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August 1, 2005

Traveling Exhibition on View August 17 - September 30

Main Library to Host *Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation*



How was it that a nation founded on ideals of freedom and equality was also home to one of the harshest labor systems the modern world has known? A new traveling exhibition opening at the Main Library in the Atrium on August 17 looks for answers to this question by tracing Abraham Lincoln's gradual transformation from an antislavery moderate into "The Great Emancipator," who freed slaves with a revolutionary wartime proclamation in 1863. *Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation* will be on view through September 30.

The Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County is one of only 40 libraries in the U.S. selected to host the exhibit, which was organized by The Huntington Library, San Marino, California and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, New York City, in cooperation with the American Library Association Public Programs Office.

The Library was selected as a site based on the historical importance of Cincinnati as a center of abolitionist activity and the Library's significant Presidential, African America and Civil War collections. Highlights of these materials include: one of the largest sets of Civil War regimental histories in the U.S.; current and nineteenth century sources on the politics of slavery and emancipation; over 700 books on Lincoln, as well as autographed letters, portraits, speeches and manuscripts; newspaper coverage of Lincoln's visits to Cincinnati, national and local politics, and Civil War reports; and all laws signed by Lincoln and speeches made before Congress.

"We are pleased to have been selected as a site for this exhibition," said Patricia Van Skaik, Manager of the Library's History & Genealogy Department. "The Civil War and slavery are topics which must constantly be revisited in order to help 21st Century Americans better understand their causes and more clearly see how their effects are still with us today. This exhibit offers our community an opportunity to learn more about how Abraham Lincoln decided upon emancipation of the slaves, even as he tried to hold together a fragile coalition of states to preserve the Union. It is revealing insight into the values, principles, and ideals that guided one of our Presidents."

Programs & Exhibits at the Main Library**August 17 – September 30****Exhibit: *Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation***

Beginning with “Young Lincoln’s America” and ending with “Legacies,” the period right before Lincoln’s death, *Forever Free* deepens our understanding of the painful issue of slavery and illuminates the paradox of the U.S. as a slaveholding republic founded on ideals of liberty and equality. This compelling six-section, 75-foot long panel show is chronologically organized into thematic segments containing a narrative on these topics and a display of reproductions of rare contemporary documents including: books, manuscripts, period photographs, broadsides, illustrative materials such as engravings, lithographs, cartoons, and political ephemera, drawn primarily from the collections of the Huntington Library and the Gilder Lehrman Collection. Main Library Atrium, south building, 1st floor

August 17 – October 1**Exhibit: *Lincoln and Civil War Imprints***

The Rare Books & Special Collections Department will have an array of Lincoln images and Lincoln manuscripts on display from this time period in its hall exhibit cases. Civil War Imprints will also be on view in the department. Main Library Bridge, south building, 3rd floor

Saturday, August 20, 2:00 p.m., Opening Reception**Lecture: *Great Emancipator or Reluctant Emancipator: Abraham Lincoln's Complex Journey to Emancipation***

Christopher Phillips, Associate Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati, award winning author, and editor of the journal *Ohio Valley History*, discusses Lincoln's path to becoming the nation's "Great Emancipator" — one of the least understood stories in the American past and far more complicated than most of us recognize. This talk will offer an introduction to the controversy surrounding Lincoln's legacy through the Great Emancipator's own racial views and background. Main Library Atrium, south building, 1st floor, refreshments

Saturday, August 27, 2:00 p.m.**Lecture: *Voices of Freedom: African American Soldiers in the Civil War***

Tony Burroughs, noted author of *Black Roots: A Beginner's Guide to Tracing the African American Family Tree*, awarding winning speaker, and guest expert for the PBS “Ancestors” series, will discuss this fascinating topic during his slideshow presentation. Over 190,000 African Americans served in the Civil War, many of whom were former slaves. They fought to preserve the Union, but also to end slavery, and free their brethren. But rarely do we hear their words. What did they say about their hopes, fears, thoughts, plans and actions during the Civil War? Finally, we hear from them in *Voices of Freedom*. Main Library Atrium, south building, 1st floor, refreshments

Wednesday, September 7, 7:00 p.m.**Lecture: *Collecting Lincoln***

Bob Willard, President of the Abraham Lincoln Institute in Washington, D.C, board member of the Abraham Lincoln Association, long-time collector of books and other artifacts about Abraham Lincoln, and consultant on numerous digitization projects of Lincoln memorabilia, will discuss how collecting has helped him understand Lincoln. He will also describe some of the interesting people he has met along the way. Main Library Atrium, south building, 1st floor, refreshments. The Rare Books & Special Collections Department will remain open until 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7.

Saturday, September 17, 2:00 p.m.

Lecture: *African American History 1915-2005: Contributions of Dr. Carter G. Woodson*

Harold Johnson, Past President of the NAACP, will discuss the “Father of Black History,” Carter G. Woodson. September marks the 90th anniversary of Woodson’s founding the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in 1915. Many of Woodson’s writings focus on slavery, emancipation and the Civil War. Huenefeld Tower Room, third floor

Programs funded by the Friends of the Public Library.

Further Information – Log onto <http://www.cincinnatiLibrary.org/foreverfree/> for information on *Forever Free* and recommended books, videos, and websites on the topics of Lincoln, slavery, emancipation, and the Civil War. Call the History & Genealogy Department at 513-369-6909 for details.

Also sponsored by the History & Genealogy Department

Saturday, August 27, 10:00 a.m.

Lecture: *Locating Sleepy Hollow: Or Anywhere Else Your Ancestor Lived*

Tony Burroughs illustrates strategies for locating hard to find towns that may no longer exist. He begins with basic sources, progresses to more advanced sources, and concludes with high tech sources. Co-sponsored by the Hamilton County Genealogical Society, Main Library, Huenefeld Tower Room, south building, 3rd floor

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✓ **Information about events at the Main Library and 41 branch libraries is available on the Internet site: www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.**

✓ **Our goal is to make our programs accessible to everyone. Please request ADA services one week in advance at 513-369-4400 (TTY 369-4409).**