

Connecticut Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Meeting
October 22, 2008

Meeting held at the State Capitol, Room 410 at 9:00AM

Commission Members in Attendance:

Walton Brown-Foster, CCSU
Michael Burlingame, Connecticut College
Lisa Curran, Lincoln Financial Foundation
Katherine Kane, Stowe Center
Irving Moy, 14th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry
Andrea Rapacz, Connecticut Historical Society
Dana Schaffer, Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition
Ron Spencer, Trinity College
Bruce Stave, UConn
Howard Wright, Renbrook School

Commission Members Absent:

Martha Brackeen-Harris, Renbrook School
Blair Pavlik, CT Civil War Roundtable
Mary Lou Pavlik, CT Civil War Roundtable
Olivia White, Amistad Center for Art and Culture
Walter Woodward, State Historian

Meeting called to order at 9:01AM by Commission co-chair Howard Wright

1. Approval of 9/22/08 Minutes

The meeting room number was changed from 401 to 410. There was a motion to accept the minutes that was unanimously approved.

2. CALBC Website

Howard Wright thanked the Gilder Lehrman Center and Dana Schaffer for creating and posting the CALBC website. The link will be sent to the national commission and will be published in its official national publication.

Dana Schaffer mentioned that that the banner on our webpage was temporary until the official logo is selected and can be changed. She also confirmed that artist Wendy Allen is credited on the page for her work. The Commission on Culture and Tourism's logo is on the webpage, a smaller logo has been requested, but there has been no response yet. Others can add their logos – please forward them to Dana for posting.

On 10/21/08 the agendas and minutes for commission meetings were posted on the site. Links to other Lincoln and Civil War sites will be added as well as resources for teachers as they become available. Irving Moy commented that compared to other states,

Connecticut is offering a wide variety of activities to celebrate the bicentennial. Dana also said that she would be updating the site once per week.

3. CALBC logo

Lisa Curran presented the new logo and reported that she has asked the designer to change the color of the tagline to red. The colors will be red, white and blue with the CT in gold to tie them to our Nation's flag and lend a presidential feel. The logo originally had a beige background that was knocked out for black and white applications. The letterhead for the Commission will have the logo across the top and commission members' names down the left side. The banner on the CALBC website will be updated with the new logo, Dana requested the layers from the designer in order for the new logo to be posted.

Howard mentioned that there still is no funding from the state so it was recommended that the letterhead template be mailed to all commission members so we can print our own for letters and press releases. Lisa will send this to all members. Ron Spencer offered to donate funds to have letterhead printed. Lisa also reported that the price for 40 lawn signs would be \$700. Walton Foster-Brown said that she could see if CCSU can provide signs for its events. It was also mentioned that posters might be a better way to go.

It was asked if we needed an official mailing address for the commission. It was decided that the address of the sender would be used. It should be printed on the upper left hand corner of the envelope. Howard and Michael should be made aware of all correspondence sent out on letterhead. Irving Moy offered to make a donation for envelopes.

The conversation turned to prizes for the essay contest. It was decided that there would be an essay contest for middle and high school students. In both categories 1st place would receive \$100 and a book prize, 2nd place \$75 and a book prize, and 3rd place \$50 and a book prize.

The two potential topics were:

For middle school – What does Abraham Lincoln mean to me?

For high school – Abraham Lincoln's unfinished work

There was much back and forth discussion on the timing of the contest. Ron Spencer mentioned that we would need 2 subcommittees of three people each to read and judge submissions. Essay contests sometimes bring in a couple hundred entries and at 5 pages each, it could take substantial time to review. The goal is to shoot for having the essay contest in the spring with an early enough deadline that submissions could be read, winners chosen, and prizes awarded before the end of this school year.

The contest could be promoted through posters on bulleting boards and teacher networks through the Gilder Lehrman Center and History Day announcements.

Lisa Curran offered to call Bruce Fraser at the Connecticut Humanities Council about submitting a grant proposal for funding for essay prizes (includes cash, books, printed certificates and something printed with the CALBC logo), a History Day prize, stationary, posters and lawn signs. The deadline to submit applications for the monthly grants of \$5,000 is the first of each month.

4. Publicity and related topics

The goal is create a general buzz with the media. Nora Duncan offered a press conference with the Governor that is wrapped in with the Thanksgiving Proclamation that would announce the bicentennial and then give more information about what the commission is doing. There is also a possibility of a Q&A with the media and members of the commission. We can suggest a date and coordinate with Donna Tommelleo. Lisa suggested holding the event by one of the sculptures in the Lincoln Financial Sculpture Walk along the Connecticut River.

5. Budget & resources for funds was discussed with the essay contest.

6. Update: Involvement of municipalities and schools

Ron Spencer reported that he drafted a letter for Commission of Higher Education, Michael Meotti to distribute. Co-chairs Michael Burlingame and Howard Wright reviewed the letter. Howard sent it to Mr. Meotti on 10/22/08 prior to the meeting.

7. Update: Four Institutions

Katherine Kane reported that the Stowe Center's teacher institute was not funded, so Abraham Lincoln-related themes will be integrated in 2009 programs and salons.

8. Update: Three encampments

Irving Moy handed out an updated list of the first person presenters and authors who will be participating at the encampments. Connecticut artist Wendy Allen will also be there painting and selling prints. It was recommended including someone who portrays Elizabeth Keckly. Kandie Carle has created a play about Keckly and has to actresses who portray her. <http://www.ehsco.org/performances/keckly/> However, payment for an appearance will be taken into consideration. Irving Moy mentioned that the host venues should feel free to invite artisans/authors they have worked with in the past to be part of the encampments.

9. Update: 1860 Lincoln Lecture Tour

This would be the tour to 5 Connecticut cities Lincoln where stopped to give speeches in 1860. Each would be a two-part lecture with Michael Burlingame giving a scholarly talk about Lincoln and Howard Wright delivering selected Lincoln's speeches. The tour would happen in 2009 and Winter 2010.

Potential venues -

New Haven: Yale or elsewhere

Norwich: Norwich Free Academy or Norwich Historical Society

Hartford: Wadsworth Atheneum or University of Hartford

Meriden: Friends of the Meriden Library

Bridgeport: Former City Hall

10. Conference Call with state Liaisons

Howard reported that he was part of the conference call with the state liaisons to the National commission. It was mentioned that Wendy Allen's poster and information can be downloaded from the national site. There was discussion as to whether or not Wendy Allen would be able to bring the Lincoln Birthday Card to Connecticut. (These would be large panels that people could sign and then would be incorporated into a painting.) There would be costs associated with shipping the panels and Wendy's travel, so it seemed unlikely that the state commission would have the funds to support this activity. Ms. Allen has agreed to attend the next Commission meeting in November to answer questions about this project.

11. Decide on next meeting

November 12, 2009 at 9AM in room 410 at the Capitol.

12. Other business

There was a motion to add Martha Brackeen-Harris of Renbrook School to the Commission that was unanimously approved.

Ron Spencer mentioned that Michael Burlingame will be presenting a lecture at Trinity College on March 23, 2009 and commission members would be invited to attend a pre-lecture dinner.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Rapacz
Connecticut Historical Society