



NEWS RELEASE

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Celebrate the 200th Birthday of Abraham Lincoln At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, PA (January 29, 2009) — This February marks the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth, and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania is celebrating with a Lincoln exhibit and free event.

The exhibit, titled "200 Years of Lincoln," opens on **February 3** and runs until May 1. The historical society holds hundreds of Lincoln images, documents, and ephemera, and copies of these treasures will be on display. The exhibit will examine each phase of Lincoln's life, including his childhood days, his presidency, his leadership during the Civil War, and his assassination and funeral. "Just like George Washington and other legendary presidents, there is a mythos about Lincoln," said Michael Ryan, the society's coordinator of exhibitions. "The fact that he not only ended the Civil War but also freed the slaves is reason enough to be captivated."

Highlights of the exhibit will include:

- Portraits and photographs of Lincoln and his family
- Campaign images and political cartoons
- A series of Civil War etchings that are sympathetic to the Confederate cause
- A signed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation
- Photographs of Lincoln's funeral cortege traveling through the streets of Philadelphia and cards detailing the funeral route

Items in the exhibit will be reproductions. Original documents from the collection can be viewed by request in the library. Exhibit admission costs \$1. The exhibit is open to the public during regular operating hours. Hours are posted at www.hsp.org.

Learn even more about Lincoln at a free event sponsored by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania at 6 p.m. on **February 11**. The society welcomes guest speaker Karl Purnell, a Civil War historian, author, and playwright. Purnell will examine the conflicting characteristics of Lincoln and share insights into the man behind the legend. Join us for "The Enigma of Abe Lincoln: Patriot or Despot? Poet or Politician?" Purnell's new book of Civil War short stories, *Goin' A Soldierin'*, will be available for sale after the lecture.

— more —

Abraham Lincoln came from humble beginnings. He was born in a log cabin in Kentucky on February 12, 1809. The Lincoln family moved to Indiana in 1816, and eventually made its home in Illinois. Lincoln held many jobs before ascending to the presidency. He was a store clerk, a captain in the Black Hawk War, a business partner, a postmaster, a surveyor, a presidential elector for William Henry Harrison, a lawyer, and a state representative to Congress.

Lincoln accomplished much during his one term as president from 1861 to 1865. “Lincoln believed that the Union should be preserved, so he went to war to not only save it but to cure it,” Ryan said. “Our Founding Fathers set down the notion that ‘all men are created equal.’ Lincoln sought to see this idea through to its moral end. He drafted the Emancipation Proclamation which freed the slaves. This was one of the most defining moments in our nation’s history. This moment created an echo throughout history that is still felt today.”

Media is invited to attend the exhibit and the event. The society’s Coordinator of Exhibits, Michael Ryan, is available for interviews.

The attached images will be on display during the exhibit. They can be credited: Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Additional images and higher-resolution images can be provided upon request. For more information, contact the society’s Coordinator of Communications, Lauri Cielo, at (215) 732-6200 ext. 233 or lcielo@hsp.org.

About the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Founded in 1824 in Philadelphia, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (www.hsp.org) collects and shares the stories of Pennsylvania. It is home to some 600,000 printed items and more than 21 million manuscript and graphic items. Its unparalleled collections encompass more than 300 years of America’s history—from its 17th-century origins to the contributions of its most recent immigrants. The society’s remarkable holdings together with its educational programming make it one of the nation’s most important special collections libraries: a center of historical documentation and study, education, and engagement.

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