her grandfather.

It's not the oral history she wishes for, either. "Oh, I'd love to be able to talk with him now," she says. "I'd say, 'Hey, tell me about this and about that and about this.' I'm much more interested in Lincoln now than I have been, and that's largely due to my experiences at Lincoln Forum (symposia)."

She says she has to chuckle when she is introduced during Forum sessions as a descendant of a Lincoln staff member. "I think it is rather like when a president points out someone in the balcony during the State of the Union speech. I'm sort of a token," she says. "They just like to be able to point to somebody alive who has a connection to Lincoln."

While she finds Gettysburg a fascinating place to visit, she says it isn't because it inspires thoughts of her grandfather's ties to the man whose speech there has become a literary and historic treasure. Her grandfather, she says, probably was hard at work at his desk in Washington while Mr. Lincoln was making his address.

When she tells the beard story, Eleanor Stoddard says, some people say she surely must be talking about her great-grandfather. But, no, it was her grandfather.

He was born in 1835 and lived to be 95. Eleanor's father, born when his father already was 52 years old, was William Stoddard's seventh child. So, the arithmetic works out. Ms. Stoddard, retired now and living in Chevy Chase MD, after a long career in government service, actually saw a member of Abraham Lincoln's presidential staff and heard him yelp in protest when his beard was tugged. But she says her childhood memories of Grandpa Stoddard are of a bed-ridden figure who was stone deaf. She recalls an old leather chair that smelled of pipe tobacco.

The Lincoln connection was no secret, of course. Her father and her Uncle Bill (William Stoddard's namesake son) were much more interested than their offspring. The family lived in Madison, N.J., and the Madison Eagle had made it almost a ritual to interview William Stoddard for a story each Lincoln's birthday.

However, it wasn't as if Eleanor Stoddard grew up in a family fixated by its connection to Lincoln. "To me, the Civil War seemed like something that happened a thousand years ago," she says, "something I learned about in high school."

Only later in her life did she begin taking an interest in history, an interest whetted by her grandfather's memoirs. "It's filled with just marvelous stuff," his granddaughter says. His service in the Lincoln White House was just an episode in William Stoddard's long life. (That portion was extracted and published as "Inside the White House in War Times: Memories and Reports of Lincoln's Secretary."

The autobiography also relates adventures with Indians during his childhood in Homer, N.Y. William Stoddard tells of his service in 1864-65 as U.S. marshal for the eastern district of occupied Arkansas. He had to administer laws that restored property only to owners who swore allegiance to the Union.

"That was a hairy situation," the marshal's granddaughter says, because former Confederate officers were among the landowners Stoddard had to deal with.

Stoddard had gone to work for President Lincoln in 1861, but by 1864 he had become anxious to get out of the office environment. As it happened, Mr. Lincoln wanted people he trusted and who knew his policies and philosophy to be placed in the occupied areas.
William Stoddard’s whimsical descriptions in his memoirs of the White House view of congressional actions, she says, "are just a scream."

As usher (or clerk or secretary; he handled a variety of tasks for the president), William Stoddard had a key to the White House. He kept it after leaving presidential service and it was in the family, Eleanor says, until one of her cousins sold it for $200. Malcolm Forbes eventually bought it for $11,000 at an auction.

Eleanor Stoddard, as the last surviving member of the family, says she wants to be sure her grandfather's original reminiscences are preserved. She has been consulting with the Lincoln Forum’s Harold Holzer about what to do with the papers.

Holzer, a leading authority on Lincoln iconography, also was interested in a portrait of William Stoddard painted by Francis Bicknell Carpenter, whose work includes a painting of The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation Before the Cabinet. Eleanor Stoddard says the portrait of her grandfather isn’t the best example of Carpenter’s talent, but it is further documentation of the White House days.

The Forum sessions, she says, are her main source of information about Lincoln and the Civil War. Her reading on the subject, she says, has been limited, but she especially enjoyed Holzer's "Dear Mr. Lincoln" and "Lincoln's Mailbag" and Michael Shaara's "The Killer Angels." She also remembers reading Jim Bishop's "The Day Lincoln was Shot" many years ago.

Her literary tastes cover a wide range. At the time of her interview for this article, she was reading a novel by Anthony Trollope and a book on physics.

Grandpa Stoddard was better known to Eleanor and her generation as the author of wonderful stories than as a Lincoln secretary. She says more than 100 of his boys' books and articles were published, many in St. Nicholas Magazine.

"They were very good," she says. "I know because I went to the Library of Congress and read them all."

William Stoddard also was a Biblical scholar. His career also included service as a clerk at the docks in New York and as a secretary to groups proposing — unsuccessfully, as it turned out — to build a canal across Central America and lay a trans-Atlantic cable.

Grandpa Stoddard also tried his hand in inventing, but his process for powdered eggs never became a hit.

If he never achieved dramatic financial success, William Stoddard did lead an interesting life. His contributions to children’s literature were as significant to his family as his time in the Lincoln White House.

As for his granddaughter, after she retired in 1983 (her last job was as a report-writer for the National Science Foundation), Eleanor Stoddard worked on an index of the memoirs.

But her major project was taking oral histories of women who had served in the military during World War II. Their stories are collected in the archives at California State University at Long Beach. She is working on a book about one of the nurses she interviewed.

She also is active in community affairs and is helping her neighbors prepare a brochure for a local project. In addition, she tutors a student.

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THE LINCOLN FORUM IS NOW A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

The Lincoln Forum is pleased to announce that we have been designated as a non-profit corporation under section 501(c)3 of the IRS code. This means that we will be able to reduce postage expense considerably and will not be required to pay sales tax on services and commodities that we purchase. Most significantly, any contributions (excluding membership fees) made to The Lincoln Forum are now fully deductible when filing your federal income tax.

For more information contact our Treasurer, Chuck Platt.
MEMORIES OF FORUM 2000

It was the biggest Lincoln Forum ever—nearly 300 people at the annual banquet—and, some declared, the best. Seldom had a speaker’s roster of equal stature ever gathered at one time in one place. And the weekend was capped by the presentation of the Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement to two popular favorites: historian David Herbert Donald and, in a surprise bonus award, to Richard Nelson Current himself. Professional and amateur photographers alike were on hand to capture the memories of the first great Lincoln Forum of the 21st Century.
Richard Nelson Current with *The American Heritage Illustrated History of the Presidents* and its author, Michael Beschloss. (Ziegler Studio)

Richard Somer considers a purchase from Chuck Hand's book stall. (Virginia Williams)

Artist Richard Wegenroth displays one of his innovative works — in this case, a patriotic adaptation of Alexander Hesler's 1860 photograph. (Ziegler Studio)

Jeff Shaara is on hand at Jason Duberman's book display as purchasers consider *Last Full Measure* — a best-seller at the Forum, as everywhere. (Edith Holzer)

Chairman, Icon, Treasurer, Vice Chairman: Williams, Platt, and Holzer flank a non-paying but particularly welcome guest. (Virginia Williams)
Dobbin House Tavern: The History Behind the Food

By Donald Pieper

It is one of history’s minor coincidences that, just down the road from the battleground cemetery Abraham Lincoln helped dedicate at Gettysburg, there stands a big stone house that in 1863 was, just like the nation, four score and seven years old.

Perhaps the residents of the already-venerable Dobbin House avoided the crowds and stayed home to watch from their second-story balcony as Mr. Lincoln and featured orator Edward Everett delivered their remarks.

Observers on the Dobbin House balcony would have been close enough—a few hundred yards—to see the proceedings, but it is likely that they could little note what was said there.

Aside from providing a grandstand of sorts for witnesses of the Gettysburg Address, the Dobbin House was merely part of the background scenery November 18, 1863. Apparently the only other tie to the action, and a flimsy connection it is, is that President Lincoln rode past.

Okay, so the Dobbin House played only a supporting role, if that, in the drama of the presidential visit. It nevertheless is rich in history and a national treasure.

Perhaps the most important Civil War-era contribution to history by Dobbin House was its use as an underground railroad stopover for escaping slaves. After the Gettysburg battle, wounded from both armies were treated at the house.

Pastor Alexander Dobbin, the rugged Scots-Irish immigrant who built the house in 1776 and raised a large family there, was a major player in founding of the city of Gettysburg and Adams County. Moreover, he was a farmer, the minister of Rock Creek Presbyterian Church (which held services in a log cabin) and founder of the first classical academy west of the Susquehanna River.

On through the decades, the house he built served as a residence and on occasion as an inn and tavern. In the middle years of the twentieth century, it was a museum and once housed the Gettysburg Battlefield Diorama (featuring a taped narration and several thousand miniature soldiers).

The structure is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission Registry, and the roster of Gettysburg Historic Landmarks. It was featured in a 1984 “National Geographic” article on the underground railroad.

When Jacqueline White acquired the property in 1977, its 201st year, she restored it and created the Dobbin House Tavern, a restaurant, gift shop and bed and breakfast complex. Her establishment is popular with participants at Lincoln Forum symposia. They troop across the forked streets separating Dobbin House from the Gettysburg Battlefield Holiday Inn to enjoy the food, drink and authentic colonial ambiance.

Allen Knouse, an employee at the Dobbin House for nearly 16 years before becoming director of Gettysburg.com, says he has conducted many tours of the house and the adjacent buildings that now make up the complex. He says many visitors seem to be most intrigued by the crawl space between the first and second floors that was used to hide slaves following the underground railroad route to the North.

Inside and outside historic Dobbin House: attendees share the annual lunch (above), then gather outside (below) for another Forum tradition — the yearly group picture. (Photos: Virginia Williams, Edith Holzer)
Dobbin’s house is today virtually the same as when the pastor and his family lived there. According to materials provided by Knoose, “the native stone walls, seven fireplaces and hand-carved woodwork have been painstakingly restored to their original beauty and character, with interior decor in the traditional eighteenth century manner.”

Many of the furnishings are identical to those listed in the inventory of the Dobbin estate. The china and flatware match fragments unearthed during the re-excavation of the cellar. The “servants’ clothing is authentic right down to the tie-on pockets.

Knoose says the bed and breakfast facility across the parking lot from the main house was moved to the site. It was, according to Knoose, a post-bellum addition to Lydia Lyster’s home, used by Union General George G. Meade as his headquarters during the battle at Gettysburg.

Knoose says the farmstead that Pastor Dobbin bought in 1774 spread over 300 acres and extended to the area made famous by Pickett’s Charge. There were three springs on the property and Dobbin provided rights to access to the water when he sold parcels as lots. Water from the springs is still used at Dobbin House (but not for human consumption).

In a town so steeped in Civil War and Lincoln history, Dobbin House offers an interesting contrast by harking to the settlement of Europeans in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Dobbin, born in 1742 in Northern Ireland, graduated from Glasgow and Edinburgh universities. He was ordained by the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland at Conlig, County Down, in 1771. He and his wife Isabella emigrated to the New World in 1773.

The school he started in his stone house was the equivalent of what today would be a theological seminary and a liberal arts college. The Dobbin curriculum included Latin, Greek and Hebrew. According to information from Gettysburg.com, Dobbin’s school “enjoyed an excellent reputation for educating many professional men of renown.”

Dobbin’s original Pennsylvania congregation totaled about 150 Presbyterians — known then as Covenanters — who had emigrated from Ulster.

In addition to serving as a school, Pastor Dobbin’s house had to accommodate his large family. He and Isabella had 10 children and after her death he married a widow, Mary Agnew, who already had nine children of her own.

The pastor is described as “a short, stout, smiling gentleman who wore a white wig.” He was active in community affairs and in 1800 was among those who succeeded in establishing Adams County, originally part of York County. He was one of two commissioners who chose Gettysburg to be the seat of the new county. He donated free sand, stone and screws for the construction of the original county courthouse.

Dobbin’s community service also included tenure as treasurer of the Gettysburg-York Springs Turnpike.

The pastor died at his home at age 57 of consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis).

**Lincoln Forum 2000: “Commander Kross” leads the battlefield tour.**
(Video: Tim Branscum)
generations, than the impact that his presidency and the Civil War exacted on the nature of American freedom. Few subjects are more important to modern Americans, either.

"As we begin a new century, we find ourselves living in the most diverse society this country has ever known. And Lincoln still speaks eloquently to every fabric within the tapestry of our culture. This year, the 140th anniversary of his entering the White House, is a perfect time to examine how Lincoln changed that culture forever. In his own words, he offered both 'freedom to the slave' and 'freedom to the free' by saving democracy and extending the benefits of American life to all.

"This year's symposium will also offer something to all: scholarship, excitement, perhaps even fireworks," added Judge Williams. "What we hear will inspire many and perhaps shock some. But the Forum was created to encourage all points-of-view. The next symposium will accomplish this goal, and, as always, bring some of the country's most influential scholars together with our new and veteran members. We are certain it will be one of our most memorable gatherings ever."

The 2001 Lincoln Forum Symposium will also offer the traditional Gettysburg Battlefield tour by licensed historian Gary Kross; a welcome by Gabor Boritt, director of Gettysburg College's Civil War Institute, and a slide show celebrating last year's symposium.

Once again, attendees will be invited to the annual Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania luncheon, featuring yet another leading historian. And, as always, the symposium will feature presentation of the annual Richard N. Current Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement.

The morning after the symposium's final session, attendees will have the opportunity to attend the annual November 19th observances of the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, as well as the annual Fortenbaugh Lecture at Gettysburg College. This year's symposium takes place during Gettysburg's official Remembrance Day Weekend, featuring parades and other celebrations to mark the anniversary of Lincoln's fabled November 1863 visit.

Chairman Williams emphasized that with another sell-out anticipated, members are urged to reserve early. The registration fee of $265 covers three dinners, two lunches, admission to all lectures and panel discussions, and the battlefield tour. Registration information is available from Annette Westerby, administrator of The Lincoln Forum, at 303-721-6681, via fax at 303-721-6682, or our website: www.thatlincolnforum.org.[.]

Reservations at the Forum's host hotel, the Gettysburg Battlefield Holiday Inn, must be secured separately by calling 717-334-6211. Be sure to identify yourself as a Lincoln Forum group booking participant, otherwise you will be told the hotel is sold out. Do not use the 800 Holiday Inn number.

See Special Insert: 2000 Winning Essay

"Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties: Constitutional Stalwart or Tyrant?"

by Dave Ryers

Dave is currently a student at Bridgewater State College and has recently accepted an offer from the University of Connecticut to enroll in its graduate program in history in the fall of 2001.

2001 Nationwide Student Essay Contest

"Abraham Lincoln: Liberator or Racist?"

The Chuck and Linda Platt Essay Contest of The Lincoln Forum is designed to stimulate interest in Lincoln among young people. Once again it is open to anyone who is enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at an American college or university between January 1 and July 1, 2001. Entries will be judged by the essay committee of The Lincoln Forum. Deadline for entries is June 30, 2001. Judging will take place over the summer and prizewinners will be announced at the Sixth Annual Lincoln Symposium in Gettysburg, November 16-18, 2001.

Don McCue, curator of The Lincoln Shrine in Redlands, California serves as coordinator of the Essay Contest.

For more information contact Mr. McCue at:

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If you have news to share on your Lincoln or Civil War organization, activities, or studies — send it for inclusion in the next Bulletin to: Harold Holzer Metropolitan Museum of Art 1000 Fifth Avenue NY, NY 10028-0198 e-mail: harold.holzer@metmuseum.org

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