Aging Well:  
Lincoln At 200

With a spare eloquence that has never been equaled, Abraham Lincoln reminded his countrymen, “We cannot escape history...the fiery trial through which we pass will light us down in honor, or dishonor, to the latest generation.” A century and a half later it might be said that we cannot escape Lincoln. In anticipation of the forthcoming bicentennial of his birth, a flood of new books has yet to crest, while from Hollywood comes word that Steven Spielberg is about to do for Lincoln what he did earlier for ET and Indiana Jones.

Few among his contemporaries could have imagined such a legacy. “Mr. Lincoln will go down to posterity as the man who could not read the signs of the time...who plunged his country into a great war without a plan, who failed without excuse, and who fell without a friend.” So declared the august London Times in the autumn of 1864. Such words come as a shock to modern Americans. How, they ask, could such a polarizing figure become the standard of presidential leadership? The answer may come as an even greater surprise. Along with his capacity for growth, his ability to learn from mistakes, his severely logical mind, his deep well of humor, and his quasi-mystical attachment to democratic government, Abraham Lincoln was the greatest politician ever to inhabit the White House. That brilliant simplifier Theodore Roosevelt liked to divide presidents into two categories: Lincoln types and Buchanan types. It isn’t hard to see why.

In his first inaugural address, Lincoln took pains to put the onus of military action on Southern rebels. Six weeks later, in the aftermath of Fort Sumter, he called Congress into special session – but only after he had summoned armies into the field, declared a blockade of Southern ports, and suspended the ancient protection of habeas corpus. The latter action led critics then and historians since to speak of incipient dictatorship. Lincoln justified himself under the doctrine of wartime necessity.

Rather than yield to rebels who would destroy the entire Constitution, said Lincoln, he proposed to temporarily suspend a single clause of that sacred, yet living, document. As he put it, “Often a limb must be
Busy times at our house

When I dropped by the office on the morning of July 7 — officially, I was on vacation that week — I walked into one of the busiest scenes since the Humanities Council dedicated the MacFarland-Hubbard House in June 2000.

Our workaday, business entrance is the back door, as with a lot of private homes I know. As I came up the back walk, I was gratified to see that the Allegheny Construction crew had started our pergola-patio job, right on schedule, and were already in a big way of measuring out the project. Soon architect David Marshall arrived, and everyone agreed as to just where the corner stakes should go.

Heading inside, I found plenty more activity. The Myers Transfer guys were trotting up and down the attic stairs, carting out old files. We try to do that every summer to keep from burying ourselves in paperwork. (And please, does anybody know when we’ll see the paperless offices the computer enthusiasts promised so long ago?)

Meanwhile, program officer Mark Payne was working with WVU professor Eve Faulkes in the front parlor. They were setting up our new John Henry traveling exhibit for the very first time, and I got my first glimpse of that. Writing coach Shannon Vollmer was busy with other staff in the nearby library, while the Terra Care lawn people were running around with their mowers and blowers outside.

Living with a 172-year-old house leads one to avoid superlatives. The whole human story has played out under our capacious roof, and no doubt many times over, from the conception and birth of babies to the death of their elders. This place has seen days of triumph and rejoicing, I’m sure, and enough days of the other kind as well. I’m careful not to say that anything is the best or worst, or the greatest or first, that has ever happened within these walls. So I’ll not speak of the busiest day ever, just the busiest in my short time here.

Nonetheless, this old place was surely bustling on that morning in July. Everybody was busy, things were hopping, and work was getting done. I concluded my errand and eased out the door.

All in all, it seemed like a good time for the boss to be gone.

—Ken Sullivan

Like the look? Anne Strawn of A.C. Designs in Charleston provided the new look of our newsletter. We welcome your comments.
A Lincoln Lecture

Two hundred years after his birth Abraham Lincoln remains the standard against which American presidents are measured. Presidential historian Richard Norton Smith will speak on that subject in Charleston less than a week before the upcoming presidential election.

Smith will deliver the 2008 Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities. The lecture, named for a Humanities Council founder and our annual flagship event, brings speakers of national stature to West Virginia audiences. Smith, who says “there’s no excuse for a dull book, a dull museum, or a dull speech,” joins past speakers including Ken Burns, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Elaine Pagels, and Joyce Carol Oates. A frequent history commentator on television, he was the founding director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

The McCreight Lecture will be delivered at 7:30 pm, Thursday, October 30, in the Cultural Center at the State Capitol Complex. The lecture begins a year-long observance of the Lincoln Bicentennial.
Book Festival

The eighth annual West Virginia Book Festival will be held October 11 and 12 at the Charleston Civic Center. The festival brings together dozens of authors, booksellers, publishers and presses in a marketplace that features over 40 book-related vendors. Readings, workshops, book signings, appraisals, panels and a variety of activities for children are among the many offerings.

This year’s presenters include Marvel Comics illustrator Bob McLeod, whose artwork (above) includes the New Mutants, Spider-Man and other super heroes. West Virginia authors include Davitt McAteer, Cheryl Ware, Irene McKinney, and Anna Smucker.

The Humanities Council is a founder and major sponsor of the West Virginia Book Festival. For more information and the 2008 schedule, visit www.wvbookfestival.org.

Appalachian Literary Residency

Shepherd University honors award-winning novelist Adriana Trigiani with its Appalachian Heritage Writer’s Award and a week-long residency from September 29 through October 4, supported by a Humanities Council major grant.

Trigiani is a best-selling author known for her Big Stone Gap trilogy and other works. The week is built around public readings, a screening of Trigiani’s award-winning documentary Queens of the Big Time, a concert, and book signings. Contact (304) 876-5207 or visit www.shepherd.edu for a complete schedule.

New Historical Atlas

WVU Press announces the publication of The Historical Atlas of West Virginia, “a title for libraries, schools, and every West Virginian who wants to understand how historical forces are mapped onto the state’s terrain.” The atlas, by Marshall University professor emeritus Dr. Frank S. Riddel, was supported by a publication grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council.

The Historical Atlas features dozens of maps pertaining to a wide range of subjects — everything from geological deposits that have influenced the state’s industries to immigrant settlement patterns and national census figures. The hardcover, 256-page atlas sells for $30 in bookstores and is also available at www.wvupress.com or toll free at 1-866-988-7737.

The university press also just released Matewan Before the Massacre by Rebecca J. Bailey, who participated in Matewan oral history research supported by the Humanities Council. Bailey explores the famous shootout itself, which is often cited as the opening of the West Virginia mine war of 1920-21, and also digs deep into earlier economic, labor and political history of the area. The 224-page, softcover publication sells for $27.50.
**John Brown Sesquicentennial**

October 16, 2009, marks the 150th anniversary of militant abolitionist John Brown's raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. In observance of this historical event, plans are under way to develop programs recognizing the significance of the raid that sped the coming of the Civil War. In addition, the Humanities Council invites grant proposals commemorating the 2009 Sesquicentennial of John Brown. Proposals may address Brown's battles before the Harpers Ferry Raid, the raid itself, or his trial and execution. For more information contact grants administrator Amy Saunders at (304) 346-8500 or saunders@wvhumanities.org.

Our contemporary drawing of Brown is by West Virginia artist David Hunter Strother.

**Here’s Proof**

A bit of West Virginia’s commercial art heritage will be restored and presented to the public, thanks to a recent Humanities Council grant to the WVU Research Corporation. The art in question consists of 26 proofs from the S. George Company of Wellsburg, printers after 1873 of colorful paper sacks for flour and corn meal producers in West Virginia and elsewhere. When the plant closed its doors a century later, more than 2,000 wood and metal engravings were acquired by Bob Graham and Pat Lee of Pittsburgh. Their collection came to reside at WU thanks to a long working relationship with Clifford A. Harvey, now art professor emeritus. Professor Harvey printed, documented, curated and archived all of the wood engravings and many of the metal engravings over a period of 26 years. Around the time of the plant’s closing, he also rescued boxes of folded “sack proofs” from a loft. Now, Harvey plans to restore the proofs to archival condition so they can be handled and exhibited. The first exhibition is set for spring 2009 at WVU.

**Briefs**

**Sightsee for free.** Admission fees have been dropped at two of the state’s historic attractions: Grave Creek Mound at Moundsville, the largest conical earthen mound in North America and a major state landmark, and West Virginia Independence Hall, a Wheeling museum and National Historic Register property dedicated to the history of West Virginia statehood and the Civil War.

**The Humanities Council seeks nominations for its program committee, which is responsible for grant-funding decisions and overseeing Council programs. These citizen members may be selected from schools, colleges, and the general public. The deadline for nominations is November 1. Contact grants administrator Amy Saunders for details.**

**The Kanawha Valley Civil War Roundtable** will bring Scott Hartwig, chief historian of Gettysburg National Military Park, to the Cultural Center in Charleston on Tuesday, October 14, at 7:00 p.m. Hartwig’s lecture, “The Battle of Gettysburg in History and Legend: A Critical Analysis of the Killer Angels,” is funded through a Humanities Council minigrant.

**History Teacher’s Web Site.** The National History Education Clearinghouse is an online project that brings support and resources to U.S. history educators, K-12. Visit http://teachinghistory.org for the most up-to-date history education news and content, teaching materials, research, professional development opportunities, and information about Teaching American History grants. The site was created by the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University and the Stanford University History Education Group, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education.
Grant Categories & Guidelines

Major Grants support humanities events: symposiums, conferences, exhibits, lectures. Maximum award: $20,000.
Due: Feb. 1, Sept. 1

Minigrants have a budget of $1,500 or less and support small projects, single events, or planning/consultation.
Due: Feb. 1, April 1, June 1, Aug. 1, *Oct. 1, Dec. 1

Fellowships of $2,500 support research and writing projects for humanities faculty and independent scholars.
Due: Feb. 1

Media Grants support the production of electronic or film materials, or a newspaper series. Maximum award: $20,000. Due: Sept. 1

Publication Grants are available to nonprofit presses and recognized academic presses, and support only the production phase of a completed manuscript. Maximum award: $20,000. Due: Sept. 1

Teacher Institute Grants are available to colleges and universities and support summer seminars for secondary teachers. Maximum award: $25,000. Due: Sept. 1

*Approaching Deadline!

Want Grants? Grants Administrator Amy Saunders does grants-writing workshops statewide, recently visiting Bluefield, Williamson and Logan. Upcoming sessions include workshops at the Living Heritage Museum’s one-room schoolhouse at Mineral Wells on October 9; the WW I Memorial at Kimball on October 17; and the Danville Community Center on October 23. Call (304) 346-8500 or visit www.wvhumanities.org for details.

Verizon Foundation Sponsors Council Exhibit. Our new traveling exhibit, John Henry: The Steel Drivin’ Man, was made possible by a $10,000 grant from Verizon Foundation. The company’s sponsorship will keep John Henry on the road for some time. The exhibit has already appeared at Talcott and Bluefield, and will travel to the Pennsboro B&O Depot, September 22 through October 12; the Hinton Railroad Museum in late October; the Cabell County Public Library in Huntington, November 3 through 30; and the B&O Railroad Heritage Center in Grafton, December 8 through January 3, 2009. Verizon also hosted the West Virginia exhibit at its Charleston headquarters in early September. For scheduling information or to host John Henry, contact (304) 346-8500 or payne@wvhumanities.org.

The Humanities Council Holiday Open House is set for Friday, December 5, from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Join us at the historic MacFarland-Hubbard House in Charleston for refreshments, holiday cheer, and a look at how homes were decorated in the 19th century.

Gifts and Donations
May 1, 2008-July 31, 2008

UNDERWRITER ($3,000+)
Henry and Joy Harmon

BENEFACTORS ($1,000 to $2,999)
Anonymous in memory of Dick Young
Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
Mike and Peggy Harpold
Dr. William L. and Ann Harris

PATRONS ($500 to $999)
Kenneth and Anna Bailey
Cecil I. Walker Machinery Company
Sam and Dee Kapourales
Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Potterfield
Regina W. Skaggs†
Jennifer Soule and Glade Little
Ken Sullivan

SUSTAINERS ($250 to $499)
Mr. Clifford P. Hackett
Ed and Susan Maier
Main Street West Virginia
New Century Emergency Physicians of West Virginia Inc. in memory of Regina Skaggs
Ms. Judy K. Rule
Vandalia Heritage Foundation
Mary and Stephen Voorhees
Mr. and Mrs. George Walker
West Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Walter and Shawn Williams

SPONSORS ($100 to $249)
Mr. Charles Boll and Kim Pauley
Nancy Bula
R. Terry and Athanasia P. Butcher
Mr. and Mrs. Arley W. Byer
Dr. John T. Chambers
Mrs. Elizabeth E. Chilton
Dr. Betty Jane Cleckley
Thomas S. and Lakin R. Cook
Wilson and Marge Davis
Bob and Mary Alice Elkins
Mr. Buck Flynn
Rod and Lynn Frye
Mr. William H. Gillespie
Ms. Sandra G. Graff
Priscilla M. Haden
Phil and Lily Hill
Theodore A. Jeffries in memory of Edward Mason Jeffries
Kanawha Valley Alumni Chapter
WVSU Alumni Association in honor of Dr. James W. Rowley
Gretchen Moran Laskas
Charles E. Mahan, IV
Dr. Joseph F. Marsh
William B. Maxwell, III
Nina Ratrie Peyton
Arthur and Patricia Poffenbarger in memory of Regina Skaggs
Mrs. Mary Watson Ragland
Ms. Rita Ray
William C. Revercomb
Steve and Maria Carmen Riddel
Mr. R. Terrance Rodgers
Elisabeth Rose Lathrop
David and Peggy Sadd
Bus Trip a Success

In late July, 53 Humanities Council supporters joined Executive Director Ken Sullivan and Development Director Michelle Walker for a two-day bus trip to the Eastern Panhandle. In Shepherdstown, the travelers enjoyed an overnight stay at the Bavarian Inn, an evening at the Contemporary American Theater Festival, and a walking tour the following morning. On the way back the group visited Seneca Rocks, West Virginia’s best-known natural landmark, before stopping for a good supper at elegant Graceland at Davis & Elkins College (above). The country inn was once the summer residence of U.S. Senator Henry Gassaway Davis. “Humanities Council bus trips are a great way to see the state and get to know our friends. We look forward to the next one,” Sullivan said.

Commemorative Gifts: We will recognize gifts made in honor of special people and special occasions in the upcoming year-end issue of People & Mountains. Commemorate an anniversary, birthday, graduation, wedding or other event, letting those you cherish know they really matter. Memorial gifts are also appropriate. You may use the envelope in this issue, or contact Michelle Walker at walker@wvhumanities.org.

As always, your gift to the West Virginia Humanities Council is tax deductible.
For more than a year, the Humanities Council has been actively planning for an online West Virginia encyclopedia. Tentatively named e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, the interactive web site moved closer to reality in recent months. A Request for Proposals to design and build e-WV brought in bids from nine software vendors, with nearly half of the companies located in West Virginia. A contract will be signed by the end of October with work to begin on November 1.

With the print version of the West Virginia Encyclopedia published and selling well, the time is right for broader use of this unique knowledge resource. The Humanities Council published the West Virginia Encyclopedia on West Virginia Day, June 20, 2006. The book is now in its second printing with more than 16,000 copies sold. The West Virginia Encyclopedia has become the standard reference for all things West Virginia, and its contents will provide the information base for the proposed online reference.

“We are not interested in just putting the book online,” says Ken Sullivan, Council executive director and editor of the Encyclopedia. “Rather, we expect to create a thoroughly innovative reference site. The information guts of e-WV will be the 2,200 articles from the print encyclopedia, but that material will be brought to life with audio and video and more illustrations than could ever be packed into a book, and many interactive features.”

In keeping with the Humanities Council mission of service, access to e-WV will be free to the user and available to anyone with a computer and Internet connection. The Council expects to launch e-WV on June 20, West Virginia Day, 2010.