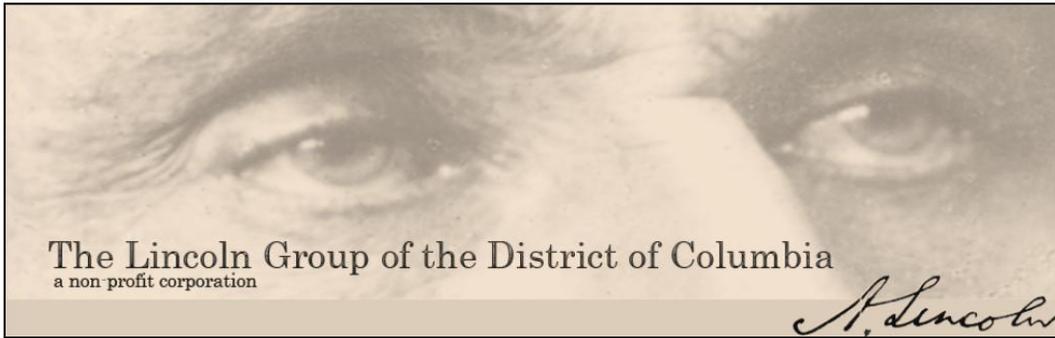
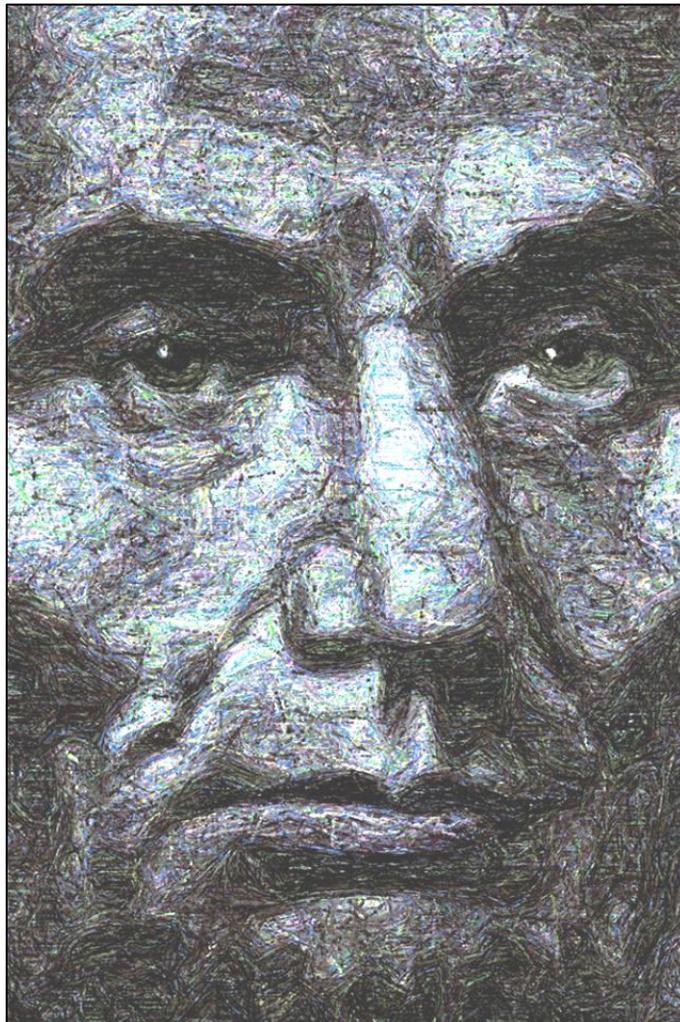


THE LINCOLNIAN



VOLUME XXXVII

Number 1



(Doug Leuneg)

Lincoln Has His Eyes on You

On the cover: The artwork on the cover of this *Lincolnian* edition depicts a 30’ x 50’ mural entitled “Abraham Blue” which hangs on the side of the Peoria (Illinois) County Courthouse. The work, done by an artist local to that area, Doug Leuneg, commemorates Lincoln’s October 16, 1854 speech at the courthouse. The speech, three hours in length, was known for making Lincoln a national leader in the effort against slavery. The mural Lincoln has a blue tint to signify depression, a condition he overcame to become a great president. The original image was part of a project to depict famous Americans shown on currency. Commenting on his creation, Leuneg stated that he “hoped to elicit dialog and open conversation about depression, remove its stigma and celebrate our inherent ability to face adversity and rise above it to create a future that is better for all.” The mural, installed on October 1, 2018, is part of Peoria’s Big Picture Project, a city-wide initiative to bring art to public spaces and to enliven buildings throughout the town. Carl Adams has reminded us that Lincoln’s eyes in this mural look down on the location of the last residence of one Nance Legins-Costley.

The Lincoln Group Remembers:

The last several months have witnessed the passing of the following individuals who in the past often were attendees at our dinner meetings and other events. Longtime members will remember them well. We extend condolences to their families.

Russ Weidman passed away March 16 at the age of 86. He was a retired Navy commander who worked on the development and testing of cruise missile programs. A Vietnam War commander, he later transitioned to aeronautical engineering. He later became a senior scientist and vice-president at Science Applications International. He, along with his late wife Budge, volunteered to preserve Civil War records at the National Archives. He was active in the Lincoln Forum, serving for a time as treasurer of that organization.

Samuel Shoemaker served in the Marine Corps and later the Army. In civilian life he taught English and creative writing at the high school and college levels. Growing up in DC, he was the youngest Boy Scout to qualify for the Eagle level at the time of his elevation. A delightful conversationalist at our dinners, he shared stories of the Soldiers Home. He passed away on April 24 at age 90 of Covid-19.

Nora Caplan was a teacher, government clerk, librarian and author who was active in Montgomery County civic and arts groups including the Kentlands Community Foundation. She also was a traveler who visited sites of her favorite authors in England, France and Italy. In late April, at age 93, she too died from Covid-19.

In This Edition	
Lincoln Blue – page 1	Debating the future of the Emancipation
On the Cover – page 2	Statue – pages 5-9
The Lincoln Group Remembers – page 2	LGDC Board Resolution – page 9
Upcoming dinner programs – pages 3-4	Rod Ross Book Report – pages 10-12
Other events - page 4	David Kent Book Reviews – pages 13-15
Carl Adams – Nance AA Hall of Fame/Juneteenth = pages 16-20	

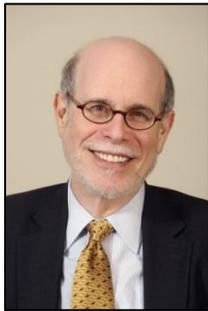
Upcoming Program Speakers

The following speakers have been scheduled for dinner meetings during the remainder of 2020:



Brian Dirck
“Lincoln and Death”
August 18, 2020

Brian Dirck will speak on the subject of his recent book *The Black Heavens: Abraham Lincoln and Death*. David Kent wrote in a recent *Lincolonian* review of the book: “death nearly always close at hand.” Perhaps, for Lincoln, such deaths early on in his life (his mother, sister, etc) “steeled him for the many deaths to come.” Kent added that the author “made the topic of death inspiring.” Dirck is a professor of history at Anderson University in Indiana.



Harold Holzer
“Presidents and the Press”
September 15, 2020

Harold Holzer is a leading authority on Abraham Lincoln, one who has spoken to our group numerous times on a variety of topics. Winner of the Gilder-Lehrman Lincoln Prize, he is the author, co-author or editor of over 50 books as well as numerous articles. He will speak on his upcoming book *The Presidents vs. Press – From Founding Fathers to Fake News*, due for release later this summer. He previously wrote on Lincoln and the power of the press. He currently serves as director of Hunter College’s Roosevelt House Policy Institute.



Buzz Carnahan
“Lincoln and Pardons”
October 20, 2020

Buzz, a two-time past president of the Lincoln Group, is a retired Judge Advocate officer for the Air Force, a former foreign affairs officer at the State Department, and an ongoing professional lecturer at George Washington University School of Law. He is the author of two books on Abraham Lincoln, dealing with aspects of the “Law of War.” For the Lincoln Group of DC, Carnahan will discuss Abraham Lincoln’s use of the presidential pardon, which he frequently employed during the Civil War.

Traditionally, no dinner program is scheduled for the month of November; this is Lincoln Forum month and many members participate in those programs. Currently, we plan to continue the practice of no November meeting in 2020. The dinner program for December is still under development.

2021 programs: Our January 2021 speaker has been scheduled. Dr. Curt Fields will appear as General Ulysses Grant on January 19, 2021. An active living historian, Dr. Fields has portrayed General Grant at numerous battle reenactments and at the 150th anniversary of Lee's surrender at Appomattox. A career educator, he taught for eight years at the junior and senior high school levels and then served 25 years as a high school administrator. He has been an adjunct college professor and now is an educational consultant. He also speaks on leadership as demonstrated and advocated by General Grant. He is the same height and body style as Grant and therefore represents a realistic portrayal of the general.



The Lincoln Group continues to hold virtual dinner meetings via Zoom and will use this format for as long as health issues persist. We expect that this status will continue for the remainder of the calendar year and may extend into early 2021. Please keep your eyes on your email box for notices on changes in schedules, news of additional events and other updates. Additional information on these speakers and their topics will be furnished closer to the actual meeting dates. We welcome suggestions for additional speakers and topics for presentation at future dinners. Please share your ideas with your Lincoln Group officers.

Other Events

Ford's Theatre will be live streaming the last of its Abraham Lincoln Institute Symposium lectures on Monday, August 3 at 4 p.m. The speaker will be Jason Emerson and his topic will be "Mary Lincoln for the Ages: Why Lincoln's wife is not the Woman we Think we Know." For those who just cannot get enough on the topic of the Confederate Monuments – this will be the subject of "Cabinet Conversation" at Ford's with Eugene Robinson, Mitch Landrieu and Kevin Levin on July 30. The virtual talk will start at 4 p.m. and is scheduled for 30 minutes. Check out Ford's website (www.fords.org) for more information.

Taps: The 100 Nights of Taps in Gettysburg, at the National Cemetery, resumed last month. The summer evening ceremonies take place at the Soldiers National Monument. Social distancing guidelines will be in effect. Attendees should wear masks (although no mask is required while one is sounding Taps).

Debating the Future of the Emancipation Statue



(Bruce Guthrie photograph)

The Iconic Emancipation Statue: Awaiting Its Fate

Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C.

The surge to take down public monuments and statues deemed offensive swept over the nation's capital this summer. Surprisingly, the statue of Lincoln the Emancipator, and the rising freedman has also become a target. The Lincoln Group has worked with community and history



Lincoln Group President John O'Brien with Frederick Douglass as portrayed by Nathan Richardson. (This photograph as well as those on pages 8 and 9, courtesy John O'Brien.)

groups to organize a community discussion of the future of the statue and frankly, to prevent its threatened destruction.

The project began when demonstrators alerted news media that there would be an attempt to tear down the Emancipation statue on June 25. The US Park Police quickly constructed a temporary security fence around the monument and started 24-hour protection patrols. Our “community discussion” program was then announced for Friday, June 26, with National Park Service



Frederick Douglass rules! Nathan Richardson as Douglass addresses the first rally. He enthralled the rowdy crowd.

consent. Once this time for our event was announced, the protest group moved their demonstration to the same night. We decided that the moment for education was acutely necessary and so decided to proceed with our plan despite the possible conflict risks.

A summary of the history of the memorial was prepared. We contacted historians who portray some of the figures connected with the placement of the monument in 1876. Frederick Douglass himself would be present to re-enact his dedication speech from 154 years ago. And, a group that portrays renowned women in period costume, Female Re-Enactors of Distinction (FREED), was to give presentations on historical context of the dedication event. When the event started that Friday evening, the protest leaders spoke first. They demanded that a crouching black man image beneath Lincoln was beyond redemption and had to be destroyed. Further, a recitation of revisionist history declared Lincoln himself had nothing to do with improving conditions for black people and was also beyond redemption.

Several older African American attendees presented arguments in favor of preserving the statue for historical memory. Lincoln Group President John O'Brien gave the history of the monument and briefly described Lincoln's process for emancipation. Then Frederick Douglass himself took the stage before a decidedly volatile crowd. Douglass was portrayed by Nathan Richardson from



The boisterous audience at the first event in Lincoln Park on Capitol Hill, DC.

Norfolk, VA. He delivered the speech made at the statue's dedication on April 14, 1876. He described Lincoln as Douglass knew him, defects and all. But he also gave Lincoln full credit for doing what no one else was capable, when he delivered the greatest act of social justice in our history: the Emancipation Proclamation. The audience was enthralled. Richardson persisted, through occasional protester rants, to complete the speech and to answer questions in the way Douglass would have. In all, it was a remarkable day of listening to concerns while learning from well-presented history. Passions were largely cooled. As the sun set, the capital's only memorial to the Proclamation still stood. The conversation continued on July 3, the following Friday. While the crowd for the second event was considerably smaller, the Lincoln Group was well represented. And the statue still stands.

A protective 10-foot fence now surrounds the monument. (*Editor's note: The protective fence is visible in the picture on page 5*) The fence is covered with signs arguing for various resolutions. There was even a very large copy of Frederick Douglass' letter to the editor of the *Washington National Republican*. In it, Douglass noted that the figure of a crouching African-American is not the best representation of freedom. He suggested that the statue be surrounded with figures of African American soldiers and abolition leaders. In fact, across the park and facing Emancipation is a statue of African American educator Mary McLeod Bethune with several children.

At this moment, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton has submitted a bill proposing to move the statue from the park to one of the Smithsonian museums. The Lincoln Group board supports the process of discussion acknowledging that either the Douglass or Norton proposals would be much more appropriate than the wanton destruction that had been contemplated. The fence is scheduled to come down on July 31. LGDC will continue to work toward a community consensus for a reasonable and long-term solution. -- *John O'Brien*

Statement of the Lincoln Group Board

At its late-June meeting, the Lincoln Group board decided to weigh in on the controversy over the status of the Emancipation or Freedmen's Memorial in Lincoln Park in Washington D.C.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, D.C.'s non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives, and others have proposed removing the statue of a standing Lincoln with a freed slave kneeling before him and placing it in a museum. Instead, the board decided to favor a more reflective approach and to work with federal officials to discuss options for the statue and the park.

Resolution

“The Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia appeals to officials and policymakers to not react impulsively to passions of the moment and instead reflect on options for the future of the Freedmen’s Memorial in Lincoln Park. These options include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of the current statue to a museum
- Keeping the statue in place and surrounding with educational historical contextualization
- Modifying the current statue to remove the rising enslaved person and in its place put a colored troop soldier or a statue of Frederick Douglass
- Erecting a new statue of President Abraham Lincoln and Douglass
- Erecting a statue of Lincoln and Harriet Tubman.

The board volunteers to work with policymakers and the public in creating a solution to realize our national quest for racial justice and equality that also honors the contribution of Abraham Lincoln to the cause of equality and freedom for all people.”

The kneeling former slave in the Emancipation statue in Lincoln Park is modeled after former slave Archer Alexander. When the statue became front page news earlier this summer, Lincoln Group member Rod Ross mentioned that he had in his possession a small volume on Alexander; now certainly seemed to be an appropriate time to read this publication. Rod did and prepared the following “Book Report,” which tells us not only about Alexander but also the author of the work, William G. Eliot. Along the way we also learn some fascinating history about Rod himself.

**A “Book Report”
by Rod Ross**

William G. Eliot, *The story of ARCHER ALEXANDER: From slavery to freedom*, March 30, 1863. Published in 1885 by Cupples, Upham and Company of Boston, with my copy a pocket-sized volume “electrotyped” n.d. by C. J. Peters & Son with the title page identifying Eliot as A Member of the Western Sanitary Commission, St. Louis and including the Wordsworth poetic lines:

*No sea
Swells, like the bosom of a man set free*

A wilderness is rich with liberty

Today is June 25, 2020. And things seem to be moving at warp-speed regarding the fate of DC’s Emancipation statue in Lincoln Park. On June 23rd I watched an after-the-fact YouTube of the peaceful rally in Lincoln Park, led by the 20-year-old Harvard University student Glenn Foster, with Foster promising to return — for this evening — June 25th for a follow-up rally with the purpose of pulling down the statue. Meanwhile, news reports say that unarmed DC National Guard will be present to provide security for the statue.

As things currently stand on Friday, June 26th LGDC President John O’Brien is slated to be part of a 6:00 p.m. teach-in at the statue, a “History learning gathering” called by Frederick Douglass aficionado John Muller. Other speakers will include Carolivia Herron (Lecturer in Classics at Howard) and Marcia Cole (re-enactor as Charlotte Scott with FREED — Female Re-Enactors of Distinction)

I like bookends in life, and for me, “From Slavery to Freedom” is a bookend, as I’ll explain at the end of this essay.

.
This report is less about Archer Alexander than it is about William Eliot

.
Archer Alexander is, of course, the former slave in the two-man Emancipation statue. Alexander is portrayed as kneeling on one knee, with his having broken an arm-shackle, gazing into the future, with Lincoln standing beside him, with one hand outreached in a kind of motion of “come hither and rise.”

William Eliot is less well known in history. As owner of a 4-acre property in need of maintenance on the outskirts of St. Louis — Beaumont Place by name — it was Eliot who came to employ as general caretaker the escaped-from-his-Missouri-owner Alexander. Eliot was a Unitarian minister, who during the Civil War was a mainstay in the Western Sanitary Commission. One day after Eliot had left for work at Washington University, slave-catchers seized Alexander. They took Alexander to a St. Louis jail for an overnight stay with their plan to return the fugitive slave to his master the following day.

But that was not to be. When Eliot had first employed Alexander, Eliot had secured from his friendly local Provost Marshall General, F. A. Dick, a thirty-day writ of protection. And in showing that writ, Eliot got Alexander sprung from confinement.

Eliot unsuccessfully attempted to purchase Alexander from Alexander's legal owner. Once emancipation came, Eliot continued to employ Alexander. At Alexander's funeral, Eliot officiated at the African Methodist Episcopal service. Pages 88 and 89 contain the following:

He [Alexander] was, I believe, the last fugitive slave taken in Missouri under the old laws of slavery. His freedom came directly from the hand of President Lincoln, by provost-marshal authority, and his hands had helped to break the chains that bound him. His oldest son had given his life to the cause.

When I showed to him the photographic picture of the "Freedom's Memorial" monument, soon after its inauguration in Washington, and explained to him its meaning, and that he would be remembered in connection with Abraham Lincoln, the emancipator of his race, he laughed all over. He presently sobered down and exclaimed, "Now I'se a white man! Now I'se free! I thank the good Lord that he has 'livered me from all my troubles, and I'se lived to see this."

A few years ago, at an evening LGDC dinner meeting at the Channel Inn in Southwest DC, the late Tony Pitch reviewed *Killing Lincoln: The Shocking Assassination that Changed America Forever* by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard. Pitch was indignant with the many direct quotes clearly fabricated. Much of the Eliot volume similarly provides extensive quotes of imagined conversation. As such, it's hard to say how much of the Alexander story, as reported, by Eliot is true — other than the bare facts of Alexander's life

Given that Wiki is readily available to all, I'll now recount what Wiki has to say about Alexander.

The first chapter in Eliot's volume is entitled Freedom's Memorial. The chapter's subtitle is ABRAHAM LINCOLN.—ARCHER ALEXANDER. Then comes a sentence from the Emancipation Proclamation: "And upon this act I invoke the considerate judgement (*sic*) of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God." — PROCLAMATION OF FREEDOM, JAN. 1, 1863.

What follows is a history of the monument, concluding with its April 14, 1876, dedication when it was unveiled by President Grant. That story begins when Charlotte Scott brought five dollars to her former master begging him to use her first earnings as a free woman "to make a

monument to Massa Lincoln, the best friend the colored people ever had.”” Soon total donations had reached the \$16,242 mark. In the summer of 1869 Eliot visited Florence and saw a marble work sculpted by Thomas Ball. The upshot was that Ball accepted the funds raised as sufficient payment. Ball assented to changes, so that “instead of the ideal figure of a slave wearing a liberty cap, and receiving the gift of freedom passively, as in the original marble group, the representative form of a negro should be introduced, helping to break the chain that had bound him.”

Eliot continued: photographic pictures of ARCHER ALEXANDER, a fugitive slave, were sent to him; and in the present group his likeness, both face and figure, is as correct as that of Mr. Lincoln himself. The ideal group is thus converted into the literal truth of history without losing its artistic conception or effect.

And there you have it.

As for the “bookend” in question, it relates to the book’s subtitle: “From Slavery to Freedom, March 30, 1863.” That’s what was to appear on a monument stone to be placed on the spot where Alexander had been captured as a fugitive slave.

To quote what I wrote Marcia E. Cole this morning:

I like bookends in life, with the title “From Slavery to Freedom” serving as one such bookend. For what it’s worth I’m cited in the Preface for the 4th edition (1973) of John Hope Franklin’s *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans* as his research assistant who “brought to his task a thorough knowledge of the subject and a high quality of scholarship that greatly eased my own task.”

Oddly, however, I think my greatest contribution to the book was a negative one. Professor Franklin offered me the position, thanks to a grant he had received from Alfred K. Knopf, in follow-up to my having provided him with an unsolicited “critique” of the African introductory section of his predecessor edition. Although Professor Franklin never verbalized what I’m about to say, I think it was that critique that led him to drop the introductory African history section from the 4th edition and subsequent editions.

The Lincolnian is a quarterly publication of the
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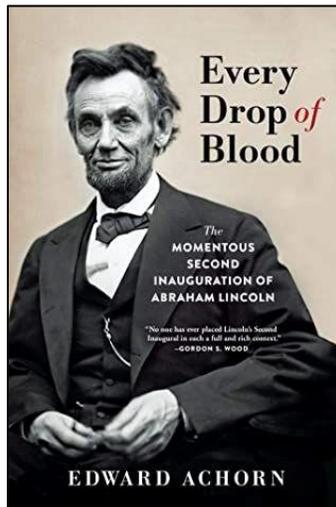
www.lincolngroup.org

Note: The Lincoln Group invites readers to submit articles for publication in The Lincolnian, articles which address today’s national challenges by drawing on the wisdom, statesmanship, humanity, and leadership of Abraham Lincoln.

Book Reviews by David J. Kent

This continuing column reviews two books about Abraham Lincoln in each issue. One review will come from the recently released literature. The other review will take a look at an older but worthwhile read – a classic Lincoln tome or one of the more obscure books. The goal is to introduce, or reintroduce, the Lincoln literature to LGDC members, both for their enjoyment and to stimulate research ideas. Comments and feedback are welcome to davidjkent.writer@gmail.com.

Recently Released



Every Drop of Blood: The Momentous Second Inauguration of Abraham Lincoln
by Edward Achorn
(Atlantic Monthly Press, 2020, 376 pp)

"...until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword...." These words from Lincoln's second inaugural address provide the title to this engaging book by journalist and author Edward Achorn. Not simply an analysis of the address - only one chapter focuses on the speech itself - the book deftly explores the lives of Lincoln, many of the period's main characters, and the historical circumstances leading up to the surprising reelection of our 16th president in a time of civil war.

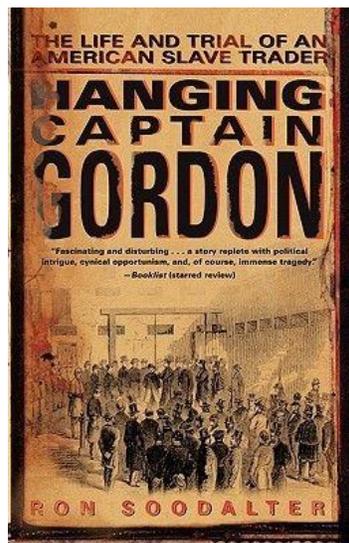
Much of the material is familiar: Lincoln's views on slavery as his policy evolved into the Emancipation Proclamation and 13th amendment; Washington DC in wartime; Lincoln's battles with his own generals; Salmon P. Chase's machinations; Frederick Douglass's changing impressions of Lincoln; to name a few. There are flashes back to the first inaugural address, a lengthier statement of the national policy on secession (it wasn't legal) and the state of slavery (the federal government had no authority to emancipate enslaved peoples in states where slavery existed, but did have the authority to block its expansion into federal territories and free states). Achorn references the half-finished new dome of the Capitol building during the first address as

an allegory for the state of the nation. Lincoln insisted on construction continuing: “If the people see the Capitol going on, it is a sign we intend the Union shall go on.” The completed dome with its statue of freedom overlooked Lincoln giving his second inaugural address.

As did John Wilkes Booth. Through his apparent charm and insider connections (most notably Lucy Hale, daughter of prominent Senator John Hale, and to whom Booth was secretly engaged), Booth had secured a prized limited ticket to observe the swearing in ceremony from a spot just feet from President Lincoln. As Lincoln was heading from inside the Capitol outside to the seating area, Booth made a move to attack him, according to Benjamin Brown French, although he didn’t recognize Booth at the time.

Most of the book provides a narrative history of Lincoln’s life, from his father’s farm to his trials and tribulations of war. A single chapter examines the address; another its reception. One interesting tidbit: Lincoln cut up the text into 27 scraps, then carefully glued them to a sheet of paper in two columns as a reading copy. The brevity and religious imagery of the speech led Frederick Douglass to call it “a sacred effort,” but Lincoln thought it might take a while for its message to sink in: “Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them.” The speech has stood the test of time well. While the book offers no new revelations about Lincoln or the address, Achorn finds a way to make even the familiar seem original. Throughout, the author’s narrative is both comfortable and prosaic, successfully weaving this background into the day of inauguration to regale us with the power of Lincoln’s address and the story of the moment. The book is a pleasant read that Lincolnophiles and general readers alike should enjoy.

Classic Literature



Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of An American Slave Trader
by Ron Soodalter
(Washington Square Press, 2006, 317 pp)

A well-written account of the only slaver ever convicted and executed in U.S. history. Nathaniel

Gordon was a repeat offender, caught with nearly 900 enslaved men, women, and children crammed into the tiny space below decks off the coast of the Congo. But Gordon wasn't particularly worried. For the first 40+ years of the law that made international slave trading illegal and punishable by death, no man was ever executed. Why?

Soodalter tells us that a "chain of five circumstances" had to exist to hang a slaver. First, the arrest had to be made by an officer of the United States, at sea, with slaves found on board. This hardly ever occurred given the lack of seagoing vessels and officers patrolling the African coast. Second, a slaver had to be held long enough to stand trial. Simply bribing a jailer was all it took to let a slaver escape. Third, a jury had to be willing to convict him, an unlikely event given that most peers hesitated to convict fellow white men for transporting black men. Fourth, the slaver could be excused if he was foreign born or the ship was foreign owned, the latter being as simple as "selling" the ship to a foreign agent. And fifth, the accused could simply claim he was merely a passenger or that he shipped for a legal voyage and had been coerced into helping the slavers.

Gordon somehow met all of those criteria, in part because he was sure he would get off, just as every other slaver had done. But Gordon had the misfortune of being caught in August of 1860, just as the presidential election and ensuing secession and civil war was about to turn the nation upside down. Soodalter's narrative pulls us through a captivating tale of slave trader deceits, the capture, the mistrial, the second trial, and the surprising conviction. We also are drawn into the tremendous lobbying pressure put on President Lincoln to pardon Gordon, or to at least commute his sentence to life imprisonment instead of the noose. With Lincoln's history of compassion, Gordon's supporters assumed they could protect him. But early in 1862 Lincoln is already thinking of emancipation and letting a slave trader off easy conflicted with his desire to punish those who have fed the slavery chain. Resolute, Lincoln finds it his duty to allow the conviction to stand, and the sentence to come to fruition. With the Emancipation Proclamation and the forthcoming 13th Amendment ridding the nation of slavery, Gordon stands as the only slave trader ever executed for his crimes. Author Soodalter has constructed an engaging and lively portrait of an important case and period of American history rarely covered elsewhere. We are all the better for this book.

**First Slave Freed by
Lincoln now in the African-
American Hall of Fame**

Lincoln Group member Carl Adams has been busy and all his hard work has paid off. He has done extensive research on "a slave girl named Nance," research which led to his writings on "the First Slave Freed by A. Lincoln." In late February his investigations led the way to Peoria, Illinois, where Nance was inducted into the African-American Hall of Fame along with her biographer, Carl, himself. While conducting his research, Carl learned that Nance's son, William Henry Costley, who served during the Civil War as a member of the First Regiment, Illinois Colored Volunteers, witnessed the original Juneteenth celebration in Galveston, Texas.



Nance's well-deserved and long overdue recognition in the area of Civil Rights now realized in the African American Hall of Fame Museum

The Story of Carl: Shortly after his arrival in Peoria for the African-American Hall of Fame activities, he was whisked away for an interview with Ms. Colleen Johnson, President of the Peoria Historical Society. That interview provided insights into Carl's interest in history which, in turn, led to his discovery of Nance. Carl is from Alton, Illinois, which he describes as the "Mason-Dixon Line" of Illinois, with areas to the south pro-slavery and areas to the north, against slavery. Growing up in this area contributed to his interest in Illinois history; in time, he became a fan of Abraham Lincoln. Another influence on his life was the fact that he grew up during the time of the Civil Rights movement. These life experiences impacted his writings and his aim to show "the human side of a slave."

Nance entered his radar through a thumbnail sketch in a free newspaper called "The Shopper." The sketch referenced the first slave freed by Abraham Lincoln in 1841. He noted that this was twenty years before the Civil War and that this information was in contrast to historians who say Lincoln "never freed a single slave." Initial research found few references to Nance but Carl persisted and eventually unearthed Nance's story.

2020 African American Hall of Fame Museum Inductees

Civil Rights Award



Nance Legins-Cromwell became the only African American servant whose freedom cause was appealed three times in the Illinois Supreme Court. Nance lived along the Pekin - Peoria IL road. She earned a place in US history as the first slave freed by Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln agreed to work as her advocate and used the words of his favorite founding father, Thomas Jefferson, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist..." in Illinois, the territory or the state. Lincoln won the court decision in Nance v Howard 1828 and Nance was freed after fifteen years of appeals.

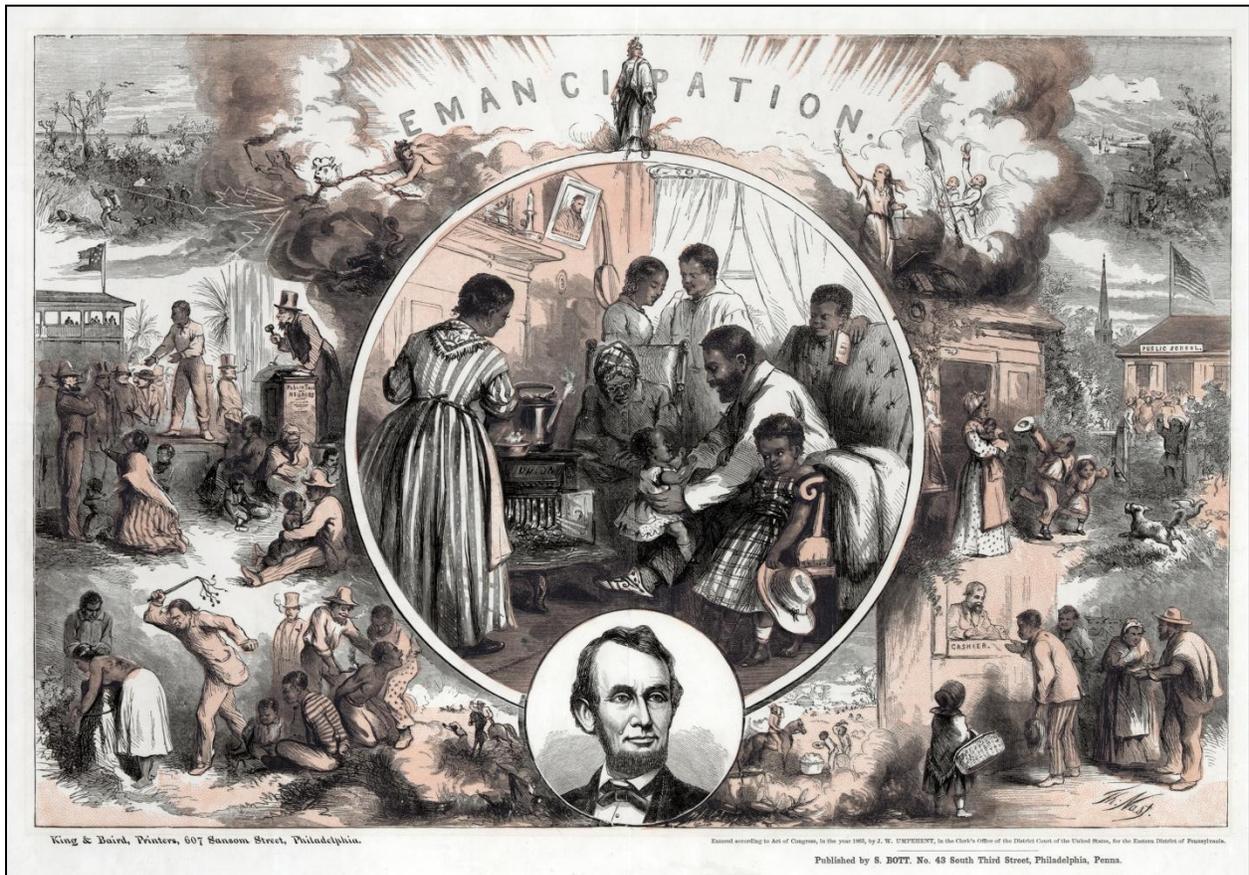
Carl Adams, biographer for "Nance," was raised in Alton, IL along the 'color line' with mostly white folks to the south and minorities to the north near two racially segregated public schools. He started writing journalism in high school during the Civil Rights movement and reported news for NPR radio at Southern Illinois University. He came to Peoria after graduating from SIU and worked on TV news at Channel 19. In the spring of 1993, he read about an unknown Black woman "...a Negro girl name Nance" a slave from Tazewell county. Considering the "sundown town" reputation in that county, his

curiosity led to the revelations of "The Trials (and tribulations) of Mrs. Nance Legins-Costley". His affiliations include Lincoln Group of DC, Illinois State Historical Society, NAACP historian on Education Committee of National Juneteenth Observance Foundation; Veteran of USMC. He now resides in Bethesda MD and is the author of Nance a story by Carl Adams.

Nance's biographer, Carl Adams, now in the African American Hall of Fame Museum

In response to a question of what Nance's story tells us about Abraham Lincoln, Carl replied that "growing up poor, Lincoln identified with the poor." Coming from a slave state and having lived in two indentured servant states (Indiana and Illinois), Lincoln was aware of poor black and white folks. He 'understood that slavery among poor whites was not conducive of good for anyone." Carl opined that Lincoln himself was still struggling with the issue of slavery. Politics was a tricky business and Lincoln gained expertise in this area while campaigning. While Lincoln "wanted everyone to be free, he was aware of racial prejudice." Carl sees Nance's story as that of the "history of black and white: we need each other to fulfill each other." (*Editor's note: You can hear this interview in its entirety at <http://youtu.be/P9MluChsOpM>. The interview gives more information on the story of Nance and on Carl's research, including tips for researching slave genealogy. Also, see Carl's article on Nance in The Lincolnian, Volume XXXVI, Number 3*)

Peoria, February 2020: Peoria's small African-American Hall of Fame Museum held its "Red, Black & Green Ball" at the end of Black History Month at the Riverfront Museum downtown in the Illinois town. The main feature of the event is the presentation of academic scholarships to deserving Black students as well as the presentation of several awards. Recipients of this year's awards included Nance and her biographer, Carl Adams. The evening's agenda was full – so Carl was given three to five minutes for an acceptance speech. That gave him enough time to say "thank you" but then he asked the rhetorical question "What have we done here tonight? We have rescued a name lost to history, Mrs. Nance Legins-Costley, the only slave to appeal to any state Supreme Court three times. **To rescue** a name, **worthy** to be remembered and **honored**...to



(Courtesy: Library of Congress)

The above image is Thomas Nast's "Emancipation," a print widely distributed in 1865. The January 24, 1863 edition of Harper's Weekly contained the original illustration that formed the basis for this print – but there is a difference. The original work did not contain Lincoln's image at the bottom; rather, the insert featured "an abstract image of heavenly intervention breaking a slave's chains." (The difference is pointed out in Matthew Pinsker's July 8, 2011 on the "house divided" section of the Dickinson.edu website.)

rescue a name. Again, thank you!" The musical *Hamilton* examining the subject of legacy asks "Who lives, who dies, who tells the story." We applaud Carl for telling Nance's story.

Meanwhile, Carl's story continues. Building on the knowledge that Nance's son, William, witnessed the original Juneteenth celebration, Carl became an active member of the National Juneteenth Observation Foundation, serving on the education committee of that organization. His input is once again having positive results! Some of his work and interpretations were presented to Congress by U.S. Representative Danny Davis of Chicago to support the legislator's efforts at getting "Juneteenth" on the road to a national holiday. The organization's efforts also led to the declaration of Juneteenth as a holiday in Virginia. Carl wrote the following article for the Black-owned newspaper, *Traveler Weekly*, in Peoria, Illinois. His idea to the National Juneteenth Observation Foundation was accepted to expand the significance of the June 19th date, beginning with June 19, 1862, the date Congress abolished slavery in the U.S. Territories and to include

June 19, 1863, the date the War Department authorized the organization of the U.S. Colored Troops into the Army for Civil War service.

Juneteenth 2020

By Carl Adams

In American Standard English “Juneteenth” is a contraction of June 19th, 1865. It is the day a quarter million Texas slaves were set free from slavery by the Federal War Department with General Order #3 of the new Department of Texas enforced by the Executive Order of 1863 – The Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth is the realization of freedom, events, proclamations, legislations and “War of the Rebellion – 1861-1865.” Juneteenth, 1865 was the actualization of the Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment. However, the National Juneteenth Observance Foundation (NJOF) studied a cumulative calendar of history and found more of “the Pillars of Juneteenth” to add to the commemorative celebration. The Education Committee of NJOF, with Peoria area historian Carl Adams, published these for this year.

June 19th, 1862 Slavery outlawed in US territories ... Lincoln seemed to believe in the domino theory to end slavery, i.e., stop its spread in one place and one by one the other dominoes would fall, affecting gradual emancipation nation-wide. As early as 1837 in Illinois, Lincoln had argued to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but he was in a dreadfully small minority. Again Congressman Lincoln proposed abolition in D.C. in 1849, but could not get the votes thru Congress. Early in 1862 with the Civil War less than a year old, Congress, with Lincoln’s approval, emancipated the slaves of D.C. on April 16th. And then a few months later Lincoln, with Congress’ approval, signed the order to “Abolish slavery in the US Territories” on June 19th, fulfilling a campaign promise made as early as Lincoln’s Peoria Speech in October 1854, the Juneteenth of 1862.

June 19th, 1863 Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society enforced the Emancipation order. The oldest Abolition Society since 1775 of Philadelphia, Pa had sent Ben Franklin to the first federal Constitutional Convention to argue against slavery, but he couldn’t get the votes. On Juneteenth, 1863 following the Emancipation Proclamation, the Society formally endorsed and enforced Lincoln’s Order and built Camp William Penn to recruited tens of thousands of Negro soldiers for the Union Army. June 19, 1863 Orders to authorize the formation of the USCT by the War Department. The Union Army was threatened with thousands of soldier desertions, while, the threat of “RE-enslavement” was a cloud hanging over the heads of every African American, if the Confederacy should win the war. Who best to face the threat and the willingness to fight against slavery than the US Colored Troops.

June 19, 1865 General Order #3 issued in Galveston, Texas. There are significant historical information gaps in just what took place in Galveston, Texas on the day of the original JUNETEENTH. The historic accounts vary wildly from a noisy celebration to almost unnoticed, depending upon the studied sources. General Gordon Granger was a cavalry officer promoted for his fight to capture Mobile, AL at the close of the war in the South, which included USCT soldiers from Florida. However, the Official Record (OR) does not reveal exactly how Granger

and his horse got from Mobile to Galveston, nor who traveled with him; no record showed if it was by land or by sea. The record does show Gen. Granger was among the first Union officers to arrive in Galveston June 18 to assess the situation there.

Moreover, two ships, the *Wilmington* and the *William Kennedy*, contracted at City Point, VA, for two Regiments of the US Colored soldiers, the 29th of Illinois and the 31st of New York also arrived on the 18th, by accident. Those two units were originally dispatched to land at Brownsville, TX, but a storm at sea prevented a landing so they found safe harbor at Galveston also on June 18th. So General Granger and two armed units of Black soldiers enforced the first “Juneteenth Freedom Day” and it has been celebrated every year since 1865. But there were more slavery dominoes to fall, with freedom flowing north.

June 19, 1866 Treaty ending slavery with the Five Tribes in Oklahoma ratified. This marked the end of slavery among Native Americans.

And on into the 20th century, JUNETEENTH, whether coincidence or acts of God, kept coming back for an encore.

June 19, 1964 Civil Rights Act of 1964 survived an 83-day filibuster in the Senate, to improve equality under the law.

And June 19, 1968 Poor People’s Campaign Solidarity Day March, Washington D.C. to try to improve economic opportunity for African Americans, while the struggle for equality of educational opportunity is an ongoing goal.

So just pick your favorite JUNETEENTH and pass on the blessings won so far.

On June 19, 1865, Union Major General Gordon Granger read Order No. 3 to the people of Galveston, Texas. The contents of that order are as follows:

“The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.”

Did you know? The original handwritten record of Order No. 3 is preserved in the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. The order was a critical piece in the expansion of freedom to enslaved individuals. However, note the last two sentences of the order – this language foresees civil rights battles to come.