

*Celebrating 200 Years*



**FEBRUARY 12, 2009 STATUE DEDICATION**

Left to Right: Frank Milligan, Director of President Lincoln's Cottage, Robert H. Smith, donor of the statue and supporter of the Cottage, Ivan Schwartz, founder of StudioEIS, and Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation at the dedication of a life size bronze statue. Located in front of the Cottage, this portrayal of Lincoln and his horse depicts a moment in the president's daily commute.

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# A CLOSER LOOK...

## AT *Presidents of the United States*

On Lincoln's 200th birthday, President Lincoln's Cottage launched a new special exhibit, "My Abraham Lincoln," which explores the breadth of Lincolniana and the motivations to collect and study Lincoln through the stories of six private collectors. The collections on display range from original manuscripts and art to pop culture.

Portraits and copies of speeches are some of the first items people collected when Lincoln made a splash on the political landscape 140 years ago. When Lincoln was elected president and the country was deeply divided, people realized they were witnessing a pivotal moment in history and wanted to remember and commemorate that moment, not unlike the behavior of many during the recent presidential election.

One particular item in the exhibit that both commemorates Lincoln's election and recognizes the challenges and opportunities facing the 16th president is a chromolithograph entitled, *Presidents of the United States*, published in 1861, shortly after Lincoln's election. In this image, a portrait of Lincoln completes an unbroken ring of portraits depicting the 15 presidents who preceded him. The illustration calls to mind a quote from Lincoln's first inaugural, "Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments."

The 16 presidential portraits encircle symbols of the republic at a time when a divided nation faced secession and civil war. In the center, Columbia holds a shield and liberty cap, the latter being a symbol both of revolution and of freed slaves. A bald eagle grasps arrows and an olive branch and carries a ribbon with the motto "E Pluribus Unum." The Capitol dome (shown completed at a time when it was still



*Presidents of the United States*, by A. Feusier, published by F. Bouclet, 1861. The Tefft Smith Collection

unfinished) symbolizes the founding of the democratic republic while a steamship symbolizes development and progress. The allegorical images relate to concepts that Lincoln expressed in his first inaugural address; that seceding and breaking the Constitution, would be a step backward, not forward, and violates the very principles of the Union, a Union which is "older than the Constitution." By commemorating Lincoln's election and illustrating the troubled and complex scene he faced, this chromolithograph encapsulates the spirit of Lincoln's presidency.

- Erin Mast, Curator

The exhibit "My Abraham Lincoln" is located in the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center for President Lincoln's Cottage and may be viewed during regular visitor hours through December 31, 2009.

## CALLIE HAWKINS JOINS COTTAGE STAFF



President Lincoln's Cottage is proud to announce that Callie Hawkins has joined the team as Education Coordinator. Callie has extensive experience working with school and youth groups. As Education Coordinator,

Callie will manage all school programs as well as design and implement new and exciting tours for the general public.

### *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.

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

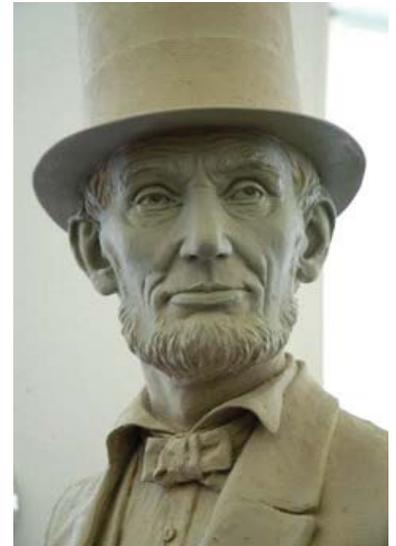
# Why Another Lincoln Sculpture?

Novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne called Lincoln "about the homeliest man I ever saw, yet by no means repulsive or disagreeable." Accused of being two-faced, Lincoln himself quipped, "If I had another face, do you think I'd wear this one?" We don't contemplate images of Lincoln because the man was strikingly handsome. Nor do we use them to learn what the man looked like: over a hundred photos record that in minute detail. Yet the invaluable SIRIS database of American sculpture lists portraits of Lincoln

by more than 100 sculptors. How can any of those works, or a new sculpture such as the one StudioEIS has produced for President Lincoln's Cottage, possibly add to our understanding and appreciation of Lincoln?

Sculpture can commemorate, tell a story, inspire, teach, or stimulate thought. If the purpose differs, even portraits of the same man by the same sculptor will vary widely in facial expression, pose, gestures, and costume. StudioEIS has created no fewer than six sculptures of George Washington, each meticulously accurate yet unique. Each of them makes us think about a different facet of Washington.

Their Lincoln is also meticulously accurate in its details. To create it StudioEIS's staff did a phenomenal amount of research into Lincoln's physical appearance, including the study of dozens of photographs, sculptures, and paintings. They even measured Lincoln's surviving clothing, including the size of his hat. All this detail is employed to present a facet of Lincoln that we seldom consider. Looking at a few previous versions of Lincoln is the easiest way to grasp how unusual StudioEIS' Lincoln is.



Lincoln for Lincoln's Cottage by  
StudioEIS

## Why Another Lincoln Sculpture?...continued

Two of the earliest Lincoln sculptures were the work of Henry Kirke Brown. Finished in 1868 and 1869, they stand in Manhattan's Union Square and Brooklyn's Prospect Park. The Union Square Lincoln stands upright, gazing into the distance: a stalwart, far-sighted figure in loose garments and a heavy cape. With a different face, the sculpture could represent almost any notable politician or businessman of the late 19th century.

In the Prospect Park statue, Lincoln holds a document in one hand, and gestures at it dramatically (although somewhat awkwardly) with the other. This sculpture might portray any 19th-century orator, if the pedestal didn't bear an inscription

identifying the document as the Emancipation Proclamation. Like almost all 19th-century portrait sculptors, Brown set his Lincolns on pedestals: Lincoln was a hero, and his image was meant to inspire (to be looked up to) as well as commemorate.

For Americans who had lived through the Civil War and the shock of Lincoln's assassination less than five years before, these were acceptable sculptures. Memories of Lincoln were still so vivid that a faithful representation of Lincoln's face was enough to recall a host of details about the man himself.

The image most of us hold of Lincoln was not created until some 20 years after Lincoln's death. In the *Standing Lincoln* (shown on page 5) in Chicago's Lincoln Park (dedicated in 1887), Augustus Saint Gaudens showed Lincoln with bowed head and furrowed brow. The clothing Lincoln wears emphasizes his gauntness, suggesting that presidential duties have kept him too busy or too worried to eat.

Saint Gaudens's biographer Wilkinson wrote, "It was as if the true Abraham Lincoln had never been seen before. From that time forward, he would be seen no other way." The media at the time agreed that Saint Gaudens's work was the best sculpture of Lincoln to date, and one of the best portrait sculptures ever done in America.

Saint Gaudens's viewpoint was slightly different from that of Brown. He



Daniel Chester French, Lincoln, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. From Wikipedia Commons

vividly remembered seeing Lincoln in person, but he knew that his audience included a generation of Americans who did not have firsthand memories of the Civil War or Lincoln. Saint Gaudens's Lincoln is a distillation of what made Lincoln memorable and heroic - literally larger than life.

The second famous Lincoln was created by Daniel Chester French for the Lincoln Memorial (dedicated 1922). For this sculpture, French not only had to capture the president's physical likeness and a characteristic action or pose: he had to do it on a scale large enough to fit the interior of the Memorial. The planned 10-foot-tall sculpture was soon more than doubled in size. In a letter written the year the sculpture was dedicated, French explained:

*"What I wanted to convey was the mental and physical strength of the great war President and his confidence in his ability to carry the thing through to a successful finish. If any of this 'gets over', I think it is probably as much due to the whole pose of the figure and particularly to the action of the hands as to the expression of the face."*



(c) 2005 Dianne Durante

Henry Kirke Brown, Abraham Lincoln, Union Square, Manhattan



Saint Gaudens, *Standing Lincoln*. Chicago  
From Kenyon Cox's *Artist and Public*, 1914

The bowed head is reminiscent of Saint Gaudens's *Standing Lincoln*, but the position of the hands was the result of considerable effort on French's part. If the hands were lying relaxed on the arms of the chair or were tightly clasped in Lincoln's lap, we would interpret Lincoln's mood quite differently.

Saint Gaudens and French created the prevalent image of Lincoln: a great man burdened by the constant difficult decisions he had to make during the Civil War, and doomed to die of an assassin's bullet. But to reduce Lincoln to that single image oversimplifies him, and makes his triumphs and defeats seem almost inevitable.

The StudioEIS sculpture focuses on a different facet of Lincoln. It shows us Lincoln as a human being, standing beside his horse, turning aside to smile slightly at someone who has

caught his attention. The sculpture stands outside President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home, where Lincoln lived in the summer and fall from 1862 to 1864. Walt Whitman reported that he often saw the president riding by on the way to and from the Cottage. For Lincoln it was a familiar place, and less formal than the White House.

The Lincoln for the Soldiers' Home is not on a pedestal; it stands on the same level ground as visitors today. It provokes us to think about Lincoln the man, rather than Lincoln the future hero and martyr. Lincoln's perseverance in his presidential duties is more remarkable if we realize that he was capable of relaxing - and then of pulling himself back to the job at hand. His willingness to make decisions that cost thousands of lives is more remarkable if we bear in mind that he expected to be alive to suffer

or enjoy the consequences of his decisions - not die while still in office.

A contented Lincoln momentarily distracted by someone nearby would look out of place inside the Lincoln Memorial, but Saint Gaudens's *Standing Lincoln* or French's seated Lincoln would look equally out of place next to Lincoln's summer retreat. StudioEIS's goal in its historical figures has always been to make history come alive: to create images that are not purely works of art, but that tell a story and provoke thought. Their Lincoln continues that tradition, helping us better understand and appreciate Lincoln.

This article Copyright © 2008 Dianne L. Durante. Dr. Durante maintains [www.Forgotten-Delights.com](http://www.Forgotten-Delights.com), on outdoor sculpture in New York City. Pages 77-81 of her *Outdoor Monuments of Manhattan: A Historical Guide* (New York University Press, 2007) include a comparison of the Brown Lincoln at Union Square and the Saint Gaudens *Standing Lincoln*.



Clay Model of Statue for President Lincoln's Cottage by StudioEIS