

“This man grew according to the need”:

Concord and Abraham Lincoln

The Concord Free Public Library’s William Munroe Special Collections is pleased to announce the library’s forthcoming fall/winter exhibition and lecture series *“This man grew according to the need”*: **Concord and Abraham Lincoln**. Located in the CFPL gallery, it runs from 7 November 2014 through 28 February 2015 and is free and open to the public during library hours.

The unique focus of this exhibit is the evolution of Abraham Lincoln as seen through the eyes of Concordians ranging from Ralph Waldo Emerson (whose astute observation on Lincoln serves as the exhibit title), Nathaniel Hawthorne and Bronson Alcott to William Whiting and John Shepard Keyes who, serving in his official capacity as a U.S. Marshal in President Lincoln’s administration, attended the president’s first inaugural and was present as he delivered the Gettysburg Address. Also included here are the shared thoughts of members of the Prichard family, as well as the reaction by Henry Francis Smith, Annie Keyes Bartlett and other Concordians to Lincoln’s assassination.

The exhibit takes visitors chronologically through Concord’s strong antislavery tradition and its contribution toward the origins of the Republican Party, to the Convention of 1860, at which Lincoln received the nomination—and subsequently won the election—and goes on to highlight his first inauguration. It continues with the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, the escalation of hostilities, Lincoln’s signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862/1863 and concludes with the President’s assassination and its aftermath.

Keeping the focus on Concord’s reaction to a president some of its citizens were slow to admire, we see evidence of the town’s growing support for Lincoln during the war, when they realized exactly how much “This man grew according to the need.” A hotbed of antislavery sentiment and activity, Concordians went on to cheer Lincoln at the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and to mourn him profoundly when he was assassinated, just days after the war ended, at the hands of disgruntled Southerner John Wilkes Booth.

Created using manuscript and visual materials from the CFPL’s William Munroe Special Collections, the exhibit features manuscript leaves containing John Shepard Keyes’s first-hand account of his experiences at the Republican Convention in Chicago in May of 1860, as well as many additional Keyes documents, including letters to Secretary of State William H. Seward (1862) and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles (1862), as well as his reaction to Lincoln’s assassination. There is also an autograph letter (on Executive Mansion letterhead), signed by Abraham Lincoln to “The Managing Committee of the Sailor’s Fair: Boston, Mass.,” Washington, D.C., November 8, 1864, entries from Amos Bronson Alcott’s journal, a bound manuscript record book for the Middlesex County Antislavery Society, 1834-1844 and correspondence exchanged between members of the perspicacious Prichard family that provide a vivid “pen portrait” of the people, places and events of Civil War-era Concord.

Visuals include artist Edwin Dalton Marchant's painting of Lincoln having just signed the Emancipation Proclamation, 1863; dry mounted copy prints of Mathew Brady's photographic portraits of both Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, engravings from *Harper's Weekly* and other sources; artwork, photograph images, and many evocative broadsides from the CFPL's rich broadside and poster collection.

Accompanying Lectures

November 7, 6:30 p.m. Exhibit opening; lecture by Daniel Shealy, Professor, University of North Carolina, Charlotte (currently working on a book about Concord and the Civil War): **“The pulse of twenty millions throbbing in his heart’: Abraham Lincoln and Concord's Civil War.”** **R.S.V.P. to meckel@minlib.net if you plan to attend.**

December 6, 5:00 p.m. Jayne Gordon, long-time Concord historian: **“Considering Mr. Lincoln: Winning Over Concord Twice.”**

January 10, 5:00 p.m. Rick Frese, Concord resident, Professor, Bentley University and author of *Concord and the Civil War: From Walden Pond to the Gettysburg Front* (The History Press, 2014): **“President Lincoln's Concord Soldiers.”**

February 21, 5:00 p.m.: Len Gougeon, Professor, University of Scranton, **“Transcendental Politics: Emerson, Lincoln, and the Civil War.”**

Coming Soon: an anticipated showing of Steven Spielberg's film, *Abraham Lincoln*. Check the library's website at <www.concordlibrary.org> for additional information and programming.