

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A MAN OF HIS TIME, A MAN FOR ALL TIMES

## A Free Traveling Exhibition for Libraries and National Park Historic Sites

*Application receipt deadline: March 25, 2008*

*Notification: April 25, 2008*

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The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, in partnership with the History Channel, announce a tour to forty libraries and National Park historic sites of a traveling panel exhibition, "Abraham Lincoln: A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times."

The traveling exhibition and tour are funded by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. **Applications for the tour are invited from public, academic, and special libraries, and from National Park historic sites.**

**Completed applications should be sent via email or regular mail (no faxes) to:**

Susan F. Saidenberg, Director of Public Programs and Exhibitions  
The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History  
19 West 44th Street, Ste. 500, NY, NY 10036  
[saidenberg@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:saidenberg@gilderlehrman.org) / 646-366-9666

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### Exhibition Overview

Each year, four million people visit Lincoln's Memorial in Washington, D.C. More books have been written about Lincoln than any other American, yet public knowledge about our most famous president is dominated by a series of iconic images. Drawing on recent scholarship, this traveling exhibition encourages a deeper understanding of Lincoln's life, policies, accomplishments, and legacy. The exhibition presents reproductions of Lincoln's words, supplemented by letters, photographs, and images from Civil War soldiers and their families. This exhibition explores fundamental questions raised by Lincoln's life, such as: how a self-educated lawyer with little administrative experience guided a divided nation through the crises of secession and Civil War, why Lincoln championed emancipation, how Lincoln's capacity for intellectual and moral growth shaped his presidency, and how his legacy changed the nation.

The exhibition illustrates that two centuries after his birth, Lincoln still speaks to Americans and the world. Raised on the Kentucky and Indiana frontiers, and formed by his experiences as a lawyer in Illinois, Lincoln wrestled with issues of race and rights, with the limits of political leadership, and with civil liberties during wartime. His administration advanced the idea of the United States as a single, unified nation, and he set an agenda for inclusive democracy that continues to have resonance today.

Two copies of the six-section, 75-foot-long panel exhibition will travel to a total of forty sites from November 2008 to June 2010. The exhibition is organized in six thematic sections. Each section opens with a quote from Lincoln that encapsulates the theme of the section.

- **Section One** explores how Lincoln's values set him apart from many of his contemporaries. Committed to hard work, Lincoln prized temperance, eschewed tobacco, valued self-improvement, and abhorred slavery. His conviction that all people, regardless of race, have a right to the fruits of their own labor was rooted in his personal experiences as well as in his sense of the promise of America.

- **Second Two** traces Lincoln’s path to the White House. His political career was not an unbroken success story; Lincoln faced difficulties in trying to balance principle with political effectiveness. This section explores Lincoln’s return to politics in response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, his celebrated debates with Senator Stephen Douglas, his Cooper Union address, which catapulted him into contention for the Republican presidential nomination, and his 1860 election as the first Republican president.
- **Section Three** examines the accomplishments of Lincoln the War President. Even before he took office, Lincoln had to decide whether to support compromise measures that might prevent civil war, but would strengthen slavery. Once war broke out, Lincoln faced the challenge of preserving a Union torn by slavery and secession. Lincoln became a self-taught, hands-on commander in chief. Throughout the war Lincoln drew upon his extraordinary mastery of rhetoric to inspire a nation ripped apart by war and death.
- **Section Four** looks at the Emancipation Proclamation in the context of Lincoln’s evolving views on race. Viewers will learn why Lincoln drafted the Proclamation and refused to end the war without ending slavery. Reaction in the Union army is illustrated through soldiers’ letters. While John Jones wrote, “The name of Abraham Lincoln will be handed down to posterity as one of the greatest benefactors of his country,” George Tillotson predicted that Emancipation would prolong a bloody, costly and useless war.
- **Section Five** examines the final weeks of Lincoln’s presidency and its consequences. The centerpiece is Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, the most eloquent expression of Lincoln’s moral and political credo, in which he articulated his vision for a reconstructed Union. The broadside “The President is Dead!” is juxtaposed with photographs of Booth and his conspirators, images of the nation in mourning and a reproduction of the Thirteenth Amendment signed by Lincoln. A quotation from the president’s final address expresses his hope for “a righteous and speedy peace,” but the assassination undercut the possibility for such a peaceful resolution, generating intense anger in the Union.
- **Section Six** looks at Lincoln’s legacy. Eulogized by contemporaries as the true heir of George Washington and the nation’s savior, Lincoln’s enduring legacies are the Emancipation Proclamation and the Union’s preservation. His prominent support for the Thirteenth Amendment laid the foundation for the Civil Rights and women’s movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Lincoln’s belief in the Constitution never faltered. He grappled with problems that we still face today, including civil liberties in times of crisis.

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## Project Components

### Libraries Will Receive

Libraries and National Park historic sites selected for the tour will receive:

- The traveling exhibition for a four-week loan period; shipping is supported by the grant.
- Fifteen copies of *Abraham Lincoln: People, Places, Politics*, a multimedia resource kit.
- A History Channel video program, “Decoding Lincoln’s Legacy.”
- Up to 1,500 exhibit brochures and twenty-five posters.
- Two banners for display with the exhibition.
- Lesson plans for students and other educational support materials.
- Insurance coverage for reasonable damage to the exhibition.

- Both print and online Site Support Notebooks with press materials, art, shipping and installation instructions, suggestions for programming, and more.
- Technical and programming support throughout the tour.
- An orientation seminar for exhibition coordinators in September, 2008, in New York City. Participants will meet with exhibition curator and planning team, learn about interpretive materials, public relations and exhibition logistics, and view the exhibition.

## **Guidelines**

Libraries and National Park historic sites chosen for the exhibition are encouraged to:

- Sponsor an opening reception or preview of the exhibition for the public.
- Present programs featuring a lecture/discussion by a scholar in the humanities and focusing on exhibition themes (one of these programs may be combined with the opening reception). These programs must be free and open to the public. Exhibition sites are encouraged to apply to state humanities councils for discussion leaders.
- Academic and special libraries are asked to present at least one program that is open to and marketed to public audiences beyond the library's user groups.
- Demonstrate that they have sufficient space to display the exhibition—100 running feet in one area of the library or other display area is preferred—and that they can exhibit every hour when open.
- Charge no fee for viewing the exhibition.
- Provide required reports, including an exhibition condition report and a final report, to sponsors by the set deadlines.
- Appoint one staff member as the local coordinator of the exhibition. The coordinator is required to attend the exhibition orientation seminar in New York City in September, 2008 (dates to be determined).

## **Selection Criteria**

The Gilder Lehrman Institute will recommend forty libraries and National Park historic sites to the NEH for the exhibition tour, based on the following criteria:

1. Excellent ideas and plans for public programs that will feature a lecture/discussion by a qualified speaker on exhibition themes. Applications for institutions previously selected for traveling exhibitions have contained an average of five or more programs.
2. Available and appropriate exhibition space and ability to provide security for the exhibition.
3. Location of the sites. The selection committee would like the exhibition to visit all regions of the country.
4. Size and demographics of the community. The selection committee seeks a mix of different size communities and varied demographics.
5. Evidence of the site's ability to reach target audiences and market the exhibition and related programs effectively. For academic institutions or park sites, examples of programs that have reached public audiences successfully are helpful.
6. Commitment of the library or National Park historic site director for the staff time required for display of the exhibition and development of related programming.

THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A MAN OF HIS TIME, A MAN FOR ALL TIMES

APPLICATION COVER SHEET

DEADLINE: MARCH 25, 2008

**Institution Information**

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Include name of university or other governing body*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address Line 1*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Street Address Line 2*

\_\_\_\_\_ *City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *ZIP Code*

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Web site: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of Service Population: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Budget (main and branches): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Exhibition Coordinator Information**

Name : \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First Middle Suffix*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Name (Type or print)* \_\_\_\_\_ *Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date*

**Director Information - Leave blank if same as above.**

Name : \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First Middle Suffix*

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Name (Type or print)* \_\_\_\_\_ *Signature* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date*

Please mail or email the completed application, along with a separate sheet of application questions to:

Susan F. Saidenberg, Director of Public Programs and Exhibitions  
The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History  
19 West 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 500, NY, NY 10036  
saidenberg@gilderlehrman.org

**NOTE: Applications must be received by March 25, 2008. Faxed, late and/or incomplete applications will not be accepted.**

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A MAN OF HIS TIME, A MAN FOR ALL TIMES

### Application Questions

**Please respond to the following questions using no more than two pages. Repeat the first sentence of each question on your response sheets.**

1. Why would your institution like to display “Abraham Lincoln: A Man of His Time, A Man for All Times”? Please describe unique collections and local resources related to the exhibition, and other organizations that will support this exhibition (collaboration with other libraries and park sites is encouraged).
2. The Gilder Lehrman Institute strongly suggests libraries and National Park historic sites displaying this exhibition plan two public programs led by a humanities scholar and based upon the exhibition themes. What ideas do you have for public programs?
3. Describe the audience you will target and how you will publicize the exhibition. If your institution is an academic or special library or National Park historic site, describe how you will ensure that the public beyond your own user community will see the exhibit.
4. Describe the space your institution has available for exhibitions. This exhibition will about 100 running feet if placed along a wall. Please include a floor plan of the proposed exhibit space.
5. What is the scope of your current adult cultural programming?
6. Has your institution recently participated in or is it scheduled to participate in any other NEH sponsored programs or Gilder Lehrman Institute exhibitions? If so, please list these programs.
7. Are there any dates between December 2008 and June 2010 that you would prefer to display the exhibition, or cannot display the exhibition? Selected sites will have the exhibition for four weeks. We will try to accommodate requests, but WE CANNOT GUARANTEE REQUESTED DATES. Sites that have the exhibition near major holidays will have the exhibit for a longer period.

Thank you for your application.