

Presidential historian Richard Norton Smith provided the following preview of his upcoming presentation "Lincoln at 200," the 2008 Betsy K. McCreight Lecture in the Humanities.

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

Continued on page 3

An oversized Abraham Lincoln dominates the south portico of our state's capitol.

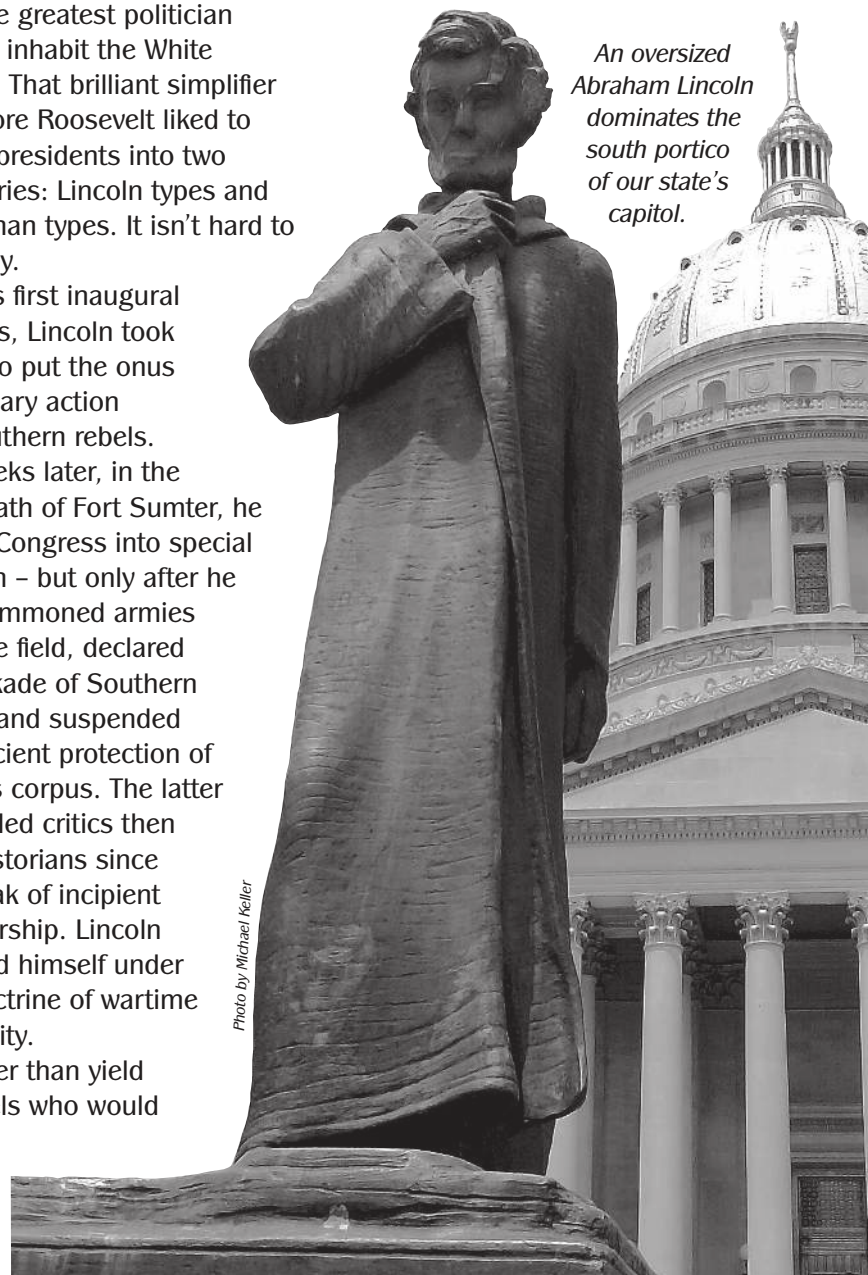


Photo by Michael Keller

Fall
2008

1

Aging Well:
Lincoln at
200

2

Editorial

4

What's New

6

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Board Meeting:

October 31, 2008
MacFarland-Hubbard House
Open to the public.

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.

People & Mountains is published quarterly by the West Virginia Humanities Council.

A state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the West Virginia Humanities Council serves West Virginia through grants and direct programs in the humanities.

We welcome reader letters, freelance manuscripts, and financial contributions. Please address all correspondence to West Virginia Humanities Council 1310 Kanawha Boulevard, East Charleston, WV 25301 or email sonis@wvhumanities.org.

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A.C. Designs *Publication Design*

Continued from page 1

amputated to save a life, but a life is never wisely given to save a limb.”

Politics is the art of persuasion. Can anyone doubt that Lincoln was the greatest of all great communicators to inhabit the White House?

A successful politician combines principle and pragmatism. There was never a time in his life, said Lincoln, when slavery didn't have the power to make him miserable. For years he had fantasized that African colonization, or financial compensation to slaveholders,

might somehow solve the awful problem. By the summer of 1862 the time for expedients had passed. The master politician had found an issue that could not be finessed. As a war president Lincoln's hand was initially stayed by fear of alienating Kentucky and other border states hostile to emancipation and teetering on the knife's edge of secession.

Now, with the war going badly, he began to ponder radical options, while playing his hand close to the vest. "I would save the Union," Lincoln told a badgering Horace Greeley. "If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slaves I would do it,

and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." This was for public consumption, offering reassurance to those, like General McClellan, who insisted that Northern troops would not fight a war to liberate the black man.

Yet even as he wrote Greeley, Lincoln was secretly at work on a

.....
Theodore Roosevelt liked to divide presidents into two categories: Lincoln types and Buchanan types.
.....

document that would strike at the heart of the rebellion. Of course, it wasn't the Emancipation Proclamation that finally freed the slaves, though it did redefine the war and open the door to mass recruitment of black troops. Only with the passage of the 13th Amendment, early in 1865, was slavery forever abolished on American soil. But the amendment — which passed the House of Representatives with just three votes to spare — never would have passed without the arm-twisting advocacy of the master politician in the White House.

Lincoln did not, like some

politicians, presume to know God's agenda. Yet in his second inaugural address, he delivered the most powerful lay sermon in American history. "Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away," declared Lincoln on March 4, 1865. "Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-

man's two hundred and fifty years unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the

judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.'"

Thus Lincoln came full circle. Out of his own fiery trial had emerged the soldier of freedom for whom preserving the Union and striking the shackles from the bondsman supplied a ticket to that secular immortality he had first glimpsed as a boy spellbound by Parson Weems's biography of George Washington. And, he remains, two centuries after his birth, the subject of continuing fascination, the president against whom all others are measured.

— Richard Norton Smith

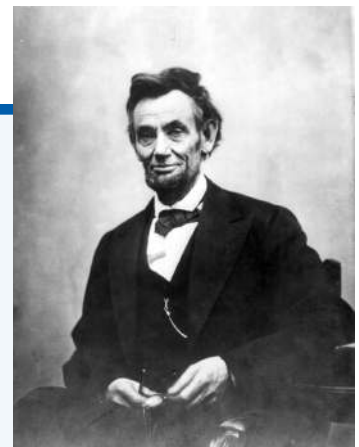


Photo by Alexander Gardner

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.



Scott Reynolds Nelson, author of the recent Oxford University Press book, Steel Drivin' Man, will speak on the subject of John Henry at Cabell County Public Library in Huntington on Sunday, November 9, at 2:00 p.m. Nelson is a professor of history at the College of William and Mary. Arguing

against the accepted wisdom of most scholars, he advances the theory that John Henry's famous contest with the steam drill took place in Virginia rather than West Virginia. The Huntington lecture, funded by the Humanities Council and free to the public, is presented in conjunction with the Council's traveling exhibit, John Henry: The Steel Drivin' Man.

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 WVU 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

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Elisabeth Rose Lathrop
David and Peggy Sadd



One Up. As the unfinished brickwork and single column indicate, work is well under way on our patio expansion job but much remains to be done. The same is true of project fundraising, notes Development Director Michelle Walker. "We are raising money as we go along in order to get the work finished this fall," she says. "We hope people will consider this opportunity as they plan their late-year tax deductible giving." You may reach Walker at (304) 346-8500 or walker@wvhumanities.org.

The expanded patio with its overhead pergola structure will provide additional programming space at our historic headquarters in Charleston.

All public spaces at the MacFarland-Hubbard House are accessible to individuals with special needs.



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.

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Dr. Janet G. Welch
Ms. Norma Whitacre
Wood County Historical and
Preservation Society

⊠ denotes a gift to the
MacFarland-Hubbard House Fund
Italic denotes pledges
† deceased

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*

e-WV:



The West Virginia Encyclopedia

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.

Simplify your gift giving by ordering the *West Virginia Encyclopedia* for \$44.95, plus tax and shipping, at www.wvhumanities.org or at (304) 346-8500. The big blue book is the perfect present for the holidays or year-round.

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