

Upcoming Programs

*Cottage  
 Conversations*

May 20, 2009  
 Catherine Clinton

September 17, 2009  
 Ronald White

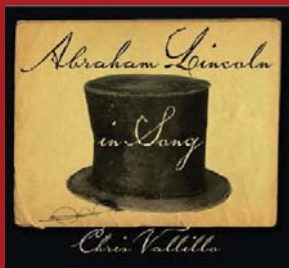
All Cottage Conversations:

6:00pm - Reception  
 6:30pm - Lecture  
 7:30pm - Book signing

MEMBERS FREE  
 GENERAL ADMISSION \$10

Reservations: alison\_mitchell@nthp.org  
 or (202)829-0436 x31228

*Lincoln In Song*  
 June 5, 2009

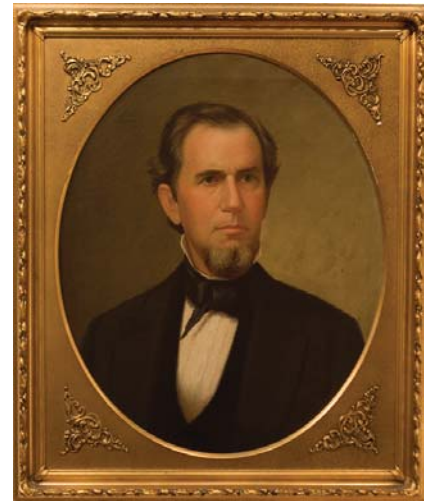


SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS

*Diary Discovery Sheds Light on  
 Lincoln's Commute*

By Frank Milligan, Director of President Lincoln's Cottage

Contemporary accounts of Civil War era visits to the Soldiers' Home are rare. Fortunately, reports of such visits continue to trickle our way. A few months ago I received a call from University of Cincinnati history professor Christopher Phillips who had seen a television show on the Cottage and noticed our interest in primary accounts of Lincoln in residence here. Coincidentally, Professor Phillips had recently come across a remarkable Civil War diary written by a "well-read, observant, knowledgeable, and outspoken" young Kentuckian Johanna (Josie) Underwood.<sup>1</sup> The diary included a remarkable description of Josie and her father meeting with Mary Lincoln at the Soldiers' Home cottage and with President Lincoln at full gallop on the isolated road leading to his country residence.



*The diarist's father Warner Lewis Underwood (1808-1872)  
 Kentucky Library & Museum, WKU; Photo by  
 Clinton Lewis*

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# A CLOSER LOOK...

## AT *Abraham Lincoln Writing the Emancipation Proclamation*

Jes W. Schlaikjer was an official artist for the U.S. government and well known painter of portraits and historic scenes in the mid 1900s. A great admirer of Abraham Lincoln, Schlaikjer determined to paint a historical scene of Lincoln toiling on the Emancipation Proclamation one evening in September 1862 at the Soldiers' Home. While he painted this scene from his imagination, Schlaikjer was inspired to paint the scene after discovering Lincoln was known to have carried notes and jottings for the document to and from the Soldiers' Home. Schlaikjer took great pains to ensure the details of the scene were historically accurate. Correspondence between the artist and the Chicago Historical Society in March 1957 reveals the level of detail Schlaikjer sought and received, from Lincoln's iconic top hat down to the delicate beading and stitching of "A" and "L" on the tongue of each of his mocassins. These items and others in the painting are still preserved by various museums and collectors today.



**Abraham Lincoln Writing the Emancipation Proclamation**

Jes W. Schlaikjer, 1957

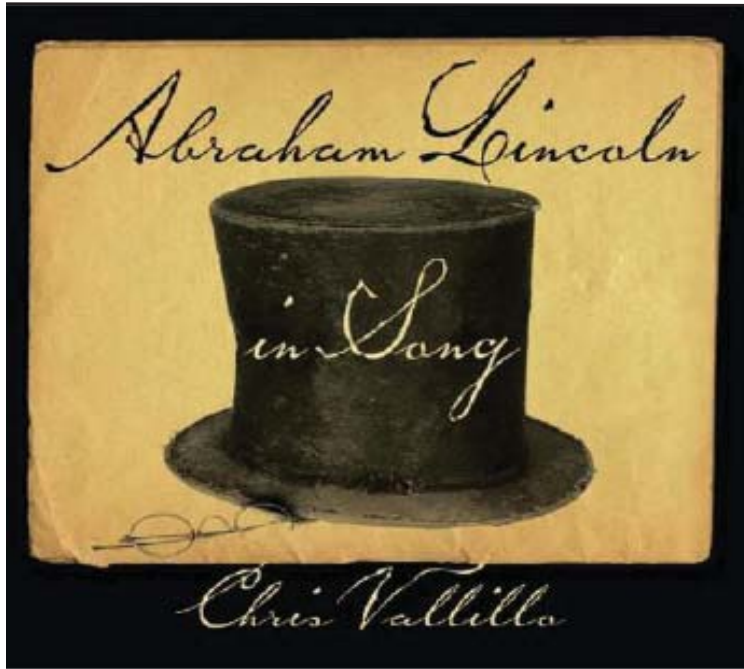
*Friends of Jes W. Schlaikjer*

When Schlaikjer finished, the painting was unveiled in the rotunda of the Senate Office Building for the Lincoln sesquicentennial in 1959. At the unveiling, Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky remarked, "This unusual painting shows Lincoln at one of the critical moments of his life, preparing a document which created a major social revolution. The painting has captured the simple dignity, the solemn earnestness and determination of President Lincoln just before the battle of Antietam." The painting was then loaned for three months, eventually making its way back to the artist.

To this day, Schlaikjer's painting remains one of the few artistic depictions of Lincoln working on the Emancipation Proclamation at the Soldiers' Home.

--Erin Mast, Curator

*"Abraham Lincoln Writing the Emancipation Proclamation" is on view in the "My Abraham Lincoln" exhibit located in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center for President Lincoln's Cottage. You may view the exhibit during regular visitor hours through December 31, 2009.*



Chris Vallillo combines Lincoln's own words and stories with period folk songs and contemporary folk music to shed light on one of our nation's most beloved historical figures.

**JUNE 5, 2009**

**7:00PM**

*Bring a blanket and picnic and enjoy  
a musical evening at the Cottage.*

ADMISSION: Free

LOCATION: south lawn of President Lincoln's Cottage  
(rain location tbd)

AMPLE FREE PARKING

\*Lawn chairs are permitted, alcohol is prohibited



The History Channel is commemorating Lincoln's 200th birthday with a Give a Lincoln For Lincoln campaign. Help raise \$200,000 for education and preservation programs at six Lincoln sites including President Lincoln's Cottage.

To learn more go to

[WWW.HISTORY.COM/LINCOLN](http://WWW.HISTORY.COM/LINCOLN)

## *Host Your Next Event at the Cottage!*



President Lincoln's Cottage offers a unique venue for private and corporate events.

Comprised of two buildings, the 1842 Gothic Revival Cottage and the 1905 Beaux Arts - style building, the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center, this site offers a wide variety of options for indoor and outdoor entertaining.

To learn more visit:

<http://www.lincolncottage.org/events/index.htm>

## *Lincoln and Emancipation Teacher Kits*

In collaboration with the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History and the National Endowment for the Humanities, President Lincoln's Cottage has developed a teacher kit for grades 5-12 which explores Lincoln's evolving views on emancipation. Using primary source documents, teachers and students will gain insights into the complexities of issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Materials included in the kit address specific standards of learning and curriculum requirements and are free of charge to educators.

To receive a teacher kit, email:

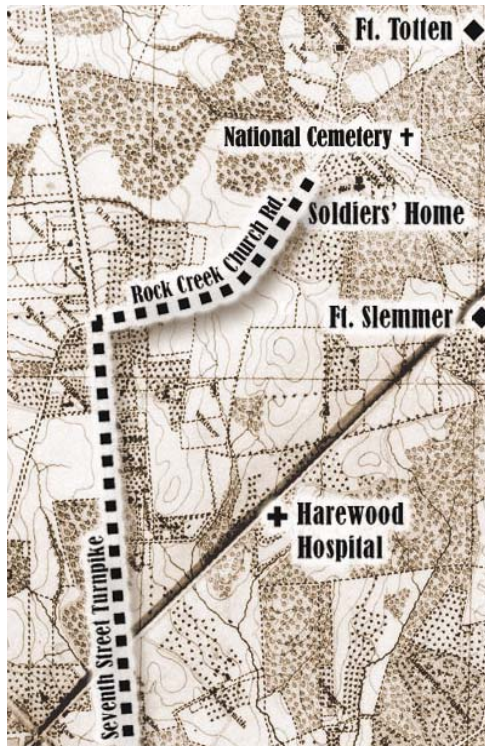
[callie\\_hawkins@nthp.org](mailto:callie_hawkins@nthp.org).

Please include your name, school affiliation, grade taught and contact information.

# Diary Discovery Sheds Light On Lincoln's Commute...continued

Professor Phillips also guided me to Western Kentucky University's Special Collections Librarian Nancy Disher Baird, who has just edited and published the diary,<sup>2</sup> which begins in late 1860 and ends in September 1862 as the family embarked for Glasgow, Scotland where Josie's father would undertake his duties as Consul, an appointment made by Lincoln.<sup>3</sup> It is probable that Warren Underwood actually sought a federal appointment to escape his war-torn home state. The Underwood diary provides fascinating descriptions of the Civil War's devastating effects within Kentucky, one of the four Union slave-holding "border states" that occupied Lincoln's political and military thinking in the early years of the war. Lincoln's native Kentucky had an extraordinary hold on his attention. Lincoln steadfastly maintained that the Union could not afford to lose Kentucky to the Confederacy even as Confederate forces entered the state in early September 1861. "I think that to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game," Lincoln privately confessed to his friend and Illinois Senator, Orville Browning. "Kentucky gone, we can not hold Missouri, nor as I think, Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us. We would as well consent to separation at once, including the surrender of the capitol."<sup>4</sup> Lincoln had good reason to be concerned, for as Michael Burlingame writes in his magnificent new Lincoln biography, Kentucky ranked high in population and farm and livestock value.<sup>5</sup>

The diary includes vivid descriptions of the 25,000-strong Confederate army of Albert Sydney Johnson camped along the waterways of south central Kentucky and its occupation of Bowling Green where the Underwood family lived. Worse, in early March 1862 the withdrawing Confederates torched the Underwood family's 'Mount Air' estate: "Mount Air is in ashes! Our home was left unto us desolate," Josie sorrowfully scrawled



Portion of Lincoln's Commute where he likely encountered the Underwoods.

Adapted from Albert Boschke's 1861 map

in her diary. President Lincoln knew of Warren Underwood and in 1861 had written to the Union-supporting Kentuckian to do all he could to help his state "stand by the Government in the present difficulties, but if she would not do that, let her stand still and take no hostile part against it, and that no hostile step should tread her soil."<sup>6</sup>

Now, with his home and law career in ashes and the Kentucky economy in shambles, it may have worked in Underwood's favor that the President knew him, for it appears that Underwood turned to Kentucky's venerable Senator John J. Crittenden to lobby the President for an appointment. Crittenden wasted little time gathering Kentucky congressman Henry Grider to his side and met with Lincoln on Underwood's behalf.<sup>7</sup> It appeared to go well. Immediately following that meeting, Crittenden advised Underwood to come to Washington, prompting the excited Josie to write: "Just the import of it all I don't know – but Pa is going [to Washington] and is going to take me with him."<sup>8</sup> The Underwoods left for Washington on June 27 and soon after Josie's father met with the President. At that meeting Lincoln may have mentioned the possibility of appointing Underwood as Consul to Glasgow, Scotland. Josie noted that Lincoln told her father that he "fills the bill" for the position, being "a good lawyer – and strong Presbyterian and a Southern Union man."

On Sunday, July 20, following his promising White House meeting with the President, Warren hired a carriage and with his daughter and two others set out from the city to visit the Lincolns at their Soldiers' Home cottage where the first family had moved the previous month in part to quietly grieve the recent death of their son Willie. Her father, Josie explains, knew Mary Todd Lincoln from their days in Kentucky "when she was Miss [Mary] Todd and Pa a young man in the Kentucky Legislature."

And with that introduction I think this wonderful diary entry is best enjoyed without further editorial interruption:



Early photo of the Cottage from the Todd Family Album  
ca 1862 (#3993)

July 20-

The President and family were staying at the Soldiers Home.... Pa got a carriage and invited Mr. Etheridge and Miss Belle<sup>9</sup> with me—to dine with him to pay our respects to Mrs. Lincoln. I was most agreeably surprised when I met her. Instead of seeing the coarse loud common woman the papers had made her out to be—she was really a handsome woman dressed in deep mourning (for her little boy—not long dead) her conversation was agreeable. Her manner gentle—Mr. Etheridge thought—this owing to the sadness which was very apparent though she did not intrude it upon us—only responding to Pa’s very appropriate expressions of sympathy and then tactfully passing on to other subjects. However, it was—I think it a great shame to so misrepresent a president’s wife or any other woman.

Mr. Lincoln was not there when we called. As we returned to the city, about sun down, there were no other people in sight on the road except a lone horseman we were meeting. He was on a long-tailed black pony (the horse looked so small) galloping along—a high silk hat on his head—black cloth suit on, the long coat tails flying—behind him. Pa called our attention to him—saying “some farmer—who has been in the hot city all day and is now eager to get hometo supper and his family.” So Miss Belle and I thought the man and he looked it. As we met, Pa had the carriage stop. The man did the same and Pa introduced us to Mr. Lincoln. He leaned

over, shook hands with us, then slouched down on one side of the saddle—as any old farmer would do, as he talked for ten or 15 minutes with us. Pa and Mr. Etheridge thought it very imprudent and unwise risk for him in such a time of warfare and especial hatred of Mr. Lincoln himself for him to be riding unattended, unguarded out a lonely country road—and called his attention to the dangers—Mr. Lincoln’s smile—

expressed kindness to all men and fear of none—as he said—he “did not think anybody would hurt him that way”—shaking hands again with us—he galloped on neither did we meet anybody else for quite a little way so it was very evident there were no guards—following him. Pa and Mr. Etheridge thought this very wrong.<sup>10</sup>

Lincoln in appearance certainly falls far short (though he is so long) of how a President should look. In fact a very common-looking man he is—but I must confess there was a kindness in his face—that does not fit a tyrant—unfair man I have been thinking him.

This splendid description of President Lincoln in a head-long gallop along the isolated rural road leading to his summer home is particularly significant because it was on that very day, Sunday, July 20, that Lincoln most likely completed the first draft of the revolutionary emancipation proclamation. In just two days he would present it to his cabinet.<sup>11</sup> Unlike most of today’s commuters Lincoln looked forward to his morning and afternoon rides from and to the Soldiers’ Home. We know that he frequently ended his work days earlier when he could escape the White House “iron cage” and escape to his country ‘sanctuary.’ But this day the President worked into the early evening finalizing the first draft of his historic work. That done, he was free to do what he so loved: get on his horse and enjoy a summer’s evening gallop out of the city and up the hill

that would lead to the cool breezes and solitude of his Cottage ‘sanctuary’ where he had for the previous month been formulating his freedom plan.

By Frank Milligan

Director of President Lincoln’s Cottage

<sup>1</sup> Josie’s father, Warner Lewis Underwood (1808-1872) was former district attorney general in Texas and from 1855 to 1858 served in the House of Representatives as a pro-Union member of the American Party. Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress. Sadly, no photograph of diarist Josie Underwood has yet been discovered.

<sup>2</sup> See Nancy Disher Baird ed., Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary (Lexington, 2009)

<sup>3</sup> My special thanks to Special Collections Librarian Baird for approving the inclusion of a lengthy diary extract in this article

<sup>4</sup> Roy Basler ed., Abraham Lincoln’s Collected Works V: 532

<sup>5</sup> Michael Burlingame, Lincoln: A Life (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2009) 11: 154.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>7</sup> A Whig turned Union supporting Democrat, Henry Grider (1796-1866) represented Bowling Green’s 3rd Kentucky District in the House of Representatives from 1847 until his death in 1866.

<sup>8</sup> June 25, 1862, diary entry.

<sup>9</sup> Tennessee Unionist and Congressman Henry Etheridge (1811-1902) and his sister in law, Baird, Underwood Diary, 215.

<sup>10</sup> Historian Matthew Pinsker notes that the President’s infantry and cavalry guards were not dispatched to the Soldiers’ Home until September, 1862. Pinsker, “Lincoln’s Sanctuary: Abraham Lincoln and the Soldiers’ Home” (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 56.

<sup>11</sup> Historians differ as to where and when Lincoln actually penned the Proclamation. Some argue that he wrote the document at the Soldiers’ Home but historian Matthew Pinsker makes a convincing case that while Lincoln undoubtedly worked on the Proclamation while in residence at his summer cottage, he actually wrote out the first full draft of the revolutionary document on Sunday July 20 in his second-floor library at the White House. See Matthew Pinsker, “Lincoln’s Summer of Emancipation,” in Harold Holzer and Sarah Vaughan Gabbard eds., Lincoln and Freedom: Slaver, Emancipation and the Thirteenth Amendment (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007), 79-99.