



**THE
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**
of Cincinnati
and
Hamilton County

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Press Release

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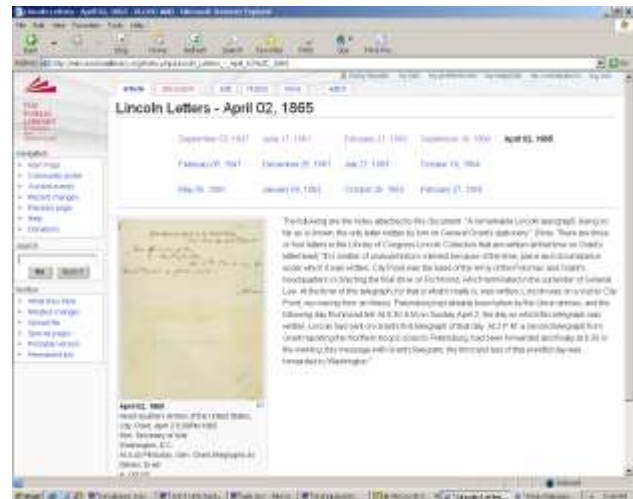
Public Library Provides Wider Access to Collection's Treasures

Wikis: Inland Riverboats Photo Collection & Lincoln Letters Collection

The Public Library of Cincinnati & Hamilton County's collection includes more than 10 million items – audiobooks, music CDs, DVDs, printed publications such as books, magazines, and newspapers, and even digital items like e-books and e-videos. With all of that material and a limited amount of space, historical treasures like the Inland Riverboats Photograph Collection and letters penned by President Abraham Lincoln himself might have been overshadowed by the ever-changing and ever-growing collection.

Thankfully, digital technology has provided a new vehicle for Library customers to experience these treasures. A wiki –short for the Hawaiian word “wiki wiki,” meaning fast – is a digital technology that provides instant access and unlimited virtual space to showcase these collection items.

More than just a gallery, these collaborative Web sites allow visitors to share the stories behind these historical treasures and even edit one another's comments. Now family stories passed down from generation-to-generation about a particular photo or letter have a special place in the Library's collection and are available for everyone to access anytime, anywhere.



User-submitted comments, like this one on the Lincoln Letters Wiki, add a new dimension and more depth to the Library's collection.

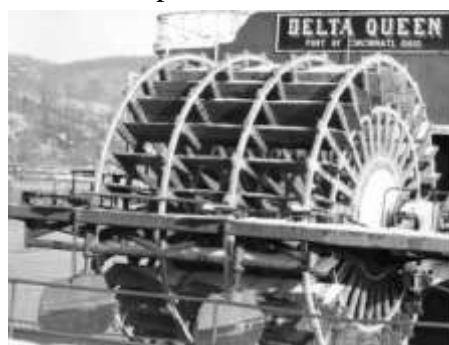
About the Inland Riverboats Photograph Collection

In 1956, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County merged its own collection of river material with a donation from the Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen, an organization devoted to the preservation of river history, and from Captain Frederick Way, Jr., a noted steamboat pilot and river historian. This merged collection, known as the Inland Rivers Library, has become a major resource for books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, and ephemera dealing with the commercial use of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and their navigable tributaries.



Aside from books and pamphlets, photographs are one of the most frequently requested items in the Inland Rivers Library. There are about 24,000 photographs on file, and there are thousands of additional photographs found in scrapbooks throughout the collection. Depicted in these photographs are various types of riverboats, including packets, towboats, ferries, excursion boats, and government boats. There are also scenes of river towns, floods, navigation facilities, and other topics.

Of the 24,000 photographs in the collection, 19,000 will be available via the Library's Inland Riverboat Photo Collection Wiki. To date, more than 4,000 of these images are already available online.



Photos above left Island Queen and at right, Delta Queen

About the Lincoln Letters Collection

Across the country communities, organizations, and individuals have already begun to plan parades, museum exhibitions, performances, art installations, and much more to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln in 2009. A diverse alliance of local institutions has come together to plan *The Lincoln Legacy – A Cincinnati Celebration of Freedom*, the region's commemoration and celebration of Abraham Lincoln's treasured legacy.

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, a Lincoln Legacy partner, has digitized 12 letters penned by Abraham Lincoln himself. The letters are from private collections as well as from the Bertrand B. Kahn Lincolniana Collection available in the Library's Rare Books Department. The Lincoln Letters wiki houses digital versions of all 12 letters.

- The wikis are available on the Library's Web site http://wiki.cincinnati.org/index.php/Main_Page and comments can be shared without complex mark up language – all you need is access to a Web browser.
- To learn more about the Inland Riverboats Photo Collection Wiki and the Lincoln Letters Wiki, go to http://wiki.cincinnati.org/index.php/Main_Page.