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**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM TOGETHER WITH  
THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY  
PRESENT *LINCOLN SPEAKS: WORDS THAT  
TRANSFORMED A NATION***

*New Exhibition Opening January 23 Coincides with the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of Lincoln's Assassination and the End of the Civil War*

**Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation**

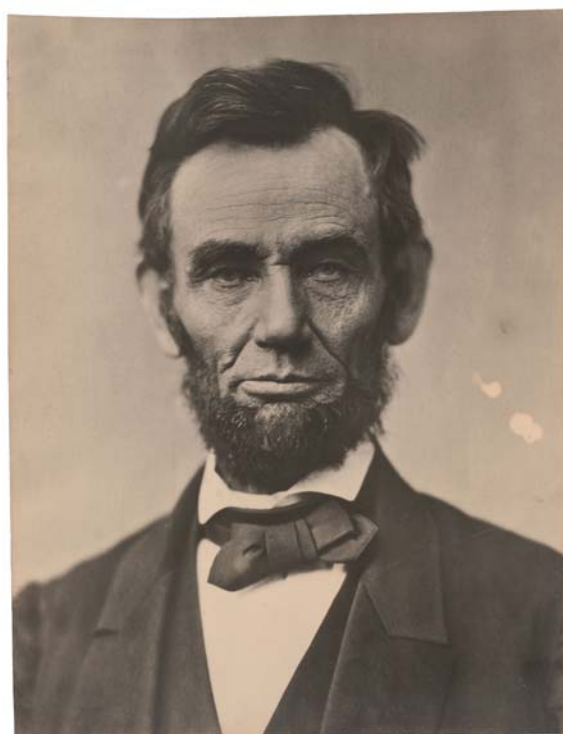
January 23 – June 7, 2015

\*\*Press Preview: Thursday, January 22, 10 –11:30 am\*\*

RSVP: [media@themorgan.org](mailto:media@themorgan.org)

**New York, NY, December 12, 2014**—No U.S. president and few leaders of any time or place have commanded language with the skill of Abraham Lincoln. Largely self-taught, he achieved a mastery of the word that helped him win the presidency and define the true meaning of America's founding principle of human equality. In his writings and speeches—many of which are woven into the historical fabric of America—he vigorously strove to defend the Union and the Constitution, while also salving the wounds of a country torn apart by civil war.

Now, in a new exhibition at the Morgan Library & Museum titled *Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation*, more than eighty items from his remarkable life—speeches, letters, legal writings, personal notes, and more—will be presented. Co-organized by the Morgan and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and on view from January 23 through June 7, the



This photograph was taken less than two weeks before Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address on November 19, 1863, two-and-one-half years into the Civil War.

*President Lincoln* by Alexander Gardner. Washington, D.C., November 8, 1863. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, GLC 245.

show includes not only well-known documents such as the Gettysburg Address, but a number of infrequently exhibited items that serve as powerful—and perhaps unexpected—reminders of the man behind the genius. Coinciding with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his assassination and the conclusion of the Civil War, visitors to the Morgan will see up-close how the most common of men reached uncommon heights of eloquence. The exhibition will also include a selection of photographs and artifacts from Lincoln’s time, as well as a short, in-gallery film that features contemporary writers and scholars sharing their personal views on his matchless gifts with language.

“Abraham Lincoln’s landmark writings and speeches are familiar to us all and their influence continues to this day, not only in the U.S., but throughout the world,” said Peggy Fogelman, acting director of the Morgan Library and Museum. “*Lincoln Speaks* presents these great works and the volatile, strife-ridden context around their creation. Importantly, however, it also highlights less renown items that offer valuable insight into the character and beliefs of the more private Lincoln. We are deeply grateful to the Gilder Lehrman Institute for partnering with us on this extraordinary exhibition.”

James G. Basker, president of the Gilder Lehrman Institute and Richard Gilder Professor of Literary History at Barnard College said, “Even for the Lincoln specialist and certainly for every American who cares about history, this is a must-see exhibition. The iconic Lincoln is here—the Cooper Union speech, the Gettysburg Address, the Second Inaugural Address—but even more importantly, so are some of the rarest and most revealing documents in Lincoln’s hand—a note denying clemency to a slave trader sentenced to death, and the last letter he ever wrote to his wife, about the fall of Richmond. Parents will want to bring their children, teachers their students, but everybody will appreciate the hidden Lincoln whose words continue to resonate today.”

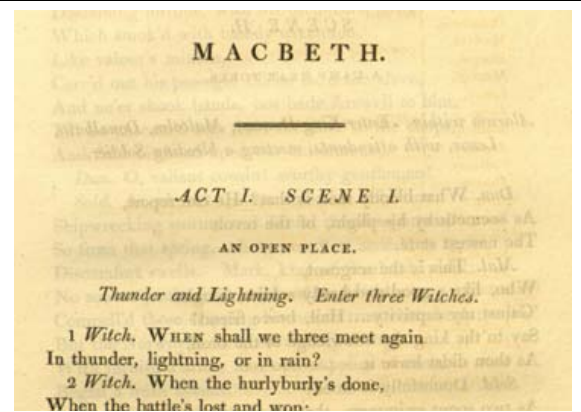
## **THE EXHIBITION**

*Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation* is divided into nine sections. They explore Lincoln’s development as a writer and speaker, and his deft and compelling use of language to fit the many roles he took on as the country’s leader at a time of unparalleled crisis.

## I. Sources of Lincoln's Language

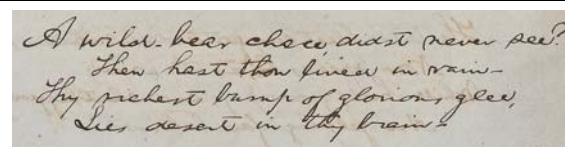
Abraham Lincoln penned his own speeches. He used words with a lawyer's precision and a poet's sense of rhythm, confident in their power to persuade an audience. Writing with great deliberation, he chose language that was spare, colorful, and accessible to all classes: it seemed to author and abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe that it had "the relish and smack of the soil." As President he deployed ethical teaching, painstaking reason, and wry humor; he resisted easy demagoguery and personal abuse.

The works that gave Lincoln greatest pleasure also gave direction to his native talent. He read, re-read, and absorbed the poetic language of the King James translation of the Bible. He revered Shakespeare's plays and sonnets for their imagery, metrical rhythms, emotional range, and psychological perception; from memory he could recite long passages from the Bard's tragedies and histories. He appreciated the political oratory of his Whig hero Henry Clay, studied Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England and other legal texts, and mastered books of Euclidian logic: together these confirmed his preference for words that appealed to reason, not mere emotion. In his favorite poem, William Knox's "Mortality"—beginning and ending "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"—Lincoln saw the power of rhythmic repetition. And in the comic thrusts of contemporary humorists and satirists such as Artemus Ward and David Ross Locke, he saw skill bordering on genius. All in all, Lincoln had no appetite for grandiloquence and pretension. Rather, he admired writing that was clear and cogent, and that, when spoken, was pleasing to the ear.



This is the third of a six-volume set of Shakespeare's works owned by Lincoln. The volume is opened to *Macbeth*, one of Lincoln's favorite plays.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616), *The Plays of William Shakspeare* (sic). From the corrected text of Johnson and Steevens. London: J. Stockdale, 1807. Courtesy of Harvard College Library; Gift of Charles Moore, 1931.



First quatrain of Abraham Lincoln's poem, "The Bear Hunt:"

A wild-bear chace, didst never see?  
Then hast thou lived in vain.  
Thy richest bump of glorious glee,  
Lies desert in thy brain.

Lincoln adored poetry and began composing poems in his teens. He remained an avid reader and writer of verse throughout his life; his last documented poem was written in 1863. He wrote this vivid and comic poem about a bear hunt a month after his election to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1846.

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), "The Bear Hunt," Springfield, ca. 6 September 1846. The Morgan Library & Museum, Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1905; MA 229.1

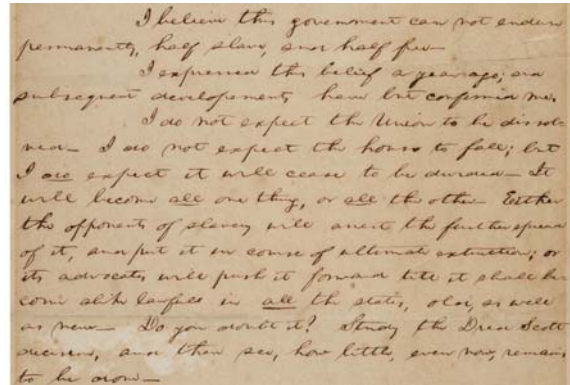
## II. The Politician

Lincoln's public career coincided with the maturing of a democratic, two-party system marked by boisterous campaigning and torrents of rhetoric. Whether working for his own election or others', he showed an aptitude for the new politics and connected easily with the public. In the main he spoke extemporaneously, but he prepared notes for his most important speeches. His faith in the people's intelligence and moral sense led him naturally to use logic and reason as means of persuasion. He despised the florid rhetoric associated with Daniel Webster and other celebrated Whig orators of the day, preferring a dry statement of his principal point in the clearest, simplest language. His great gift for colorful colloquialism

and story telling cemented his appeal as an unaffected man of the people. Few could match him for the humorous tales that he used as parable, explanation, and analogy. When the grave issue of slavery's expansion shook the political system during the 1850s, however, he reined in his humor and surprised many by his ethical seriousness. A colleague remarked that, when thoroughly roused, Lincoln "would come out with an earnestness of conviction, a power of argument, a wealth of illustration, that I have never seen surpassed."

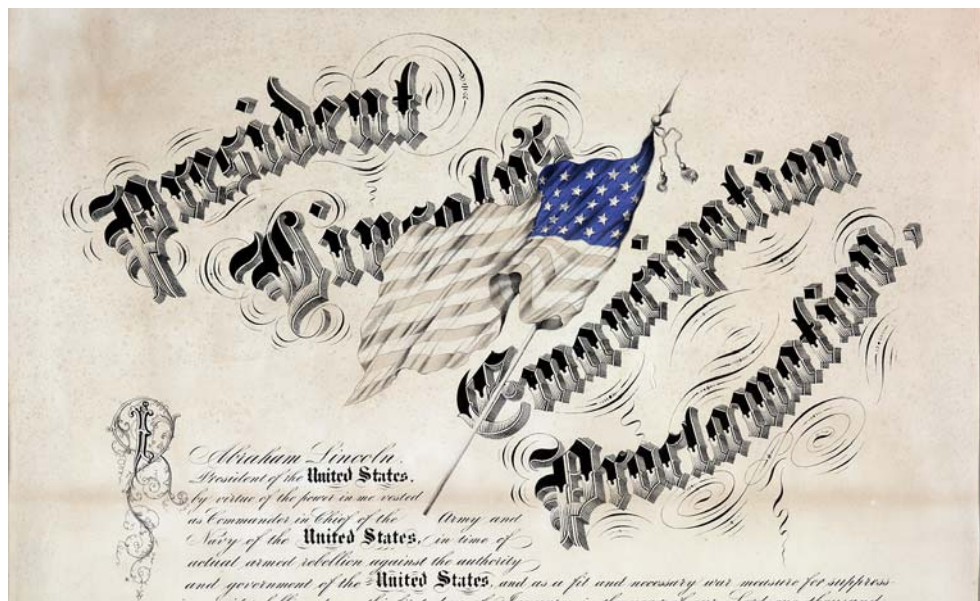
## III. National Leader

One of Lincoln's greatest achievements was his articulation of a rationale for the Civil War and its almost unthinkable sacrifices, shaped to inspire loyal Unionists. His leadership rested far less on coercion than on his faith in what he described as "the power of the right word from the right man to develop the latent fire and enthusiasm of the masses." Obtaining an audience with the president was much easier for mid-nineteenth century citizens. As president, however, he had only limited time for preparing substantial speeches. He spoke in public nearly one hundred times, but generally his remarks were modest and often unscripted. They included short addresses to troops, impromptu responses to well wishers who came to 'serenade' him, and statements to visiting delegations – of clergymen, border-state representatives, free blacks, and others.



In what is believed to be Lincoln's earliest formulation of his "House Divided" doctrine, he identifies slavery as a moral and political issue that threatens the survival of the United States. He famously invoked the biblical phrase from Mark 3:25, "A house divided against itself can not stand..."

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), Autograph manuscript, fragment of "House Divided" speech, ca. 1858. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; GLC02533.



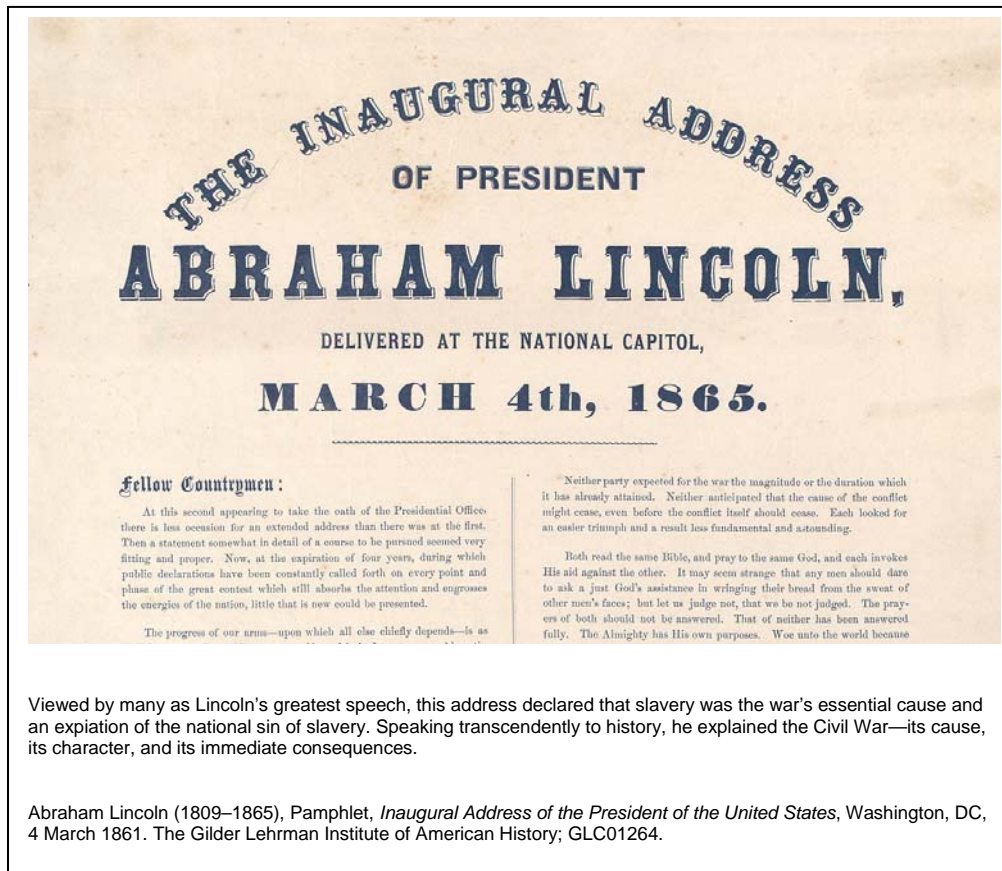
The Emancipation Proclamation was shaped by both pragmatic considerations and Lincoln's lifelong disdain for slavery. As a legal document, it aspires to precision rather than eloquence.

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), Document, signed, Washington DC, Emancipation Proclamation, 1 January 1863. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; GLC00742.

Exceptions to this general rule included the two most celebrated speeches of his presidency, the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural: significantly, they were his pithiest. For these reasons Lincoln relied less on the spoken than the written word. Most effective of all were his carefully crafted and widely circulated public letters. He skillfully designed each to rally support on an issue crucial to the prosecution of the war: emancipation and racial issues, conscription, and military arrests and the suspension of habeas corpus.

#### IV. The Emancipator

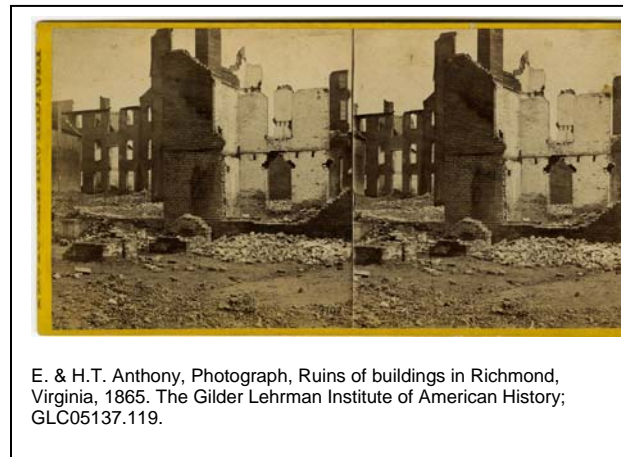
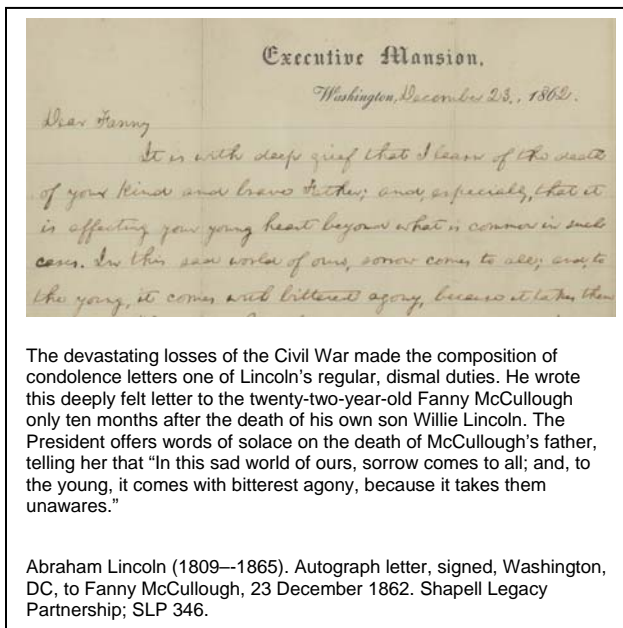
Lincoln felt strongly the injustice of slavery. "I am naturally anti-slavery," he wrote in 1864. "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel." Yet he was careful never to describe it as a sin: southerners were the victims of their particular circumstances. During the first year of the war, to avoid alarming slave-owning loyalists in Kentucky and other border states, he had to be especially cautious when addressing slavery's future. Union military setbacks during the first half of 1862 led Lincoln to take the radical step he called "indispensable" to national salvation. In the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation of September 22 he pointedly used dry, legalistic language to declare – as Commander-in-Chief, guided by the Constitution – that those held as slaves in still rebellious areas on 1 January 1863



“shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” Lincoln thereafter fashioned a more jeweled language to place emancipation within the ethical purposes of the war. African Americans were implicit in his commitment at Gettysburg to “a new birth of freedom.” When, in 1865, states began to ratify the emancipation amendment to the Constitution, he lauded this “King's cure for all the evils.”

#### V. Healing a Nation

Lincoln was a kindly man, who by his own estimate probably had “too little” of the feeling of personal resentment: “a man has not time to spend half his life in quarrels,” he reflected. He saw the irony that, as someone who did not bear a grudge, he had found himself at the center of so profound a conflict. Lincoln’s lifelong belief in American national destiny and common purpose, however, led him to sanction an intensification of the war after the summer of 1862. It could no longer be fought, he said, “with elder stalk squirts charged with rosewater.” His emancipation policy marked the end of conciliation, led to a developing assault on the South's people and economy, and prompted deep hostility in parts of the North. As the end of this “hard war” approached, Lincoln sought to heal the wounds. At his second inauguration, with the



Confederacy now speedily crumbling, he called for a magnanimous post-war reconciliation. The crowd had expected the language of triumph; instead, his words avoided blame, spoke inclusively, emphasized the shared experience of – and God's judgment on – both sides in the conflict, and urged "with malice towards none" no vengeance on the South. Of all Lincoln's words, these make claim to be the most transformative.

## VI. Commander-in-Chief

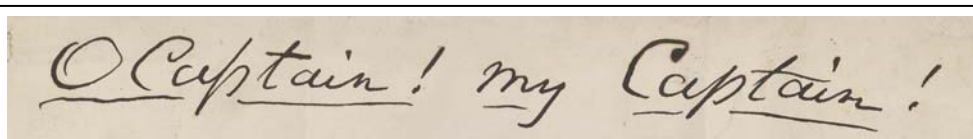
Lincoln was not a natural warrior nor had he any real military training. Like many other of his pursuits, he had to teach himself about command. As a lawyer, he knew how to draft lucid and cogent directions. Similarly, as commander-in-chief he was uncompromisingly clear in laying out military strategy. When the security of Washington DC was threatened in 1861, Lincoln erupted at the bureaucratic delay in organizing and moving troops and angrily ordered General Charles Russell to send troops to Fort Monroe 180 miles from the capital, where they could easily be transported to the capital by water. "I want you to cut the Knots and send them right along." Lincoln's words circulated in the military camps through publications that addressed the troops. He also spoke to many volunteers individually. They admired the common touch of a president who lacked airs and graces, remained approachable, and mixed kindness with good humor, jokes, and easy familiarity.

## VII. Lincoln Among Friends

In the course of his career Lincoln made many political and legal acquaintances; with some of these he established close working relationships. His engaging conversation, capacious memory, and skill in story telling made him entertaining company: more often than not he was the center of a crowd. As a personally private and self-reliant man, however, he had few intimate friends. Although his family provided emotional sustenance, his relations with his father were strained, his marriage to Mary was not always easy, and there was little intimacy with his eldest son, Robert. Lincoln's surviving writings show a guarded man. Even so, his private correspondence offers revealing insight into his beliefs and fundamental character. In the midst of the contentious 1860 presidential campaign, Lincoln paused to write a letter of consolation to a friend of his son Robert, George C. Latham, who had been denied admission to Harvard. Lincoln encouraged him to reapply saying, "It is a certain truth that you can enter and graduate in Harvard University; and having made the attempt, you must succeed in it. "Must" is the word." The letter is revealing as it could also apply to Lincoln's approach to making the most of his own life, which, as with the young student, was full of aspirational disappointment.

## VIII. Lincoln in the Eyes of the World

Lincoln's horizons stretched across the nineteenth-century world. Deeming the Union the "last, best hope of earth," he defined the Civil War as more than an American crisis. The struggle presented "to the whole family of man, the question, whether a constitutional republic ... can, or cannot, maintain its territorial integrity, against its own domestic foes." Equally, the fight to end American slavery was part of a universal struggle between liberty and tyranny, social progress and lethargy. Lincoln's words in public and private encouraged progressives abroad to cast him as the embodiment of democratic freedom and modernity. His cruel death prompted a worldwide outpouring of grief. Grown men wept in the streets of European cities. Poet Walt Whitman wrote the elegy *O Captain! My Captain!* in his honor. The U.S. State Department was overwhelmed by a blizzard of grieving tributes from every continent. Foreign biographies suggest the extent of

An autograph copy of the poem "O Captain! My Captain!" by Walt Whitman. The text is written in cursive on aged, yellowed paper. The words "O Captain!" and "my Captain!" are underlined.

Lincoln's assassination inspired Walt Whitman to write this poem of mourning. It is one of the few poems in which he used a conventional meter and rhyme scheme. His tribute became extremely popular at the time of its first publication, in 1865, and it was the only poem of Whitman's to be anthologized during his lifetime.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892), Autograph copy of "O Captain! My Captain!" The Morgan Library & Museum, Purchased in 1945; MA 1212.1.



Lincoln's global reach. By 1900, he had become the subject of usually admiring works published in German, French, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Spanish, Danish, Welsh, Hebrew, Russian, Norwegian, Finnish, Turkish, Swedish, and Japanese; over the next quarter-century the list grew to embrace lives in Polish, Chinese, Czech, Arabic, Hungarian, Persian, Slovak, Armenian, and Korean. Various seen as emancipator, nation-builder, defender of representative government, and self-made common man, Lincoln was a worldwide hero.

#### IX. A Man for All Time

Lincoln's words have lived on through their own intrinsic power. American political leaders, poets, playwrights, novelists, literary critics, theologians, journalists, and others have been inspired, challenged, and sometimes affronted by his sentiments. Lincoln has also spoken – and continues to speak – to peoples across the world. Karl Marx judged him “the single-minded son of the working class.” Tomas Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, drew strength as “the Lincoln of Central Europe.” Racially mixed, republican “Lincoln brigades” fought in the Spanish Civil War. Mohandas Gandhi recognized in Lincoln a model of nonviolence. In Britain during the Second World War his words stiffened resolve, while in Germany during the subsequent Cold War West Berliners deployed Lincoln as a symbol of anticommunism and self-determination. At the same time, Ghanaians used him to legitimize liberation from British colonial rule and then to justify the new state's use of massive force against internal enemies. Recently, Desmond Tutu accepted the Lincoln Leadership Prize for his role in national reconciliation in South Africa. “Now he belongs to the ages,” whispered the grieving Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, when Lincoln breathed his last. His words could scarcely have been more prescient.

#### **EXHIBITION FILM**

*Lincoln Speaks: Words that Transformed a Nation* is accompanied by a short in-gallery film featuring former **President Bill Clinton** and a group of celebrated authors and scholars. The film addresses various aspects of Lincoln's remarkable life and legacy, ranging from his formative years in Illinois to the evolution of his attitudes towards race to his unmatched place in American history as the nation's most transformative president.

In addition to President Clinton, others appearing in the film include **Edna Greene Medford**, a notable scholar of the Civil War era and chair of the history department at Howard University; **Tony Kushner**, Pulitzer-prize winning playwright and the scriptwriter for the award-winning 2012 movie, *Lincoln*; **Earl Lewis**, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and author and co-editor of the eleven volume *The Young Oxford History of African Americans*; **Harold Holzer**, one

of the country's leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln and chair of the Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation, and **Jerome Charyn**, celebrated author whose recent novel, *I Am Abraham*, received wide critical acclaim.

## **PUBLICATION**

*Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation* is accompanied by a 64-page publication that includes highlights from the exhibition. The volume is edited by Richard Carwardine, Declan Kiely, and Sandra M. Trenholm and includes a forward by the Morgan's Acting Director, Peggy Fogelman.

## **EXHIBITION WEBPAGE**

A complete online version of the exhibition, along with supplemental materials, will be available starting January 26 at [www.abrahamlincoln.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln.org).

## **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

- Concert      **Rodney Mack Philadelphia Big Brass**  
*Brothers on the Battlefield*  
To coincide with the exhibition *Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation*, The Rodney Mack Philadelphia Big Brass performs the New York premiere of *Brothers on the Battlefield*, a multimedia work featuring music from the American Civil War through the Civil Rights Movement, with a five piece brass band and piano, narration, and projected images. Works to be performed include John Philip Sousa, Francis Johnson, Elvis Presley, The Beatles, and Leonard Bernstein, among others.  
Sunday, January 25, 3 pm  
Tickets: \$35; \$25 for Members
- Gallery Talk      **Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation**  
*Sandra Trenholm, Curator and Director, Gilder Lehrman Collection*  
Friday, February 6, 6:30 pm  
Free with museum admission
- Lecture      **Cooper Union—How New York Made Lincoln President Through the Power of Words—with a Little Help from the Press**  
*Harold Holzer*  
Abraham Lincoln's 1860 Cooper Union speech helped him take New York by storm in his first-ever speaking engagement—and may well have made him President. His triumph owed much not only to his actual oration at the college but also to newspaper reprints and comments as well as several printed copies of the speech, not to mention the iconic photograph taken earlier that same day.

Historian Harold Holzer will explore how the “media” helped expand Lincoln’s audience from the 1,500 who heard his voice at Cooper Union to the hundreds of thousands who read about the speech, as filtered through the eyes of New York’s top three highly competitive, politically connected, and unpredictable newspaper editors.

**Thursday, February 19, 6:30 pm**

**Tickets: \$15; \$10 for Members; Free for students with valid ID**

Music

**West Side Irregulars**

To coincide with *Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation*, the West Side Irregulars perform a variety of American bluegrass and old timey music. The musicians play guitar, mandolin, banjo, and dobro, while blending their voices in beautiful bluegrass harmonies.

**Friday, March 27, 6:30–8:30 pm**

**Free with museum admission**

Discussion

**Why is Lincoln Still Relevant?**

*A Conversation with Historians*

As the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln’s assassination approaches, Lincoln remains vital to today’s leading historians and scholars. Lucas E. Morel, Professor of Ethics and Politics, Washington and Lee University (editor, *Lincoln and Liberty: Wisdom for the Ages*), moderates a discussion with Richard Brookhiser (*Founders’ Son: A Life of Abraham Lincoln*) and David Reynolds (editor, *Lincoln’s Selected Writings*) about Lincoln’s life and legacy. Cosponsored by The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

**Tuesday, April 28, 6:30 pm**

**Tickets: \$15; \$10 for Morgan and Gilder Lehrman Institute Members; Free for students with valid ID**

Family

**Spring Family Fair**

To coincide with the exhibition *Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation*, families can participate in three hours of engaging activities that bring to life the times of the 16th President of the U.S. The afternoon includes interactive performances, live music, and lots of costumes. For more information visit [themorgan.org/programs](http://themorgan.org/programs).

**Sunday, May 3, 2–5 pm**

**Tickets: \$8 adults; \$6 for Members; \$2 for Children**

Family

**Sunday Story Time in Mr. Morgan’s Library**

Join us for Sunday Story Time! In this drop-in program families will be transported back to the time of Abraham Lincoln, learn about the boy who became the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, and hear amazing tales of children along the Underground Railroad. Appropriate for ages 3 and up.

**Sundays, March 1–June 7, 3–4 pm (excluding May 3)**

**Free with museum admission. Free to Cool Culture members**

### **Organization and Sponsorship**

*Lincoln Speaks: Words That Transformed a Nation* is co-curated by Declan Kiely, Robert H. Taylor Curator and Department Head of Literary and Historical Manuscripts at the Morgan and Sandra M. Trenholm, Curator of the Gilder Lehrman Collection, with editorial assistance from Professor Richard Carwardine, President, Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Lead funding for this exhibition is provided by Karen H. Bechtel and the Gilder Foundation, with additional generous support from Richard and Ronay Menschel.



The programs of the Morgan Library & Museum are made possible with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, and by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

### **The Morgan Library & Museum**

The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, music venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan's private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, photography, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets.

### **General Information**

The Morgan Library & Museum  
225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405  
212.685.0008  
[www.themorgan.org](http://www.themorgan.org)

**Just a short walk from Grand Central and Penn Station**

### **Hours**

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Mondays, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

### **Admission**

\$18 for adults; \$12 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop, Café, or Dining Room.