In this issue:

A Dream Fulfilled and Then Forgotten: The Tokyo Lincoln Center
by Jason H. Silverman

A Noble Dream: Abraham Lincoln and the Arab World
by Jason H. Silverman
“For years I attempted to work out the theoretical underpinnings of an ideal U.S. foreign policy. I found it difficult to advance much beyond Abraham Lincoln’s hope that our country would be not the terror but the encourager of the world . . .”

Henry S Reuss, When Government Was Good: Memories of a Life in Politics

Abraham Lincoln Advisory Board

Teresa Leporace, Argentina
Patricia Moral, Lincoln College, Lincoln, Argentina
Sarker Hasan Al Zayed, East West Univ., Bangladesh
Yvette Alex-Assensoh, Indiana Univ.-Bloomington
Shahab Ghobadi, Kurdistan, Iran
Rita Uotila, Finland
Bettina Hofman, Germany
Balaji Ranganathan, Ahmedabad, India
Yotirnaya Tripathy, India
M. Ranjendra Pandian, Madurai, India
Prafulla C. Kar, Banda, India
Stefano Luconi, Univ. of Florence & Pisa, Italy
Sunil K. Sarangi, India

Henry R. Abraham, University of Virginia
A.B. Assensoh, Indiana Univ.-Bloomington
Ronald J. Byrd, LSU in Shreveport (Emeritus)
Shiyi Chen, San Francisco, CA
Barbara A. Perry, University of Virginia
Sura P. Rath, Univ. of North Texas-Dallas
Robert P. Watson, Lynn University
Frank W. Williams, The Lincoln Forum
Douglas E. Saffel, Texarkana College
Helen C. Taylor, UK
Alexander Mikberidze, Republic of Georgia
Alvaro Rodriguez, Alvarez, Spain
Burris M. Carnahan, McLean, Virginia

Copyright by the International Lincoln Association. All members of the ILA receive Abraham Lincoln Abroad as a part of their regular services. Individual copies are available for $10.00 each. ISSN: 1522-1326.

Founded in 1987, Abraham Lincoln Abroad is the annual publication of the International Lincoln Association (ILA). www.http://internationallincolnassociation. The ILA promotes the democratic leadership of Abraham Lincoln, as well as information about his life and values (peace, justice, and prosperity). It encourages the worldwide study of his legacy, especially in schools, through lectures, symposia and conferences, as well as publications. For further information, please contact:

William D. Pederson, co-editor          Jason Silverman, co-editor          Donna F. Byrd, co-editor
International Lincoln Center, LSU Shreveport. One University Place. 321 BH
Shreveport, Louisiana 71115-2301
In 1905, a twenty-year-old Japanese man traveled to the United States. Awestruck by all that he observed, he soon found himself mesmerized by the centennial celebrations of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln. “I began assembling books and reference materials in preparation for the writing of a biography,” he recalled late in his long life. “But I soon found out that the task was beyond my powers. I became convinced that to reconstruct Lincoln’s greatness in literary form one must share some of that greatness. Though I felt unequal to this labor, I [thought] that by collecting and making available the maximum amount of research materials on Lincoln I could assist other people in creating their own images of the great man. In this way I might be able to provide stimulus and assistance to a more talented writer who could himself produce the biography that I had found myself unable to write.”

So began the young man’s lifelong devotion to whom he considered the greatest American in history.

The name Masaharu Mochizuki is not one that is usually bandied about when speaking about Abraham Lincoln. And yet his story, largely untold, is a fascinating and heartwarming one. As anti-Japanese sentiment intensified in the United States in the early twentieth century, Mochizuki felt more strongly than ever that the country needed the spirit of democracy and humanity personified by the life of Lincoln. Seeing prejudice all around him, he concluded then and there that “the only path for him to follow in [his] life was the spiritual path of the way of Lincoln.”

Born in 1885 in Shizuoka Prefecture, Mochizuki’s migration to the United States taught him that Lincoln’s self-made success story was one he must emulate. Thus, like Lincoln, Mochizuki began as a store keeper. He opened a trading and general merchandise store in Sacramento, California, attempting to follow in the life footsteps of Lincoln himself.

Soon, however, the visceral hatred and prejudice directed toward the Japanese and other Asians in California, became embodied in such laws as the Federal Chinese Exclusion Act, signed by President Chester A. Arthur on May 6, 1882, prohibiting all immigration of Chinese laborers, and the California Alien Land
Law of 1913 (also known as the Webb-Haney Act) which prohibited “aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning agricultural land or possessing long-term leases over it. The latter law affected the Chinese, Indian, Japanese, and Korean immigrant farmers in California, but implicitly, the law was primarily directed at the Japanese. These laws made it virtually impossible for Mochizuki to live peacefully and prosperously and he soon found himself the target of intense racism and hatred. So, in 1919 he sadly packed his bags and returned to Japan. In his luggage, however, were more than thirty of his treasured biographies of Lincoln.

The spirit of Lincoln was his sole business inspiration during the years when he operated the Yokohama Shoji Co., Ltd., which he founded and which increased in prosperity as time passed. Tragically, in the disaster of the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, his entire collection of books and other materials on Lincoln were destroyed by fire. At that time it was reported that 50,000 people were killed and 300,000 houses were burned. “This hard blow prevented me from purchasing any books for some years,” Mochizuki recalled in 1971, “but thanks to my trading business which had relationships with the United States I could eventually start anew collecting books in Japanese and English. I kept collecting until 1945 . . . when the valuable collection of books was again reduced to ashes by the 1945 Tokyo bombing raids.”

Not long after World War II, and undeterred Mochizuki traveled to the United States representing his new company Japan Publications Trading Co., Ltd. While in America, he fulfilled his lifelong dream of visiting Lincoln’s Springfield. “In Springfield I purchased some books and the like on Lincoln and visited various places connected with him, such as the cemetery, the monument, and so on,” he reminisced. He had traveled by car from St. Louis to Springfield along the Mississippi River taking in all the historical associations with Lincoln along the way. He had also visited New Orleans where he “imagined how young Lincoln displayed his righteous indignation toward the slave trade and the disregard of human rights in the slave market [and] I was deeply stirred . . . With these pleasant memories of Springfield, I returned home and not long afterwards confirmed my determination to somehow open a library of books dealing with Lincoln.”

From that time, until his death in the 1980s, in addition to his duties as company president and chairman of the board of directors, he spent most of his time rebuilding his collection of materials on Abraham Lincoln. Almost as unique as a Lincoln scholar in Asia, Mochizuki collected books, ephemera, and memorabilia his entire life.
That collection, first housed in the Japan Publications Trading Company building soon outgrew its initial location and is now known both at home and abroad as the Tokyo Lincoln Center housed at Meisei University. It is unique in the Far East and its story is one worth telling.

The lofty mission of the center is the promotion of peace for the whole world. In fulfilling that mission, it is restricted by no bonds of nationality or ideology. It directs its efforts to the service of all humanity “by preserving and offering to the public information about one of the great humanitarians of all time.”

To do this, Mochizuki believed that books were the best weapons and ignorance about Abraham Lincoln the greatest enemy. Mochizuki took comfort in knowing that Lincoln, too, was a great lover of books. Though they were scarce and expensive in the backwoods of America of his time, and though Lincoln was poor, he managed to acquire reading materials whenever and however he could. For Lincoln, of course, reading was not an end in itself, for he always attempted to gain something from the books and to assimilate in his life whatever he learned. “In fact,” Mochizuki reflected, “reading probably accounted for a good bit of the famous Lincoln personality, which was a compound of humor, wit, and love of people.” Lincoln is said to have learned wit and irony from Aesop’s Fables, courage to overcome hardship and loneliness from Robinson Crusoe, and the basis of self-criticism from The Pilgrim’s Progress. Mason Locke Weems, usually referred to as Parson Weems, wrote the first biography of George Washington immediately after his death and that book brought Lincoln in touch with the spirit of the founders of the United States, while the Bible taught him faith, belief, and love of humanity. He mastered rhetoric by reading grammar, the fundamentals of law from Blackstone’s and the accurate pursuit of logic from Euclid’s geometry.

Mochizuki always maintained that Lincoln reminded him of one of the great figures in Japanese history, Ninomiya Kinjiro Sontoku, a prominent 19th-century Japanese agricultural leader, philosopher, moralist and economist who, throughout his life, also found every opportunity to obtain books and use whatever he learned from them. It was his personality, like Lincoln, that “captured the hearts of people everywhere,” Mochizuki believed.

And so Meisei University became a haven for Lincolniana after Mochizuki donated his entire collection. “Books are the record of civilization and culture and heritage left us by people of the past,” Mochizuki wrote. “Libraries are repositories of this knowledge; it is their function to conserve the old and proclaim the new. Human beings attempt to save the eternally true from the transient and fleeting, but sometimes the true is suppressed and forgotten with the transient. The day may
come when what ought to be abandoned and forgotten is elevated to the position of the true. To prevent this from happening to materials on Lincoln, the [Tokyo Lincoln] Center’s library strives to collect everything available on this great man."

To implement Mochizuki’s dream, Ralph Newman, one of America’s most prestigious Lincoln collectors and Kenneth Rendell, a prominent autograph dealer were recruited to broker almost everything that was added to the collection by Meisei University after the original donation. At one point, during the height of such acquisitions, Newman, an Illinoisan, was challenged by an Illinois politician to defend his “sending U.S. history overseas.” Newman replied that he would never send “anything of consequences” to be housed in such a collection. The Center’s eventual holdings, however, would belie such a claim. “One half century had flown by," Mochizuki remembered, “and my original purpose was happily accomplished in November 1961 when the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Book Center was held in the presence of the then U.S. Ambassador to Japan, the Hon. Edwin O. Reischauer."

Eight years later because the collection had grown to extended, the Center’s name was changed to the Tokyo Lincoln Center with 1,465 copies of Japanese and foreign books, 185 duplicate copies, some 30 fine oil portraits, postage stamps and coins, all associated with Abraham Lincoln. By 1980, Meisei had created space in the university library for the new Tokyo Lincoln Center.

Throughout the 1980s the university continued to expand its holdings in large part because of the university president Mitsuo Kodama. Kodama, was a great admirer of Lincoln and of the Center and its collection. Indeed, it was Kodama who was responsible for convincing Mochizuki to donate his entire collection to the university in the first place. Kodama set out to enhance the collection and establish a new research center encompassing all things having to do with Lincoln. By the end of 1985, the collection grew to include 6,000 titles, innumerable periodicals, and over 1,000 statues, life masks and related articles.

But the great promise and potential of the Tokyo Lincoln Center to make accessible to people of all walks of life and of all corners of the globe the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln eventually became a largely unfulfilled one.

Only a fraction of the collection is actually catalogued and there is no lending of materials including interlibrary loan. No complete survey of the collection has been undertaken and whether the holdings are adequately preserved in the climate controlled Center. One observer wrote that “the musty smell to the room can’t bode well for the collection.”
Mochizuki knew Lincoln well and his tribute to the sixteenth president was a fitting one for Lincoln once said that “My Best Friend is a person who will give me a book I have not read.” But Lincoln did not end there, “A capacity, and taste, for reading,” he said “gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so. It gives relish, and facility, for successfully pursuing the [yet] unsolved ones.”

However, subject to the whims and whimsies of academic administrations, as all university projects eventually become, Mochizuki’s dream has now largely become overlooked and neglected. His desire to have his Lincoln library used by those far and near never materialized. Quite the contrary, in fact, as few if any patrons avail themselves of the many books and resources that Mochizuki collected during his lifetime. One visitor commented that today “the collection sits, collecting nothing more than dust and [perhaps] a few [already subscribed to] periodicals each month all added to the stack of books lining the wall outside the exhibition and research rooms.”

Although he sought no monuments to himself and surely would be embarrassed by how revered he and his legacy are today, Lincoln would be saddened by the now seemingly forgotten efforts of Mochizuki and his library and research center. Education was paramount of importance to Lincoln, perhaps because he had so little formal education. “Upon the subject of education,” he said when running for the state legislature in 1832, “not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appear to be an object of vital importance, even on this account alone, to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be derived from all being able to read the Scriptures, and other works both of a religious and moral nature, for themselves.”

Unless something changes, few people in Tokyo and abroad will be able to read the histories of Abraham Lincoln and the era in which he lived in the confines of the center that Mochizuki dreamed they would.

It is not easy to find Meisei University even when you are in Tokyo. To get there you travel just over an hour by train to the outskirts of the Tokyo metropolitan area. From the station you must trek up a series of increasingly narrower streets until you reach the main artery leading to the entrance gates. The location itself is impressive. Meisei is perched on a hill overlooking the surrounding area. The Lincoln
collection in the Library which follows the architectural leanings of Japanese universities in the 1960s: retro pillbox. There is absolutely nothing to tell visitors of the Lincoln research center, now accessible only by contacting a librarian who serves as a gatekeeper and who hold the keys to the Lincoln “exhibition room” and the “research collection.”

Approaching the exhibition room, you cannot help but be struck by the site of massive bookshelves that line the halfway outside the room with even more volumes piled up against the walls. Space is at a premium in Japan and the University dedicated a rather large room filled with standing display tables that cover the various phases in the life of Lincoln.

The research room houses some pretty important items from a massive bust of Lincoln sculpted by Thomas D. Jones in 1861 to Lincoln’s first autobiography self-written in 1858. At one time the Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln listed the whereabouts of this original as “not located.” Abraham Lincoln wrote three autobiographies in a two-year period. This first, terse effort was prepared at the request of Charles Lanman, who was compiling the Dictionary of the American Congress. It read: “Born, February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. Education defective. Profession, a lawyer. Have been a captain of volunteers in Black Hawk war. Postmaster at a very small office. Four times a member of the Illinois legislature, and was a member of the lower house of Congress. Yours &c A. Lincoln.”

Lincoln’s correspondence to the recently elected Democratic Governor of New York, Horatio Seymour, on March 23, 1863 is an extremely revealing and important piece. “You and I are substantially strangers,” Lincoln wrote, “I, for the time being, am at the head of a nation which is in great peril, and you are at the head of the greatest State of that nation. As to maintaining the nation’s life, and integrity, I assume, and believe, there cannot be a difference of purpose between you and me . . .” While there is a draft of this letter in the Robert Todd Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, the original copy, sent to the contentious, (and oft accused of being a Copperhead) Governor Seymour resides in a storage room in the Tokyo Lincoln Center.

Sadly, today the Tokyo Lincoln Center goes largely unsung and unused. After a visit by the editors of the Springfield-based Papers of Abraham Lincoln project visited Tokyo some seven years ago that attracted national news when they discovered several documents that they did not have in their collections, there hasn’t been a burst of interest in, or even use of, the collection to which Mochizuki devoted his life. Quite the contrary. A change in presidential leadership at Meisei University brought with it a shift in direction. Apparently Lincoln was no longer a
priority, but William Shakespeare was. The new president decided that building a Shakespeare collection had more long-term viability for generating publicity than displaying the works of an assassinated American president. All Lincoln acquisitions ground to a half as the collection now only adds new periodicals to their “buy list."

The only mention of the Lincoln Center today on the University’s website is the following: “Also at the University Library, there is the Tokyo Lincoln Center with a valuable collection of documents and memorabilia related to the remarkable America President.” There is no link to the Center or its holdings, though in fairness neither is there a link to the Shakespeare holdings.

The Tokyo Lincoln Center also houses one of the Leland-Boker authorized copies of the Emancipation Proclamation. A total of forty-eight copies were signed by President Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward, with John Nicolay also signing each copy attesting to the authenticity of the document. These were produced by Charles G. Leland and George H. Boker and sold for $10 each at the Great Central Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia in June 1864.

The sheer volume of documents in this collection proves quite formidable. Piled on the shelves and locked within the cabinets are countless pages and volumes. At one time there was an attempt at preservation of the more valuable documents, but a couple of pages of old magazines with a mention of Lincoln share space with a manuscript note signed by the President in 1863.

What he once begun almost a century ago, Mochizuki lived to see his plans ultimately realized into a significant collection for scholarly usage and housed at a large Tokyo university. Even well into his nineties, Mochizuki “with a spirit of perpetual youthfulness, [devoted] himself unstintingly to increasing the quantity and improving the quality of [his] center’s holdings.”

Jason H. Silverman is the Ellison Capers Palmer Jr. Professor of History Emeritus at Winthrop University and author, most recently, of Lincoln and the Immigrant. He is a co-editor of Abraham Lincoln Abroad.
The story of Abraham Lincoln’s self-education is a well-known one. A voracious reader from a very young age, Lincoln devoured whatever books he could get his hands on. And much has been written about this. Indeed, he once told his friend, Leonard Swett, that as a boy “he borrowed and read every book he could hear of for fifty miles.”

We know that Lincoln read the Bible, classics, histories, poetry, drama, and patriotic works. But, little has been written about one work in particular that had great influence upon Lincoln’s later life and diplomacy. Over eight years ago, the eminent Lincoln scholar, R. Gerald McMurtry, wrote a short article about the influence that Captain James Riley’s *Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce* (1817) had upon Abraham Lincoln. According to McMurtry, “the book is said to have a striking and permanent impression on the minds of early American youths who read it,” and Lincoln certainly fell into that category. Besides being an exciting adventure of capture, release, and cultural immersion, Riley’s story left “an indelible impression on Lincoln’s mind in regard to race superiority and the moral wrongs of slavery,” not to mention keen and critical observations of the Arab world. As McMurtry perceptively noted the complete title of Riley’s *Narrative* not only summarizes the contents of the book, but also indicates how Lincoln could have become enthralled with it and remembered it many years later as President of the United States.

*An Authentic Narrative of the Loss of the American Brig Commerce Wrecked on the Western Coast of Africa in the Month of August 1815. With an account of the Sufferings of her Surviving Officers and Crew who Were Enslaved by the Wandering Arabs, on the Great African Desart, Or Zahahrarah; and Observations, Historical, Geographical, &c., Made During the Travels of the Author, While a Slave to the Arabs, and in the Empire of Morocco*

For Lincoln, who would barely leave the United States in his lifetime, this was his first exposure to the Arab world and one that would have profound influence upon him. While it is doubtless that the anti-slavery sentiment of the book left a lasting impression upon the young Lincoln, so too did the descriptions of the nomadic Moroccan Arabs, and their cruel and unusual customs, who sold Riley and his crew as slaves to Arab merchants. “After some time bartering about me,”
Riley wrote, “I was given to an old man whose features showed every sign of the deepest rooted malignity in his disposition. And this is my master? Thought I, Great God defend me from this cruelty.” Later, as president, Lincoln would list Riley’s Narrative, along with the Bible and Pilgrim’s Progress, as one of the books that most shaped his life and thinking.

Though he had celebrated his inauguration in a banquet hall called the Muslim Palace of Aladdin, Abraham Lincoln was not given to Middle Eastern fantasies. Immediately upon assuming office, Lincoln Secretary of State, William Seward, cautioned the new president that Middle Eastern rulers, “accustomed as they were to wait upon power with respect, and visit weakness with disdain,” would exploit to their benefit the division in the United States. Indeed, James Buchanan’s Minister to the Ottoman Empire, Alabaman James Williams, urged the government there to ignore the Union and recognize the Confederacy.

Lincoln quickly removed the Buchanan appointee to the Ottoman Empire and replaced him with Edward Joy Morris, a Pennsylvanian, who suggested that a naval force be stationed outside Constantinople to demonstrate American resolve in the region. Lincoln demurred on the stationing of a naval squadron and assured the Sultan of his desire to “continue to cultivate the friendly relations which have always so happily existed” between America and the Ottomans. Having long battled secessionist movements in his empire, Sultan Abdul Aziz needed little persuading and assured Lincoln of his “friendly sympathies” for the North and his hope that its differences with the South “may soon be settled in such a manner as will preserve the Union intact.” The Sultan also took the extraordinary step on February 25, 1862, of renewing the 1830 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between the United States and the Ottoman Empire with an addendum forbidding Confederate privateers from operating in Ottoman waters. This was a very impressive feat for the Lincoln administration consumed in its first year by war and the President proudly announced it in his annual message to Congress that “the new commercial treaty between the United States and the Sultan of Turkey has been carried into execution.”

But, the perils of being perceived as weak in the region continued to plague Lincoln with each passing day. It soon came in the presence of Christian missionaries to the region; the number of whom grew significantly while Civil War engulfed the United States. Of the 150 documented missionaries in the Ottoman Empire at the outbreak of war in the United States, Ambassador Morris observed that not one sympathized with the Confederacy. As such, Morris, Seward, and Lincoln regarded the missionaries as a de facto diplomatic corps for the State
Department. Missionaries in the Middle East reported Morris, “enjoyed a liberty of conscience that is not accorded to dissenters from the established faith in some of the most enlightened kingdoms of Europe.” His boss, Secretary of State Seward echoed that opinion. “The missionaries, Seward said, “enjoyed not only the support of the President, but also the support of a “very considerable and intelligent portion of the people of the United States.”

Ever since he read Riley’s Narrative, Lincoln had great respect for the work of the missionaries in the Muslim world. And because of that he soon found his administration embroiled in a controversy over one missionary in particular. In a very unusual response, to reach a wide audience abroad, Lincoln chose to publish the official correspondence concerning the controversy over this missionary. The publication appeared in the form of a white paper entitled Religious Toleration in Egypt: Official Correspondence Relating to the Indemnity Obtained for the Maltreatment of Faris-El-Hakim, An Agent of the American Missionaries in Egypt which was intended to apply diplomatic pressure to the Egyptian government to exact punishment on those responsible for the abuse of Hakim. The published correspondence covered a period of twelve months and few Americans, consumed by the strife at home, realized, until they read it, that Lincoln had issued an ultimatum to Egypt and Turkey.

In the midst of his myriad of domestic woes, Lincoln had received a letter from his Egyptian ambassador, William S. Thayer, stating that a Syrian bookseller, a Christian employed by American missionaries, had been abused by a mob of Moslems on the Upper Nile. Thirteen wealthy and respected citizens of the area were guilty of the violence. Thayer said that an example must be made of them to preserve American prestige. A year’s imprisonment and a fine of $5,000 for each of them was what Thayer recommended because “that would renew respect for the America.”

To support the abused Syrian, Faris-el-Hakim, Lincoln published in his white paper Thayer’s letter along with an affidavit and the reply of the local Turkish officials. The depositions of the two principals agreed in all the essential facts, yet the two accounts contradicted one another significantly. Ever the lawyer, Lincoln had seen many similar incidents while riding the circuit back to Illinois. Faris claimed that the Moslems in Upper Egypt disliked him because he sold Christian books cheaper than the native merchants could sell books in their own faith. In addition, he stated he had been persecuted because he acted as an attorney for a woman who wished to become a Christian. The Moslems condemned him as a dangerous infidel and urged the population to stone him.
The local Moslem officials, however, claimed that the trouble began over a woman, Fatima, whose attorney, Faris-el-Hakim, lured her away from her husband and four-year-old child. Ordered to appear in court, Fatima arrived with her Christian lawyer. Confronted by her husband who insisted she was married to him by Moslem law, Faris maintained that this did not bind Fatima because she had become a Coptic Christian. Violence ensued and Faris ended up in jail. Faris was charged with “reviling our religion which includes all courts and government and for his persistence in having the woman violate the law.”

Lincoln’s correspondence with Egyptian and Turkish officials resulted in the Moslem officials being reprimanded for not confining their jurisdiction to the ruling on the marital status of the woman and for incarcerating Faris. But, when that didn’t satisfy the Lincoln administration, Turkey shortly thereafter closed their ports to Confederate vessels. “I pray Your Highness to be assured that these proceedings at once so prompt and so just,” Lincoln wrote to the Viceroy of Egypt, “will be regarded as a new and unmistakable proof of your Highness’ friendship for the United States, and of the firmness, integrity, and wisdom with which the government of Your Highness is conducted.”

But Lincoln’s problems with the Middle East did not end with the case of Faris. Several months later, in February 1862, Americans Henry Myers and Thomas Tunstall traveled to Morocco. Myers, a Georgian, was the paymaster of the Confederate cruiser, Sumter, which managed to seize eighteen federal ships before putting into port in Gibraltar. Seeking supplies, Myers and Tunstall, an Alabaman who had formerly served as a U.S. diplomat in Spain, boarded a French ship for Cadiz, but stopped en route for a sightseeing tour of Tangiers. The allure of the Middle East proved costly for the pair, however, when their presence in the city attracted the attention of the U.S. Consul there, James De Long, a former judge from Ohio, and a fierce American nationalist. Flying over one of the buildings in Tangiers was an American flag and both Confederates paused to make loud, angry, disparaging remarks about it. “American citizens may talk and plot treason at home,” De Long vowed, “but they shall not do so where I am, if I have the power to prevent it.” Appealing to the local authorities, De Long had Myers and Tunstall arrested and place in irons on the consulate’s top floor. The Confederate vehemently pleaded their rights as belligerents on neutral soil. De Long, however, replied that they were traitors and, sensing that his action might place the Lincoln administration in a controversial position, requested a “Federal man of war in this bay.”

The arrest of Myers and Tunstall was indeed controversial. French nationalists in the Moroccan city denounced what it considered a flouting of its neutrality,
Insisting that Myers and Tunstall sailed to Tangiers under the protection of the French flag. Surely this must have caused Lincoln to flashback to the Trent affair of several months prior which caused an international crisis when the British claimed the Union violated its neutrality by removing two Confederates from a ship flying under the British flag.

An angry anti-American mob formed in the Tangiers market place protesting the arrest and detainment of Myers and Tunstall. Enraged Frenchmen marched down to the American consulate, flourishing knives and threatening vengeance. To protect American interests in the Middle East, Lincoln dispatched the USS Ino to Tangiers. In short order thirty bayonet wielding Marines charged ashore, the first to land in that area since the Barbary Wars of the early nineteenth century, and managed to press through the mob. In response, the Moroccan Emperor, Muhammad IV, closed the port. With the Lincoln administration’s support, De Long then issued an ultimatum to him: reopen the port and permit the captives to be evacuated or the United States would close its consulate. Given the choice between placating the French and angering the Americans, the Emperor sided with Washington. Less than an hour later, guarded by a detachment of Moroccan troops and watched by “at least three thousand spectators,” De Long and the Marines marched Myers and Tunstall up the Ino’s gangplank.

But whatever triumph De Long experienced was short lived. Fearing a very ill-timed break in diplomatic relations with the French, Lincoln again relented as he had in the Trent episode, and released both Tunstall and Myers from prison in Boston. And like the captain of the American ship which intercepted the HMS Trent, Lincoln removed De Long from his position. The embittered former consul questioned whether Lincoln’s leniency would backfire and cause Middle Eastern leaders to question America’s strength and resolve.

And to an extent De Long’s speculation was not misguided. Lincoln had not placated the French and soon they were again testing Lincoln. This time the French used Egypt as its pawn and created for Lincoln an international dilemma in Mexico where Napoleon III had hoped to create a puppet state under his brother Maximilian.

Egypt’s interest in Mexico had, for the most part, been overlooked because the number of her troops in that country was small and because they tended to be absorbed in the French army. Nevertheless, having faced diplomatic problems in Turkey and Tangiers, Lincoln now faced a confrontation with Egypt at a time when the war at home was not going well for the Union.
In 1862, before France had engineered the creation of a Mexican monarchy, it had quietly negotiated a treaty with Egypt. The Egyptian government was to deliver 1500 soldiers to France for service in Mexico. The understanding was kept strictly secret for fear that Turkey who had gained controversial control of Egypt, or Great Britain, the protector of Turkish integrity, would block this independent policy by the Cairo government.

On January 6, 1863, the French frigate La Seine, anchored in the Egyptian port city of Alexandria, began some very provocative preparations to set sail. First the local police seized fifty young black men, a few of whom had been born in America, and impressed them into service onboard the French ship. Then 450 regular Egyptian Army men arrived. The police were instructed to prevent anyone unauthorized from reaching the ship. The families of the irregular conscripts, desperate at the sudden loss of their family members, crowded the wharves seeking some assistance from, among others, the American diplomatic delegation.

One week after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect in America, the frigate made a hasty departure and William Thayer, the U.S. Consul-General in Alexandria, who had earlier and successfully intervened on the behalf of Syrian bookseller Faris-el-Hakim, immediately launched a formal protest. Thayer was falsely told that the ship contained 500 regular Egyptian soldiers destined to Morocco to suppress a revolt there. Incredulous, Thayer questioned why Egypt should have any interest in Morocco, or why a French warship should have been used when Egyptian ships were available. When his questions went unanswered, Thayer, a perceptive and knowledgeable diplomat, concluded that Mexico and a threat to the Monroe Doctrine were involved.

While the United States and Egypt enjoyed a healthy economic relationship, diplomatically relations became strained at this point. The French sought out Egyptian troops because they believed that Arab fighters would be better accustomed to the heat and resilient to yellow fever in Mexico. Because of the war at home, neither President Lincoln nor Secretary Seward had the diplomatic leverage to expel Napoleon III from Mexico. Much like the U.S. foreign affairs with the Barbary States, the Lincoln administration could not engage Egypt without being concerned about British and French interests as well.

After some relentless diplomatic pressure from Thayer the Egyptian Viceroy, Zoulfikar Pasha, in a rare moment of candor, came clean and admitted that his troops had gone to Mexico. He minimized the significance of the expedition, however, by stating that only 500 troops had been sent, though Napoleon had
requested 1500. The Egyptian characterized the entire proceeding as merely “a
driendly service to France.” This was unacceptable to Thayer who under Lincoln’s
direction explained to Zoulfikar Pasha what would happen if Egypt insisted on
violating the Monroe Doctrine. Too, Thayer was explicit in his assertion that the
impressment of 50 black soldiers was inhumane and a complete repudiation of all
that the Lincoln administration represented.

While Thayer wanted to pursue this matter further, Lincoln and Seward gave
him little encouragement. Preoccupied with the domestic war, Lincoln did not
want to become involved in any foreign venture. With a threat right on their
doorstep. Seward and Lincoln took the view that it was best to avoid involvement in
Mexico by adopting a seemingly neutral position. Their official opinion was that the
United States had no objection to French troops in Mexico, but to their heavy-
handed commandeering of the Mexican government. America would recognize
Maximilian, they stated, if his regime receive the popular support of the Mexican
people which, of course, was highly unlikely.

On behalf of the President, Seward wrote U.S. Ambassador to France John
Bigelow that Napoleon’s monarchical experiment in Mexico could not survive. Only
the Mexican people, he added, could decide whether they wanted monarchical
rule over a republican form of government. Upon Lincoln’s directive, Seward
informed Bigelow that the United States would not intervene in Mexico against
France, but expected that the French would follow suit and stay out of the
American Civil War. Complicating matters further, the death of Thayer deprived the
United States of his diplomatic skills at a very crucial time.

In his last annual message to Congress in December 1864, Lincoln informed
Congress “Our very popular and estimable representative in Egypt [William Thayer]
died in April last. An unpleasant altercation which arose between the temporary
incumbent of the office and the Government of the Pasha resulted in a suspension
of intercourse. The evil was promptly corrected on the arrival of the successor in the
consulate, [Charles Hale] and our relations with Egypt, as well as our relations with
the Barbary Powers, are entirely satisfactory.”

The Egyptians made no further attempt to assist the French in Mexico until
shortly after Lincoln’s assassination. A new Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sherif Pasha,
believing that the death of Lincoln would weaken American foreign policy
considerably, informed Charles Hale, the new U.S. Consul at Alexandria that Egypt
intended to send 900 new troops to Mexico. Lacking instructions and somewhat
taken aback by the new development, Hale threatened the Egyptians with
retaliation if they followed through on this plan. Hale warned Sherif Pasha that if
Egypt once again sent involuntary black soldiers to Mexico at the behest of an ally, the United States at some point would consider sending a black army to invade Egypt at the request of a friendly power.

With Lincoln gone and Andrew Johnson a poor successor, this crisis fell squarely on Seward’s shoulders. Seward issued a strong protest to Alexandria, Constantinople, and Paris while overlooking Hale’s threatened invasion. Nevertheless, Seward did in his official dispatches make clear reference to the involuntary servitude of the black soldiers and that the President and Congress have watched with consternation the events unfolding in Mexico “which I need not say form a subject of serious apprehension with regard to the safety of free Republican institutions on this continent, an object of which we are accustomed to connect the desired ultimate consequence of the abolition of every form of compulsory civil or military servitude in this hemisphere.”

For over a year, Seward faced diplomatic resistance from the French and the Egyptians. The diplomatic impasse came to an end when Sherif Pasha was replaced as Egyptian Foreign Minister with an Armenian Christian, Nubar Pasha. The new minister wasted no time in informing Ambassador Hale of his opposition to any further intervention in Mexico. He informed Hale that the United States could count upon Egypt to stay out of Mexico. And so Lincoln never lived to see the resolution of an incident that all too frequently consumed him as he sought to bring peace to his homeland.

Ever since the youthful Lincoln read Riley’s Narrative, his interest in the Middle East was genuine and sincere and had the Civil War not monopolized both his administration and his life, it is highly likely that Lincoln would have cultivated a deeper and more intense relationship with the region. In a meeting with Lincoln in 1863, the leading Canadian clergyman, Henry Wentworth Monk, protested the fact that Jews, unlike black Americans had yet to be emancipated. “There can be no permanent peace in the world,” the reverend prophetically maintained, “until the civilized nations . . . atone . . . for their two thousand years of persecution [of the Jews] by restoring them to their national home in Palestine.” Lincoln readily agreed. “Restoring the Jews to their national home in Palestine . . . is a noble dream and one shared by many Americans,” Lincoln replied, adding that once the war was won, Americans would again be able to “see visions and dreams” and lead the world in realizing them.

Like those Americans, Lincoln himself had “visions and dreams” about the Middle East. On that fateful day at Ford’s Theatre, even as Lincoln enjoyed Our
American Cousin, he couldn’t keep his mind from straying to other thoughts. Likely, he found himself day dreaming about the future and his life after the presidency. Earlier that day he told Mary that he would very much like to visit “the Holy Land” and that “there was no city on earth he so much desired to see as Jerusalem.” Such was never to be.

But Lincoln’s relationship with the Middle East was like his relationship with everyone else, whether they were individuals or nations; honest, principled, governed by integrity, and buttressed by the Declaration of Independence. Garry Wills once wrote that Lincoln’s interpretation of the Declaration of Independence as a universal document for all humankind was essential in understanding the president’s wartime foreign policy. “The Declaration gave liberty not alone to the people of this country,” Wills wrote, “but hope to all the world, for all future time. It was that which promised that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men and that all should have an equal chance as Mr. Lincoln said.”

Lincoln’s “new birth of freedom” still does not exist in many parts of the fractured and violent Middle East today. Nevertheless there still stands in that region several monuments to the man who dreamed that someday he would be able to visit the Holy Land in that corner of the world.

Jason H. Silverman is the Ellison Capers Palmer Jr. Professor of History and Emeritus at Winthrop University and author, most recently, of Lincoln and the Immigrant. He is a co-editor of Abraham Lincoln Abroad.
36TH ANNUAL CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY LECTURE

"WAS LINCOLN RIGHT?:" DEMOCRACY, THE CONSTITUTION, AND CITIZENSHIP"

JASON H. SILVERMAN, PH.D.
Ellison Capers Palmer, Jr. Professor of History Emeritus
Winthrop University
Co-Editor, Abraham Lincoln Abroad
Book Review Editor, The Lincoln Herald
Author, Lincoln and the Immigrant (2015)

Monday
September 16, 2019
8:00 a.m.
Caddo-Bossier Room
University Center
(2nd Floor)
LSU Shreveport

Free and open to the public

For further information, please contact the International Lincoln Center,
318-797-5138, or william.pederson@lsus.edu
36th Annual Abraham Lincoln Lecture
"Lincoln’s Legacy in the Caribbean"

Michael R. Hall, Ph.D.
Professor of Latin American History and U.S. Foreign Relations
Georgia Southern University
and *Historical Dictionary of Haiti* (2012)

Monday, October 7, 2019
8:00 a.m.
Caddo-Bossier Room
University Center (2nd Floor)
LSUS

Free and open to the public
For further information, please contact the International Lincoln Center,
318-797-5138, or william.pederson@lsus.edu