MCDERMOTT PROMOTED TO ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Stacy Pratt McDermott became the Assistant Director of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln in March. This promotion came on the heels of her promotion to Associate Editor in November, a title which she retains. Her promotion to Associate Editor reflects her contributions to the editorial aspects of the project, while her new title of Assistant Director encompasses her administrative responsibilities.

When John Lupton resigned as Associate Director of the project in December, McDermott soon began to assume several of Lupton’s former responsibilities, especially those associated with fiscal management and reporting. “Her long experience with, and deep commitment to, the Papers of Abraham Lincoln made her the natural choice to succeed John Lupton in this vital position,” Director Daniel Stowell observed. “I have long relied on her sound editorial judgment,” he continued, “and she will bring that same passion to managing other aspects of the project as well.”

Dr. McDermott completed her Ph.D. in American History at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign in 2007, adding to her previous educational accomplishments of Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in History from the University of Illinois Springfield. Her manuscript, The Jury in Abraham Lincoln’s America, based on her dissertation, has been accepted for publication by Ohio University Press. McDermott has been a member of the editorial staff of the Lincoln Legal Papers/Papers of Abraham Lincoln since 1996, having also served as a research assistant with the Lincoln Legal Papers in 1993-1994. She has authored several articles and delivered numerous presentations on Abraham Lincoln, legal history, and sports history. She served as an Assistant Editor in the production of both prize-winning publications, The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln: Complete Documentary Edition (2000) and The Papers of Abraham Lincoln: Legal Documents and Cases (2008). In 2009, she also received an Award of Superior Achievement from the Illinois State Historical Society for her ongoing work as editor of this newsletter.

FEDERAL AGENCIES AWARD RECORD GRANTS

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln received notification in June from both the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) that the funding proposals submitted in the fall of 2009 had been accepted. The NHPRC announced that the project’s proposal for $143,446 in support was fully funded for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010. This amount represents the largest award ever given by the NHPRC to the Papers of Abraham Lincoln.

A few days later, the NEH notified the project that its request for matching funding had been accepted in the amount of $250,000 over the next three years. This award represents a $50,000 increase over the project’s current three-year grant of $200,000 from NEH.

Both awards will support salaries for project staff who are conducting research at the National Archives and Library of Congress in Washington and who are transcribing
STAFF AND PROJECT NEWS

McWhirter Joins Staff at National Archives

In April, Christian McWhirter, a native of Scarborough, a suburb of Toronto, Ontario, joined the Papers of Abraham Lincoln staff conducting research at the National Archives Building in Washington, D.C. McWhirter is an Assistant Editor and will be working with fellow Assistant Editors David Gerleman and Sean Scott. McWhirter’s first assignment was to search through the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in which he has already located more than one hundred documents. He will next search the records of the Commissary General of Subsistence.

McWhirter holds a B.A. in English and History from the University of Toronto at Mississauga, Ontario, and an M.A. in History from the University of Alabama. In 2009, McWhirter earned his Ph.D. in American History, also from the University of Alabama. His dissertation is entitled “Liberty’s Great Auxiliary: Music and the American Civil War,” and the University of North Carolina is currently reviewing his manuscript for publication.

McWhirter is the recipient of numerous scholarships, fellowships, and awards. He is the author of more than a dozen articles, reviews, and encyclopedia entries, including several in Southern Historian: A Journal of Southern History. For five years while at the University of Alabama, McWhirter served in several positions with Southern Historian, including one year as the editor.

McWhirter and his wife Corrin live in Arlington, Virginia.

Iles Rejoins Staff at Archives II

Helena Iles, who worked for the project during the summer of 2009, rejoined the Papers of Abraham Lincoln in June. With funding provided to the project by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, Iles will be working at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, for the next year to scan documents located during the search there. Specifically, she will digitize thousands of letters and petitions requesting jobs and recommending others for jobs with the State Department during Lincoln’s presidency.

Iles, a native of Buckingham, England, holds a Bachelor’s degree in History from Lancaster University in England, a Master’s degree in U.S. History from the University of Maryland, and a Master’s degree in Library Science from the University of Maryland. As a British citizen, Iles has extended her student visa to encompass an additional year of Optional Practical Training related to the degrees she received at the University of Maryland. Her work with the project will draw on her training both in history and in library science.

More Staff News

Research Assistant Laura Kopp Starr resigned from the project in May to take a position as an archivist with History Associates, Inc., in Rockville, Maryland. During her time with project, Starr processed digital images of Lincoln papers located at the Library of Congress. The project wishes her much success in her new position.

In May, Assistant Editor Sean Scott and his wife Heather welcomed daughter Priscilla into their family. Sean and Priscilla are pictured at left with Abraham and Tad Lincoln. The statue is located at the American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar in Richmond, Virginia. Lincoln and Tad visited the the ruined city in early April 1865.

In June, Research Associate Chandler Lighty married Elisabeth Erickson in Accokeek, Maryland, and they honeymooned in Bermuda. Elisabeth is the managing editor of Arms Control Today in Washington, DC, where the couple will reside.

Upon the expiration of his contract with the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, Research Assistant Andrew Roling left the project in June. For the past eight months, he worked in
the Springfield office transcribing documents from the Illinois General Assembly. He is enrolled in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, and the project wishes him luck in his academic pursuits.

**Staff Presentations**


In May, Assistant Director Stacy McDermott was the guest speaker at the annual meeting of the Peoria Inns of Court. She spoke about Lincoln’s divorce cases to the group of lawyers and judges from the Peoria area.

Assistant Editor David Gerleman gave a presentation to the National Archives Book Club, a public forum, entitled “Looking for Lincoln: In pursuit of ‘Old Abe’ at the National Archives.” Gerleman was the invited guest of Head Librarian Jeff Hartley.

In June, Assistant Editor Sean Scott presented a synopsis of his forthcoming book *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* at the Society of Civil War Historians Second Biennial Meeting in Richmond, Virginia. At the same conference, Assistant Editor AJ Aiseirithe presented a paper entitled “Garrisonian Abolitionists and President Lincoln During the Civil War.”

**Scanning of Lincoln Documents Continues**

On March 31, John P. Pruitt of Springfield, Illinois, with the assistance of Gregory Sgro, brought a military commission signed by Abraham Lincoln to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library for scanning. Thanks to both of them for making the document available to us.

The project thanks Robert Hydon for permission to scan the Lincoln document that he owns and Jackie Gray for her assistance in making the document available.

When Eugene and Charlotte Lamson of Paso Robles, California, visited Springfield in April, they brought their two Lincoln documents with them. They graciously permitted project staff to scan them. One of the documents is a previously unknown letter that Lincoln wrote to a fellow attorney in 1859.

In April, The Amistad Research Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, provided images of two documents from the American Missionary Association archives. The project thanks Christopher Harter for his assistance in making the scans. The project also thanks William F. Moore and Jane Ann Moore of the Lovejoy Society for facilitating the acquisition of these images.

Also in April, the Papers of Abraham Lincoln received from the Newberry Library in Chicago images of eight Lincoln documents. The project thanks John Brady, Daniel Greene, Rachel Bohlmann, and Catherine Gass for their assistance in obtaining these images.

In May, Stacy McDermott scanned a new Lincoln document owned by James Minar of Springfield, Illinois. Special thanks to him for providing access to the document and to John Lupton for facilitating that effort.

In June, Leana Harris of Rockford, Illinois, visited the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library with her autographed Lincoln lithograph. She kindly allowed project staff to scan the signature, which was written in pencil below an engraving of Lincoln’s image.

The Library of Virginia provided images of three letters from Governor Francis H. Pierpont to Abraham Lincoln. The project thanks Sandra Treadway and Mark Fagerburg for their assistance in providing these images.

On July 1, the project scanned a Lincoln document that Patricia Doyle Associates, a Springfield auction house, was preparing to sell. Special thanks to Patrick Doyle for making the document available to the project.

---

**DONORS**

The project acknowledges with deep appreciation the generosity of the following contributors:

- American Inns of Court (Peoria)
- Arkansas Bar Association
- John A. Lupton
- Stacy Pratt McDermott
- Revs. William and Jane Ann Moore
- Jane Running

---

**GRANTS**

from page 1

and annotating documents in Springfield. This support from federal agencies is particularly timely because of recent decreases in funding from the State of Illinois. Both the NHPRC and the NEH supported the Lincoln Legal Papers with a series of grants between 1991 and 2006, and these awards represent the fourth annual award to the Papers of Abraham Lincoln by NHPRC and the third multi-year grant to the project by the NEH since 2004.

“The receipt of these two grants represents both validation of our progress thus far and vital support for our continuing efforts to locate and make available the documentary record of Abraham Lincoln’s fascinating life and career,” said Editor Daniel Stowell.
SCOTT IS LATEST MEMBER OF LINCOLN CORPS OF DISCOVERY

New Assistant Editor Sean Scott became the latest member of the Lincoln Corps of Discovery in February during his first month with the project. Scott, who joined the project late in January, discovered the new Lincoln letter in the Records of the Office of the Secretary of War. Since his first discovery in February, Scott has located three more new letters by Lincoln in this same record group.

Editor Daniel Stowell presented Scott with a brass magnifying glass in an engraved hardwood case, the coveted symbol of the Lincoln Corps of Discovery, in June. Scott became the eighth member of the prestigious Corps. The Papers of Abraham Lincoln began the award in 2006 to recognize the sleuthing skills of those researchers who locate a previously unpublished document written by Abraham Lincoln that is also unknown to the repository housing it. Congratulations to Sean on this achievement.

CHOPPING AND SELLING HISTORY

In February 2006, Heritage Auction Galleries in Dallas, Texas, sold seventy-seven Lincoln legal documents from the Henry E. Luhrs Collection. Luhrs, who died in 1962, collected the documents in the 1940s and 1950s. As part of his estate, most of the documents were unknown when the Papers of Abraham Lincoln published The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln: Complete Documentary Edition in 2000. Thanks to the assistance of Heritage Auction Galleries, the project obtained digital images of the entire collection prior to the sale of the documents. Color images of each of the documents are now freely available in the online edition, The Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln (www.lawpracticeofabrahamlincoln.org).

In April of this year, two fragments of legal documents in Lincoln’s hand appeared for sale on eBay. Upon inspection, editors of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln determined that both of the fragments were clippings from two of the documents sold in Texas in 2006. Sometime after the Luhrs’ sale, the purchaser of these documents clipped them into pieces, apparently in an effort to maximize resale potential.

The owner of both of these two-page documents—a declaration from a slander suit and a plea in abatement from an assumpsit case—cut them each into at least half a
dozen pieces. After chopping the documents into fragments, the owner then paid Pass-Co (a leading authenticator of historical collectibles) to certify them. Each fragment sold for a few thousand dollars.

In the legal edition published in 2000, the editors had included the slander case, Smith v. Gaines. However, the declaration discovered as a result of the Luhrs’ sale provided the personal details of the slander and revealed the legal basis of the lawsuit. Prior to the discovery of this central pleading document, the editors knew little about the case. The declaration in the slander suit added rich detail, but the plea in abatement from the assumpsit case, Robbins and Pomeroy v. Peters, led to the discovery of a brand new Lincoln legal case. Before the Luhrs’ sale, the project was unaware of the fact that Lincoln had handled this case in Vermilion County, Illinois. The document provided evidence of a new case and the particulars of the legal dispute.

Had the Papers of Abraham Lincoln missed the opportunity to obtain digital images of the full documents prior to their dismemberment and separate sales, the complete historical details of the documents and of the legal cases in which they were filed may have been lost forever to history. Reassembling all of the scattered pieces of the documents would have been impossible, and the discovery of one or two of the fragments would have provided only limited historical detail. Of course, such destruction of privately owned historical documents is not illegal. However, this activity does violate the historical integrity of the documents.

Many people desire to own a piece of Lincoln’s history and legacy, and Lincoln’s handwriting represents an important connection to the past. A few manuscript dealers and collectors justify cutting up Lincoln documents as promoting the democratization of the ownership of history. However, this practice destroys the very history that people seek to own. While owning a few words written by Abraham Lincoln may make a nice conversation piece, carving up documents destroys the historical meaning of the full document. The destruction of these documents represents the potential destruction of history itself.

Such chopping and selling of history is antithetical to the mission of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln, which is to preserve the documents that help us understand Lincoln and the historical era in which he lived. 

Stacy Pratt McDermott  
Assistant Director/Associate Editor  

NOTE:  
1 The Papers of Abraham Lincoln originally reported this sale in the Lincoln Legal Briefs No. 77 (January-March 2006), http://www.papersofabrahamlincoln.org/Briefs/Briefs77.pdf.
The Papers of Abraham Lincoln has always depended on the collective assistance of hundreds of individual archivists, librarians, and other dedicated cultural heritage professionals at numerous repositories, both large and small. The project has tried to acknowledge each one of these persons by name in our newsletter for their many professional and personal courtesies. For most repositories, our interaction with these helpful professionals is limited and brief.

However, at institutions with extensive holdings, Papers of Abraham Lincoln researchers work with individuals over months or even years to identify and sift through massive document collections. These archivists and librarians merit special attention for the ongoing assistance they have provided this project. We would like for you to meet some of them and learn more about how they have helped the Papers of Abraham Lincoln fulfill its mission to chronicle, as completely as possible, the life of our sixteenth president.

“I’M JUST A BILL”: THE WILLIAM H. DAVIS STORY

Currently, editors in Washington, D.C., are searching for documents related to Abraham Lincoln’s career as a member of the Thirtieth Congress from 1847-49. Assisting in this monumental task is one of the most helpful and knowledgeable of National Archives and Records Administration staff members, William H. “Bill” Davis.

Stationed at Archives I in Washington, D.C., Davis serves as an archivist for the Center for Legislative Archives, which receives, stores, preserves, describes, loans, and makes available the records of the legislative branch of the U.S. government, in particular the records of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. As a legislative archivist, Davis provides assistance to the general public, genealogists, scholars, students, legal assistants, and government officials enabling them to track down, access, and interpret legislative branch documents from the modern day all the way back to the first federal congress of 1789.

A native of Long Island, New York, Davis attended Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania, graduating with a B.A. in 1981. He received his Master’s in Library Science from the University of Maryland in 1984. In the fall of 1982, Davis began working with State Department records as a part-time intern at the National Archives, which was an opportunity that has since blossomed into a twenty-eight-year career. In addition to aiding countless researchers over the years, Davis has been given special assignments, such as assisting members of the White House staff in the waning months of the Reagan Administration in the assembly, cataloging, and storage of presidential records.

Having worked at the Center for Legislative Archives since 1988, Davis has been indispensable in helping the staff of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln to navigate the murky waters of the House and Senate Journals and to unearth the original bills, resolutions, vote tally sheets, committee reports and papers, as well as petitions and memorials generated by the Thirtieth Congress. Assisting the project on a daily basis, Davis has been “impressed with the comprehensive, thorough, and diligent approach employed by the staff of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln endeavoring to produce a newly definitive compilation using the most up-to-date documentary editing standards and practices.” Even with his years of experience, Davis is always surprised at what can turn up in the records and is confident that hiding in the legislative files are “vast numbers of new documents relevant to Abraham Lincoln waiting to come to light.”

Davis is active in his local community and with the Washington Hebrew Congregation and has held leadership positions in several organizations, including the Society for History in the Federal Government. He enjoys taking advantage of the capital’s many cultural activities, especially concerts of classical music recitals and embassy events. The Papers of Abraham Lincoln staff owes Davis thanks, not only for his exceptional knowledge of congressional records and cheerful disposition, but also for offering judicious insights at where to find the finest Washington eateries. Davis exemplifies the best traits of the archival profession; his dedication in tracking down even the most obscure records that might be helpful to researchers is well known and is a credit to the National Archives.

David J. Gerleman
Assistant Editor
“REMEMBER LINCOLN’S MAN”

Like any other nineteenth-century politician, Abraham Lincoln wanted to do right by his friends and political allies, and critics often accused him of excessive attention to patronage as president. Certainly Lincoln understood the importance of patronage in building and maintaining a political organization’s power, and he also knew the dangers of political patronage mishandled—a lesson he had learned under the Taylor Administration when he sought a position for his friend Dr. Anson G. Henry.

Henry was born in Oswego County, New York, where he studied medicine alongside a local physician before relocating to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1826. During the next five years, Henry lived in Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Michigan, and Wisconsin, before landing in Springfield, Illinois, in 1831. Plunging into regional Whig politics, Henry soon became acquainted with Lincoln, and for twenty years the two men were in nearly daily contact. Henry often treated Lincoln’s bouts of hypochondria, earning his patient’s grateful comment that the doctor was “necessary to my existence.”

The closeness of the two men helps explain Lincoln’s desire for Henry to secure a federal position in the Minnesota Territory. Lincoln began bombarding Whig cabinet members with letters to secure the position even before he left Washington to return to Illinois in the spring of 1849, telling Secretary of State John M. Clayton “on this [matter], my solicitude is extreme.”

In March 1849, Lincoln wrote to both Secretary of the Interior Thomas Ewing and Secretary of the Navy William B. Preston on behalf of Henry:

**Abraham Lincoln to Thomas Ewing**

**Washington, March 12, 1849**

Hon: Secretary of the Interior: 

Sir: 


Tho. Corwin
Truman Smith
Caleb B. Smith

When nothing came of these appeals, Dr. Henry, armed with a letter of introduction to the Secretary of State by Abraham Lincoln, packed his bags and set off in November 1849 to lobby personally for an Indian agency. Henry’s visit scarcely rattled the patronage levers, so Lincoln once more wrote to Secretary Ewing in March 1850, saying that “Dr: Henry was at first, has always been, and still is, No
One with me. I believe, nay, I know, he has done more disinterested labor in the Whig cause, than any other one, two, or three men in the state.”

Lincoln’s constant appeals finally seem to have worked. In June 1850, Henry received a commission as an Indian agent in Oregon Territory, but he found the duties and climate unsuitable and resigned his frontier post within two years. It was not until his friend became president that Henry received a suitable reward. On July 17, 1861, Lincoln appointed him Surveyor General of Washington Territory.

Close both in life and in death, Anson G. Henry died three months after Lincoln’s assassination when his ship foundered off the coast of California as he returned to Washington Territory.

David J. Gerleman
Assistant Editor

Notes:
2 Abraham Lincoln to John M. Clayton, 8 March 1849, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, Entry 760: Records, Applications and Recommendations for Office, Applications and Recommendations for Public Office, 1797-1901, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.
4 Thomas Corwin, b. 29 July 1794, in Bourbon County, KY; d. 18 December 1865, in Washington, DC. Corwin served as Whig Governor of Ohio from 1840 to 1842, as a U.S. Senator from 1845 to 1850, and as Secretary of the Treasury from 1850 to 1853. Lincoln appointed him as Minister to Mexico in 1861, and he served until 1864. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, eds., American National Biography, 24 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5:549-50.
5 Truman Smith, b. 27 November 1791, in Roxbury, CT; d. 3 May 1884, in Stamford, CT. Truman Smith served with Lincoln in the 30th Congress. He was also a U.S. Senator from 1849 to 1854. In 1862, Lincoln appointed him as judge of the Court of Arbitration for the suppression of the slave trade, a position he held until 1870. Garraty and Carnes, eds., American National Biography, 20:299.
6 Caleb B. Smith, b. 16 April 1808, in Boston; d. 7 January 1864, in Indianapolis, IN. Caleb Smith served with Lincoln in the 30th Congress and later served as Lincoln’s Secretary of the Interior, from 1861 to 1863. Garraty and Carnes, eds., American National Biography, 20:143.
9 Abraham Lincoln to Thomas Ewing, 22 March 1850, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia, PA.
11 Temple, “Dr. Anson G. Henry,” 7, 9, 12, 13. President Andrew Johnson appointed Henry as Governor of the Washington Territory, but Henry died before reaching Washington to take office.