

Connecticut Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Meeting
January 21, 2009

Meeting held at the Connecticut Historical Society in the Research Center at 10AM.

Commission Members in Attendance:

Walton Brown-Foster, CCSU
Lisa Curran
Katherine Kane, Stowe Center
Irving Moy, 14th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry
Mary Lou Pavlik, CT Civil War Roundtable
Andrea Rapacz, Connecticut Historical Society
Ron Spencer, Trinity College
Olivia White, Amistad Center for Art and Cluture
Howard Wright, Renbrook School

Commission Members Absent:

Martha Brackeen-Harris, Renbrook School
Michael Burlingame, Connecticut College
Blair Pavlik, CT Civil War Roundtable
Dana Schaffer, Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition
Bruce Stave, University of Connecticut
Walter Woodward, State Historian

Non-Commission Members in Attendance:

Wendy Allen
Elaine Henderson

The meeting was called to order at 10:04AM by Commission co-chair Howard Wright.

Wendy Allen was introduced to the commission and brochures from the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission & Foundation that feature artwork by Allen were handed out. Allen was officially thanked for the artwork she provided for the CALBC materials.

1. Approval of 11/12/08 Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2008 meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2. Budget & resources for funds

Lisa Curran reported that Lincoln Financial donated \$1,000 to the Connecticut Historical Society to fund the essay contest sponsored by the Commission, the PTA and CHS. This will cover the expenses for books, certificates, prizes, etched gifts and honorable mention prizes. Two History Day prizes sponsored by the CALBC will also be covered by these funds.

The essay contest did not fit in the Connecticut Humanities Council's guidelines for funding, so CHC will be approached for activities that do match their guidelines.

3. Welcome to Wendy Allen

Wendy Allen, a Connecticut-based artist, shared with the Commission the Lincoln-related projects she is working on.

She discussed her Happy Birthday card project sponsored by the national ALBC which will travel to 5 major cities. Allen has created two sets of panels that are covered with duck cloth and participants will be encouraged to sign birthday greetings to Lincoln on them with archival pens. The panels will be brought to the Lincoln Memorial for its rededication on May 30, 2009, and will then be archived and brought out for Lincoln's Tercentennial in 2109.

Large canvases will be painted onsite by Allen and later sold to offset the cost of the project. There is also the possibility of Allen doing a project called "One Brush Stroke" where participants help create a work of art by painting just one stroke. Materials (mugs, t-shirts, prints) with Allen's artwork on them will also be sold at the venues to offset the costs of the project. The program is of no cost to the host venue, but they do need to provide space, a table and security. Visit the website happybirthdayalincoln.com for more information about the project and the schedule of appearances.

The Amistad Center of Art and Culture may host the project in Connecticut in March on a family day.

There was a motion for the Commission to support a 1 to 2 day event in Connecticut and make it a Commission-approved event and promote it on our site and other vehicles, if possible. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

4. Encampment Update

Mary Lou Pavlik reported that there was a meeting on January 17, 2009 with representative hosts from all three encampments. Mark McEachern, Executive Director of the Torrington Historical Society, will be applying for a grant through the CT Humanities Council. The Torrington event hosts met with the Mayor of Torrington who is excited about the encampment and the possibility of making it a downtown community celebration. The city cannot provide funds, but will provide police and traffic control as its contribution to the May 30th event. The event hosts are trying to organize a train to go from Waterbury to Torrington for President Lincoln to arrive at the train station where he will be greeted by townsfolk, a military escort and period Civil War music. Horse and buggy will then take him to the encampment at the Torrington Historical Society.

5. Feb 12 and The Amistad Center's Opening of the exhibition *Lincoln: Man, Myth and Memories*

In the event of inclement weather, the opening will be held on Feb. 17, 2009.

6. Lecture Tour

Howard reported that four of the five cities had secured dates or were working towards securing dates and details:

Bridgeport: March 8 @ 2:00PM at the Klein Memorial Auditorium

Norwich: March 9 (details TBD)

Meriden: April 19 @ 1:00PM at Hubbard State Park

New Haven: TBD; coordination will be with the GLC

Hartford: Sept. 17 @ 7:00 PM in the Wilde Hall of the University of Hartford

7. Update: Essay Contest

Essays will be sent to the Connecticut Historical Society and will have to be postmarked by April 1, 2009. The notification date will be June 1, 2009. About 3-5 judges will be needed for each category.

It was mentioned that the length of the essay will be important given the length of time the students have to work on it. It was debated as to whether or not the essay would have to be typed, or if can be sent electronically or in hard copy. The final decision was that the submissions do not have to be typed, though it will be recommended and that they can come in electronically or in hard copy.

Since the CALBC and PTA are not working directly with the State Department of Education, announcement of the contest in the schools may happen in an "ad hoc" manner.

8. Commemorative Bicentennial Book update and distribution

Howard reported that the chairs will receive 3,000 copies of the national commemorative book with articles written by Lincoln historians. The books are 150 pages and in full color. Howard offered copies to members of the commission. If they are sold, 5% of the proceeds should go to the national ALBC.

9. Other

Walton Brown-Foster reminded the commission of the lecture on Central Connecticut State University's Campus on Tuesday, February 3 at 4PM in the Torp Theater located the administration building.

Katherine Kane reminded the commission about the Stowe Center's salon series starting Thursday, February 5 with a presentation and discussion of how Harriet Beecher Stowe used her celebrity to influence public opinion to the evils of slavery and Lincoln's later decision to add the military goal of eliminating slavery to that of saving the Union.

10. Decide next meeting date of the CALBC

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, March 18, 2009 at 10AM at the Connecticut Historical Society.

In February the commission will be polled to see if a February meeting is necessary.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:13 by co-chair Howard Wright

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Rapacz
Connecticut Historical Society