

**The 2009 Maynard Sundman Lecture**  
**LINCOLN, SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR**  
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Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. It is very nice to see children here as well because we have much that will interest them and will teach them and you.

This exhibition and lecture is hosted by the National Postal Museum of the Smithsonian Institution and is part of the National Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's observance of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Lincoln's birth on February 12, 1809. Let me add my thanks to the Sundman family for their generous support of this series. Some of my earliest purchases as a collector were from Maynard Sundman's Littleton Stamp Company and I've bought a few offer items from Mystic.

We are honored by the presence of some people from Congress, the US Postal Service and the American Philatelic Society. This is the last national observance of Black History Month, 2009. We welcome many members of ESPER, the Ebony Society of Philatelic Events and Reflections, a chapter in the American Philatelic Society, whose members study and collect philatelic material of all nations showing the Black experience in America. My deep thanks to Dr. Cheryl Ganz, Chief Curator of Philately of this museum and, like me, a fellow member of ESPER for choosing this exhibit and this subject to share with you today.

While I hope to please you today, looking at so many of you, I feel like Poor Tom. Lincoln was in Danville, IL at dinner when he heard a ruckus outside. He saw Tom, a man he had defended a few years before, all covered in hot gooey tar and chicken feathers being carried out of town on a fence rail. Lincoln looked up and asked Tom, "Ya know, I'd always wondered what that'd feel like." Tom said, "Well Mr. Lincoln, if it wasn't for the honor of the thing, I'd rather walk."

For those of you who are here for the history, the word "philately" is the formal name for the love of collecting and studying stamps and their uses on envelopes, which we call "covers." There are many different ways to be involved in philately from those who collect a favorite topic or place or country and those who join clubs and societies to share their enjoyment and information. Many share by creating exhibits to show at local and national stamp shows throughout the country.

There are many categories of exhibiting. Our focus today will be on one of the newer recognized categories, Display Class. It combines the exhibiting of philately relating to a particular subject with other historical or related material that tells the story. The first major exhibit was Kenneth Kutz' "Letters of Gold," which told the story of the California Gold Rush. Another outstanding one was created by our curator, Cheryl Ganz, with her "Take a Ride on the Hindenburg," the story of the making, flights and tragic end of a German airship. My wife, Eileen Landau, has an exhibit, "The Art of the Kimono." The field is as wide as your own imagination since almost everything can be found on stamps and covers.

The exhibit that we are going to look at today combines letters, documents and artifacts with covers and other philatelic material to tell the story of our nation's sad involvement with the

- enslaving of men, women and children kidnapped and brought here from Africa,
- conflicts involving those who wanted to expand or abolish slavery,
- rise of Abraham Lincoln who would become the instrument of its end, and
- the bloody Civil War which preserved the Union at great cost of lives while forcing an end to slavery and letting free Black men honorably fight as soldiers, ending with the last great casualty of that war, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

This presentation gives you highlights from a 160-page exhibit which is on display just outside this room. You will have plenty of time to look it over. There is also a 16-page exhibit showing the earliest usages of the 1909 stamps issued to celebrate Lincoln's birth centennial and another exhibit frame with most of the Lincoln stamps issued since the first one in 1866 up through the bicentennial set which I helped design issued on February 9, 2009. All the materials in the exhibit that you are about to see came into being from 1822-1866, during Lincoln's life and the one year mourning period.

When I was young, I read a life of Lincoln condensed from Carl Sandburg's 6 volume work. As a second generation immigrant, it struck me how a man of such humble origins was able to become President of the United States just as Barack Obama has proved again. I began collecting Lincoln stamps. I also started collecting the story of his life and times in covers and documents.

This is why my favorite covers and lettersheets are those of the 1860 Presidential Campaign which show the young Lincoln in manual labor as a railsplitter (cutting logs to make fences) and a flatboatman steering his barge-boat down the Mississippi to New Orleans. His early occupations as farmboy, surveyor, shopkeeper, and postmaster of New Salem, Illinois, led me to suggest to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee in 2003 that the issues for the bicentennial of his birth show him performing some of his occupations.

Slave market (from masthead of Wm. Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*.)

A major turning point in his life was when, as a flatboatman, he was in New Orleans and saw men, women and children chained in slavery being sold at the slave market and treated as less than people. He promised himself that some day, when he had a future opportunity, he would work against this evil.

Slave Shackles

Slavery was very brutal. Even little boys and girls would be put into cast iron shackles such as these when they were being sold or transferred between owners.

### Slaves in Cotton Fields

Men and women slaves were forced to labor hard in the cotton and tobacco fields as shown on this bank note. They were often lashed by the whips of cruel overseers.

### Hire of a Slave

When there was not enough work for the slaves of a particular master, the slaves would often be put out for hire to others who could use their labor. This document sets out a one year term of hire and requires the master renting the slave to provide winter and summer clothing. There is also a slave metal tag in the exhibit which I just got. It is from Charleston, SC, 1828, which a hired slave had to wear with a number like an auto license just to walk in town. This one says that the man or woman who wore it was a "SERVANT."

### Fugitive Slave Girl

The Federal Fugitive Slave Act forced free states to hold and return escaped slaves, many of whom had used the Underground Railroad to seek freedom, such as the one captured here. Conflicts over the Act and whether Kansas and Nebraska would be admitted as free or slave states led to armed conflict between pro and anti-slavery vigilantes.

### John Brown

There were a few slave rebellions such as Nat Turner in 1831. One of the leaders of the Abolitionist fighters in 1856 Kansas was John Brown. In October 1859 he organized an attack on the Union arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, to seize weapons and gun powder in an attempt to start a slave uprising. He failed and was sentenced to hang. This picture of him is from the flyleaf of a bible he gave to a friend writing, "Farewell, God bless you, your friend, John Brown." We all know the song, "John Brown's body lies a'mouldering in his grave but his soul goes marching on."

### Railsplitter

We now shift from slavery to young Lincoln. This 1860 presidential campaign cover shows the 18-year-old Lincoln (next to the stamp) steering his flatboat down the Mississippi to New Orleans. The other illustration below the portrait shows him splitting logs to make rails for fences.

### Lincoln Legislator

After also working as a surveyor, shopkeeper and postmaster, Lincoln became a lawyer and practiced in Springfield learning from his first partner, John Todd Stuart (first cousin of Lincoln's future wife, Marry Todd), and his second partner, Stephen Logan. As each went into politics, he followed their lead and became a state legislator for four terms while keeping his practice and taking William Herndon as a junior partner. He was key in having the state capitol moved from Vandalia to Springfield. He later served one

term in Congress but was not reelected because he cast the only vote against the Mexican-America War. He returned to his law practice.

### No Extension of Slavery

The blue label at the right on an 1860 campaign cover was first used with this motto in Lincoln's 1858 campaign to unseat Illinois US Senator Stephen Douglas. Their seven debates were reprinted by the press all over the nation and brought Lincoln to the attention of many. In one of them, he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand. This Nation cannot endure half slave, half free. It must become all one or the other."

### Stephen Douglas

Senator Douglas beat Lincoln and won his reelection in 1858. He then ran against Lincoln as the Democratic presidential candidate in 1860, but this time he lost.

### Beardless Lincoln

This Lincoln campaign cover with a 10¢ stamp paid cross-country postage between the West and the East. Most people's image of Lincoln came from such covers and from posters and newspapers made by artists and printers in the days before television and the internet.

### Bell and Everett

Another losing opponent, Bell joined the Confederacy and was considered a traitor. Everett stayed loyal and gave a long rambling speech at the dedication of Gettysburg Cemetery, November 19, 1863. Lincoln's much shorter Gettysburg Address has survived in memory, while Everett's is forgotten. Lincoln said: "Four score and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation...dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal... and that this government of the people, for the people and by the people shall not perish from the earth."

### Breckenridge

Breckenridge was vice-president for the do-nothing president, James Buchanan, who preceded Lincoln. He also lost and his Southern sympathies are shown on this campaign cover used with Confederate postage.

### Grow a Beard

After the election, one young girl wrote to Lincoln saying that he would look more presidential if he grew a beard. This early 1861 photograph shows him with the beard almost fully grown, just before his inauguration.

### Reprinted

Whittimore had a very popular beardless Lincoln campaign cover. After Lincoln was inaugurated and grew a beard, Whittimore changed his plate to issue the same cover with a beard added.

### Lincoln and Cabinet

Lincoln tried hard to get the best men of his day to serve in government. Many had opposed him in different ways but all were strongly in favor of saving the Union. Author Doris Kearns Goodwin described this well in her recent book, "A Team of Rivals." For the most part, the Cabinet members performed their duties well.

### White House Staff

Unlike large government today, there were few people or agencies to perform any delicate secret tasks on behalf of a president. Lincoln sent one of his two secretaries, Jonathan Nicolay out to Denver to get a large amount of gold from the Denver mint and bring it by a safe northerly route to Boston to be sent to England to pay for rifle barrels for the Union Army. Here the other secretary, John Hay, writes to his colleague in Denver.

### Mary Todd Lincoln

Mary Todd, like Lincoln, was born in Kentucky but her sometimes outspoken southern sympathies made her very unpopular as a First Lady. She was also deeply affected by the deaths of her sons, Tad and Willie, when young boys. There is a cover in the exhibit which reminds me of a story about her. While having a large dinner in the White House, she gave her maid the gloves she wore in the receiving line putting on a new pair for dinner. When she spilled some gravy on the new pair, she called her maid to again get replacements. Lincoln rose angrily and faced her (as reported by a NY Herald editor in attendance) and said, "Madam this Nation is engaged in a great war at great expense of lives and money. Your frippery with gloves is an expense that this Nation and this President will no longer tolerate." The cover is the one in which she sent her check from her personal funds to Fuller Brothers for 48 pair of white silk gloves.

### Secession

Just after Lincoln's election, southern states started seceding from the Union. First there were seven and later 11 formed the Confederate States of America.

### Fort Sumter

On April 12, 1861, five weeks after Lincoln's inauguration, Confederate troops attacked and captured Ft. Sumter, South Carolina, beginning the Civil War.

### Innocent Cause

While clothed in the language of the rights of states to set their own laws and economics, slavery and fear of its abolition was the basic cause of the South starting the Civil War.

### President of CSA

The Confederate States of America elected Jefferson Davis their president and boosted his image among Southerners with stamps showing him and patriotic covers featuring him such as this one.

### Old Stamp

The Union feared that the Rebels would get value from Union stamps in their hands. This caused the US to declare the 1851-57 stamp issues invalid for postage. A whole new series was issued in 1861 replacing the old ones from June that year and thereafter. Here is a cover showing that the “Old stamp, no good” and is crossed through with an “x” while the new 1861 3¢ stamp is accepted for postage.

### Stamp Money

There was a shortage of metals in the Union to make coins because of the need of metal for war supplies. For awhile, small change was made by printing stamp currency in low values up to 50¢. We should remember that at this time, 50¢ was a day’s wage for many workers and 5 to 7¢ could buy a good meal.

### Blockade

This cover shows Lincoln’s free frank (where one could send a letter just by signing his or her name) on an April 21, 1863 cover to General Sanford commanding the New York City garrison. The letter provided Sanford with instructions on how to handle mail seized from ships that were caught trying to evade the blockade of the East Coast by the Southern Atlantic Squadron, commanded by Admiral Richard Lee, ironically the brother of the Confederate States Commander, Robert E. Lee.

### Lincoln Medicine

Probably one of the most elaborate of the Union patriotics is this one showing Lincoln mixing medicines to cure the Union’s ills and attack the rebels. Some of the signs read, “Lincoln’s renowned Rebel exterminator, warranted not to spoil in warm climates” and “Pure refined national elixir of liberty.”

### Lincoln Cancel

The Postmaster of Gouvernor, New York, handcarved an image of Old Abe on wood to cancel stamps on his town’s mail.

### Union Spirit

Patriotics sought to inspire people to keep their Union spirit high. It could hardly go any higher than this one showing Lincoln as “the comet of the North.”

### Review of the Army

The Magnus Company prepared many covers featuring Lincoln coupled with his often underperforming generals in the East. Here is General Halleck. They also did Scott, McClellan and Fremont, none of whom were aggressive enough against the Confederates as Sherman and Sheridan were later. Lincoln once wrote, “If General McClellan is not presently using the Army of the Potomac, I have a use for them.”

### General Grant

However, in the West, a young general mounted a successful land and river campaign from St. Louis south and New Orleans north along the Mississippi and won a stunning victory at Shiloh, Tennessee. General Grant successfully split the Confederacy and

controlled the river. With the Gulf of Mexico blockaded, this severely cut Confederate access to foreign supplies and isolated Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas from the rest of the Confederacy. Lincoln later put Grant in charge of the entire Army.

### POW Mail

Captured soldiers of both sides were held in prisons with poor sanitation, poor medical care and even worse, food. But there was mail exchanged under flags of truce especially at Old Point Comfort, Virginia as shown on this scarce cover with stamps of both the Confederacy and the Union paying the postage in each of their territories.

### Frederick Douglass

Freed slave, Frederick Douglass, was the first Black to become an advisor to any president. One of his strong suggestions to Lincoln was that he add to the Union Army "the strength of able and courageous free Black men" who were willing to serve as soldiers for the Union.

### US Colored Troops

Lincoln took Frederick Douglass' advice and created regiments of Black soldiers with White officers known as U.S. Colored Troops. Here he approved the appointment of the first colonel of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment.

### Black Zouave

A Black soldier (dressed in a Zouave uniform) is only found on one patriotic of which only this example is known today. Their bravery was brought to the attention of modern America in the Denzel Washington film, "Glory." If you haven't already seen it, I strongly urge you to rent it.

### Aid for Families

Many soldiers' families needed help while their men were away at war. This cover carried aid coupons to help a soldier's family pay for food.

### Emancipation Proclamation

On September 22, 1862, Lincoln used his Commander-In-Chief powers to end slavery in all the states which were in open rebellion effective Jan. 1, 1863. Here is the Emancipation Proclamation as a general order to all Union troops.

### Marines

The war was fought on open fields and in wooded forests. The marines in this hand-tinted Magnus cover were fighting in the woods of North Carolina.

### Ironclads

John Ericsson's improved propeller and Dahlgren's more powerful cannons enabled the Union's ironclad *Monitor* (dubbed a "cheese box on a raft") to defeat the Confederate steamship *Virginia*, formerly named *Merrimack*. This secured Union control of the Virginia Capes and Chesapeake Bay.

### 1864 Election

Lincoln ran for reelection in 1864 taking a border state Democrat, Andrew Johnson, as vice-president on a **Union Party** ticket. He was looking to help bring the nation back together and to start its reconstruction after an anticipated Union victory.

### John Wilkes Booth

Booth was the brother of renowned actor, Edwin Booth. He thought he could stop the South's loss of the war if Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton were killed. What might have succeeded in 1862 or 63 was a foolish act of desperation after Lee had already surrendered the Confederate Army at Appomattox, VA on April 9, 1865.

### Assassination

Booth shot Lincoln on April 14, 1865 while he and his wife were at a performance of "My American Cousin" at Ford's Theater. He died at 7:20 a.m. the next morning.

### Mourning

The Nation went into a period of deep mourning. This mourning cover has handwritten references to the Good Friday date and Ford's Theater.

### Mourning Ribbon

At this time, it was customary to observe a one year period of mourning. Many people wore elaborate ribbons as memorials such as this one hand-painted on silk.

### Widow's Free Frank

Almost at the end of the mourning year, Congress belatedly gave Mrs. Lincoln the right given other widows of presidents to free frank her mail by just signing her name. This mourning cover dated April 10, 1866, is the first use known of her franking privilege.

### Official Mourning Portrait

The National Bank Note Company created a portrait of Lincoln from his preferred C.S. German photograph with some elements of one by Matthew Brady. The U.S. Treasury commissioned them to prepare an official mourning portrait which could be distributed throughout the country starting with the anniversary of what would have been Lincoln's 57<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 12, 1866.

### Memorial Stamp

The U.S. Post Office Department adapted the same portrait for use as a 15¢ stamp in the mourning color of black to pay common treaty rates to German States and to France. It was issued in April 1866 marking the end of the official year of mourning and became America's first commemorative stamp.

### Gratitude

I want to thank my daughter, Susan Landau-Van Dyke, for her technical assistance in preparing the images for this presentation. I also thank David Phillips and Dana and

Barbara Linnett and others without whom this material could not have been assembled and my wife, Eileen, for her wonderful forbearance.

For more information

For anyone who wants to know more, here are a few selected references.

While this marks the end of the lecture, it is not the end of your experience. ESPER has a table where some of our members will be happy to discuss with you the benefits of membership. In addition to the full 160-page ten frame exhibit just outside, there are two short exhibits, one is a single frame of 16-pages showing the 1909 stamps that were issued for the centennial of Lincoln's birth.

The other shows some of the wide variety of Lincoln material that can be collected, most of it on a reasonably low budget. The Scott Company has also generously made available many copies of the February 2009 **Scott's Stamp Monthly** featuring my article on *Collecting Lincoln* giving tips and ideas on areas of Lincoln philately that are open for collecting. Many of the items that are shown in that article are also shown in that exhibit frame.

Thank you very much for coming and I will now take some questions.