

**Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission**  
**Meeting #7, April 25, 2003, 11:00 a.m.**  
**In the Community Room**  
**Hodgenville, Kentucky**

Present were Dr. Jean Bandler, Dr. Darrel Bigham, Hon. Richard Durbin, Joan Flinspach, Dr. James O. Horton, Harold Holzer by phone, Lura Lynn Ryan, Hon. Tommy Turner, Hon. Frank Williams by phone, Michael Bishop, executive director, and Jackie Williams, staff of the ALBC. Congressional Staff included Pat Souders with the Hon. Richard Durbin's office. Guests attending the meeting were the Hon. Roger Truitt, Mayor of Hodgenville, Ken Apschnikat, Superintendent of the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Park, Sarah Bishop, Scott Kingdon, and (reporter).

Mr. Truitt, Mayor of Hodgenville, Kentucky greeted the Commissioners and welcomed them to Hodgenville.

At 11:21 a.m., Senator Durbin called the meeting to order. He asked for approval of the minutes from the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. Dr. Bigham moved and Dr. Bandler seconded a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried.

Senator Durbin asked for Reports. Mr. Bishop, executive director, gave his report, which had been submitted in writing to commission members in advance of the meeting. He referred Commissioners to the written report and orally noted that the *Parade* magazine article was moved to June due to the news coverage of the war in Iraq. Our fiscal balance is currently \$863,551 with approximately \$130,000 of that balance to be used for salaries in this fiscal year. Mr. Bishop informed the Commissioners of the staff experience while attending the dedication of the new Lincoln statue in Richmond, Virginia. Protestors were vocal, and an airplane circled overhead with a banner reading, "Sic semper tyrannis." Mr. Holzer added that both African American and White citizens of Richmond embraced the statue and that the people protesting were on the fringe. Senator Durbin reminded the Commissioners to visit the impressive statue of Lincoln on the Hodgenville Square.

Dr. Bigham gave the Education Committee report. He stated that the committee's three goals are to identify other agencies that should be contacted for input; to identify projects; and to draft a set of recommendations. The committee is currently determining audiences and other resources needed. The committee met earlier this morning and reviewed the current list of projects. Mr. Bishop urged Commissioners to give Dr. Bigham their input.

Senator Durbin called on Dr. Bandler to give the Commission a report from the Mandate Committee. She remarked that the legislation to be voted on later in the meeting, reflected the input of her committee and many of the other Commissioners and incorporated the concept of a rededication of the Lincoln Memorial instead of a redesignation of it. She is collecting ideas for this rededication including an examination of the history of Abraham Lincoln, the history of the memorial itself and civil rights issues, etc. She thanked Senator Durbin for his letter to the

Director of the U.S. Mint. Senator Durbin observed that the Mint staff is excited about coordinating with the Lincoln Bicentennial. Jackie Williams has researched the protocol for creating a new stamp. She commented that the national Stamp Committee has a four-year timetable. Dr. Bandler said that her committee is arriving at recommendations for the stamp series. Mr. Holzer asked whether we would be able to contribute to designs for the new U.S. quarter series. Mr. Bishop had checked on this prior to the meeting and reported that this program is already designed and underway, so we will not be able to participate in it. Senator Durbin discussed the penny, and the Commission agreed that new designs for it will be addressed.

Senator Durbin brought up unfinished business as the next item on the agenda. The appointment of a new Commissioner to fill our vacancy has not yet been made. Three members of the U.S. House of Representatives have expressed an interest in the position. The second item under unfinished business included new legislation. Pat Souders explained that the new legislation calls for an extension of the life of the Commission until April 30, 2010, an interim report, and a final report. It is a stand-alone bill and Senator Durbin is co-sponsoring it with Senator Bunning. Mr. Bishop brought the Commissioners' attention to the phrasing on page 2, line 2 of the new legislation, which states that we will be carrying out other duties. He added that Congressman LaHood will introduce the legislation in the House with several co-sponsors. It is possible that the legislation will become part of another bill. Chief Justice Williams asked Senator Durbin how long the passage will take. Mr. Bishop answered that hopefully the legislation will pass in the fall. The Commissioners supported the new legislation by consensus.

A discussion of a motto was the next item under unfinished business. Mr. Bishop asked the Commissioners to see the five examples in their meeting materials. Dr. Horton commented on the motto, "A New Birth of Freedom." He continued that the 2005 Organization of American Historians meeting in San Francisco might adopt a theme centered on the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment since that is the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its passage and ratification. He invited the co-chairs of the Commission to sponsor a plenary session and preside at such a session. Mr. Holzer supported this idea and reminded Commissioners that we must make use of any Lincoln related anniversaries. Dr. Horton described the audience of the OAH as academic historians, public school teachers, and many members of the National Park Service. Dr. Bigham added that Dr. Horton had discussed the OAH meeting theme during the Education Committee meeting and that it had the support of this committee. Senator Durbin encouraged Dr. Horton to distribute a brochure about the Commission that included our website address. Dr. Horton said that he might write an article for the OAH's *Magazine of History*. Ms. Flinspach suggested waiting to make a decision on the motto. She preferred the motto, "Unfinished Work." Dr. Bigham also liked the motto, "The great task remaining before us." Dr. Horton stated that the motto could be part of a Bicentennial Minute. He suggested that we form an Innovation Committee comparing events occurring in the world today and using Lincoln quotations to interpret them. Dr. Bandler advised putting the motto on the website so that the public can respond.

At this point in the meeting the Honorable George Ryan, the former governor of Illinois arrived. Senator Durbin welcomed him and praised his leadership in establishing the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum. The Commissioners concurred.

Senator Durbin moved to New Business, the next item on the agenda. He asked Ms. Flinspach to explain her request for a new committee. She first digressed to thank the Commissioners for their expressions of kindness in the loss of her father. Returning the agenda item, she explained that the items covered by the Education Committee and the Mandate Committee were not addressing the general public as an audience. She noted, for example, the Rose Bowl float idea, which while not scholarly would reach the broadest television audience in the world. Other activities that would fit the scope of such a committee include traveling exhibits intended for non-museum venues, re-enactments, etc. She asked Dr. Horton to bring up an idea that he had raised in the Education Committee meeting. Dr. Horton told the Commissioners that he had been asked to consult with Disney when they considered creating their American History theme park, and, that down the road we may want to consider working with them. Mr. Bishop urged that our role would be to make what they do substantive. A discussion of celebrity bicentennial minutes followed. Mr. Holzer suggested lining up people from each major television network and asking Sam Waterston to assist. The Commissioners voted to establish such a committee provided Ms. Flinspach would chair it. Mr. Holzer volunteered to be Vice Chair.

Dr. Bigham pointed out that this direction led us to the topic of endorsements. Dr. Bandler urged that we decide what our general policy would be. Mr. Bishop reminded the Commissioners that they had endorsed the establishment of the Lincoln statue in Richmond, Virginia. Ms. Flinspach noted that in establishing our policy we will need to distinguish between endorsements and sponsorships. Judge Turner added that we will need more precise communication as we move closer to 2009.

Advisory Committee ideas were the second topic under New Business. Dr. Bishop asked that our Advisory Committee list be updated and include changes in National Park Service Personnel. Mr. Bishop stated that the website has been redesigned to include an Abraham Lincoln timeline, photos, events and that the February media coverage of our event generated 20 submissions a day for quite a while. Each submittal generates an automatic response. Mr. Holzer agreed with Mr. Bishop that we should continue to enhance our website. Senator Durbin commented that it is a good way to reach students. Dr. Bigham recommended that enhancements to the website direct teachers to on-line sources. Mr. Bishop informed the Commissioners that when our contract expires he will be looking for a new webmaster. Dr. Horton and Mr. Holzer urged the use of original documents related to Abraham Lincoln events as a part of the new website.

The Review Process was the third item under New Business. Mr. Bishop said that the Commission must continue to whittle down ideas and sift through raw material. The timetable for the June 2004 report requires that every Commission meeting from here on out deal with substance.

A discussion of future meeting dates was next. The Commission is meeting July 7<sup>th</sup> in Manchester, Vermont, at the Robert Todd Lincoln estate, Hildene. The fall meeting will be in Washington combined with another public event—perhaps at Ford's Theatre with the First Lady and school children. The spring meeting will be in Indiana and the intervening winter meeting in Washington.

Judge Turner made a special presentation of gavels to the Commission's co-chairs and pen and pencil sets to the Commissioners. All were made from the wood of the boundary Oak, which died in 1976. Prior to that year this tree marked the boundary of Thomas Lincoln's property. The Commissioners thanked Judge Turner for these gifts and for the wonderful meeting and Lincoln-related side trips that he had arranged.

Senator Durbin adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.