By Bryon Andreasen
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

A visibly inebriated Stephen Douglas and an awkward Abraham Lincoln, who punched his head through the top of a platform canopy, are two of the more arresting features from an obscure eyewitness account recalling the momentous 1858 United States Senate race between Lincoln and Douglas. Making the account even more interesting is the identity of the man who gave it—Joseph Smith III, the oldest surviving son of the founding Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr.

Joseph Smith III was just a few days shy of his twenty-sixth birthday when first Douglas and then Lincoln swooped into Hancock County, Illinois, to make eleventh-hour appeals to their supporters and to perhaps sway the minds of undecided voters like Smith. Douglas delivered three speeches in Hancock County during the week immediately preceding the penultimate Lincoln-Douglas debate at Quincy in mid-October. Lincoln, who had campaigned in the county once in late August, decided that his chances there were sufficiently hopeful to justify a second speaking tour during the closing days of the frenetic campaign. In a two day period toward the end of October he visited at least four Hancock County communities and delivered three speeches.

Carthage, the Hancock County seat, hosted the largest demonstrations for both candidates. And it was to the two Carthage rallies—held a little over a week apart—that Joseph Smith III traveled from his home in Nauvoo to listen to the rival politicians. Smith was predisposed to think favorably of Stephen Douglas, not only because Douglas had cultivated favorable relations with his father during the mid-1840s, but also because Douglas had lately turned against the Latter-day Saints who had followed Brigham Young to the Utah territory. Smith was still almost two years away from assuming the mantle of leadership for the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS). But he had opposed the “Brighamites” since his teenage years when the Mormon community had splintered into factions following the death of his father in 1844. He agreed with Douglas’ characterization of Utah Mormonism as a “loathsome, disgusting ulcer.”

Smith held anti-slavery views, however. This meant that Lincoln, as the candidate for Illinois’ new Republican party, could expect a sympathetic hearing from the soon-to-be church leader. Ten years earlier Smith had been impressed by Owen Lovejoy when the Illinois abolitionist congressman had visited Nauvoo. Smith had also studied law under William Kellogg at Canton, Illinois. Kellogg was an important figure in Illinois’ early Republican party, being one of its first congressional winners and an ally of Lincoln. Probably in part through Kellogg’s influence, Smith had been one of only six Nauvoo voters to cast a presidential ballot for John C. Fremont in 1856. Nevertheless, Douglas and Lincoln each had a fair shot at capturing the support of Joseph Smith III when they individually came to speak in Carthage.

At least that’s how Smith recalled things fifty-five years later when, in his eighties, he dictated his memoirs. Though long known to those familiar with the history of the RLDS movement, Smith’s accounts of the respective Douglas and Lincoln visits to Carthage have largely escaped the attention of Lincoln scholars. Smith dictated his memoirs to his son Israel during the last two years of his life (1913-1914), after carefully reviewing sources and materials collected over his lifetime. The memoirs were not published, however, until Smith’s daughter, Mary Audentia Smith Anderson, edited them for serial publication in the weekly newsletter of the RLDS church, the Saints Herald. The memoirs fill over 470 pages of three-columned text. The series ran from November 6, 1934, to July 31, 1937.

The following transcriptions of Smith’s accounts of the 1858 campaign visits to Carthage by Douglas and Lincoln are based on the texts at page 530 in the April 23, 1935, issue, and page 559 of the April 30, 1935, issue of the Saints Herald.

That summer of 1860 I recognize as a specific turning point in my career, both because of readjustments in my religious contacts and because of changes in my political preferences and convictions. A
couple of years before, Stephen A. Douglas had come into our neighborhood, speaking on prevailing topics, and I had listened to him earnestly, glad to have the opportunity of hearing so widely-heralded an orator. He was the judge of the court at Monticello before whom my father was brought in 1841 on an antiquated writ from Missouri. Upon hearing the testimony of witnesses and the able speech of O. H. Browning, of Quincy, in defense, he had freed Father of the prosecution urged against him. Thus I was strongly prejudiced in favor of Judge Douglas, and when it was advertised that he would speak at Carthage, on October 15 (1858) I went over to hear him. Notwithstanding the position I understood he had assumed in regard to “State’s rights,” I was still strongly impressed in his favor, and listened to him eagerly.

However, after he had spoken for a while, he showed unmistakable signs of intoxication, was unsteady on his feet, and his words were pronounced with difficulty. We, sitting on the outskirts of the assembly, could not understand what he was saying. The chairman of the meeting was the Democrat, Milton M. Morrill, whom I have already mentioned as a relative of Justin Smith Morrill of Maine, the man with a national reputation in connection with tariff matters. Mr. Milton Morrill may have been a member of the Illinois House of Representatives at the time—I am not sure. I recall that a Senator named Bryant T. Schofield (also a leading Democrat) was on the platform, as well as several others. Standing near the rostrum was a young lawyer of my city, named Manly M. Tilton, a nephew to Mr. Morrill. So I beckoned to him to come sit down by me, which he did, and I whispered:

“Tilton, if I were as near to the chairman by family and political connections as you are, I should certainly go and call his attention to Mr. Douglas’ condition. We can’t understand a thing he is saying, his tongue is getting so thick. You’d better go pull your uncle’s coat and have him stop the man before he makes himself a laughing-stock for everybody.”

Manly followed my suggestion, and soon the chairman, after some hurried conference with others on the stand, reached a decision and, pulling Mr. Douglas’ coat, said something to him which brought the speech to an end. Arising, Mr. Morrill explained to the audience that the speaker was suddenly indisposed and would not be able to finish his speech at that time.

So away went Mr. Douglas, and away went my prejudices in his favor, following which upheaval I was perhaps quite ready for a transfer of my political allegiance to his opposing party, should it prove that its representative, scheduled to speak the following week, were equal to Senator Douglas in wisdom and superior to him in sobriety!

The next week, on the same day of the week, I drove over to Carthage again and listened to the Republican champion, Mr. Abraham Lincoln. I do not mind confessing that when I first saw him coming into the court house yard I was greatly bewildered, for he looked so inferior to what I had in mind. He was accompanied to the stand by a man named McCall, the tallest man in Carthage Township but one who did not “cut much of figure” beside the noted speaker.

The latter quietly took his place upon the platform, where a number of men were managing the meeting. Among them was a young lawyer named George W. Draper, whom I remember well. I was strangely depressed. Mr. Lincoln’s appearance was anything but prepossessing or reassuring, and before the meeting opened I sat watching him with a decided sense of perplexity.

The platform had been erected in front of two windows of the court house. Over it a bowery had been added to the covering to replace those which had withered.

After the preliminaries were over, Mr. Lincoln arose to speak, leaning slightly forward to peer down at those in front of him. His eyes were dull, his manner awkward, and his voice sharp. For one, I felt very sorry for him, my heart literally aching in my breast. This sensation may have been pity, or it may have been caused by a degree of shame for him and for the party he represented. I cannot accurately analyze the feeling, but whatever it was, it was destined to be short lived, for he had spoken only a very few minutes when he abandoned his stooping posture, stepped a little back from the front of the platform, squared his shoulders and attempted to straighten up. His head came into sudden contact with the bows above him. A humorous expression crossed his face and turning his head slightly to one side, with a sudden movement he thrust it upward, entirely through that bowery business above him! There he stood towering, like some queer creature whose head was detached from its body!

A great shout of laughter greeted this performance, and a lively patter of approving hand-clapping. A bevy of men sprang to the rescue and soon removed the greenery from about his neck and overhead, leaving him free to stand erect at his own magnificent height.

His eyes brightened, his gestures took on an unstudied grace, his voice lost its harsh and strident accents, and in a few moments his oratory and argument held us spellbound. I forgot the man, forgot that ach ing sense of pity or shame that had burned in my breast, and by the time the lecture was over, I was completely and altogether a Lincoln man, with a political conscience more firmly fixed than ever in its opposition to slavery and evils.
AN INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING:
GEORGE G. MEADE AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN IN
THE WAKE OF THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

By Eric J. Wittenberg

Few generals in history have faced the challenges withstood by George Gordon Meade. Meade assumed command of the Army of the Potomac on June 28, 1863, knowing that a major battle with Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia was imminent. Meade had to depend on his predecessor’s chief of staff, Major General Daniel Butterfield, whom he despised, and had no opportunity to put his own staff in place. Instead, the army was on the march, headed for a date with destiny just north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

Under extremely adverse circumstances and seemingly against all odds, Meade defeated Lee’s army on the field of battle. At the end of three brutal days of bloodletting, the gates of hell slammed shut late on the afternoon of July 3, 1863. In the course of winning his great victory, Meade’s army took nearly 25% casualties, including three of its seven infantry corps commanders, including the commanding general’s two most trusted subordinates. Consequently, when Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia began its retreat on the night of July 3, Meade had to be cautious. First and foremost, he had to make sure that Lee was actually heading back to Virginia. Meade had orders to keep his army between Lee and Washington, D.C. at all times. Second, he had to make sure that Lee did not intend to hole up in the mountains of central Pennsylvania. Third, he had to find suitable replacements for his corps commanders. Fourth, because he had to keep his army interposed between Lee and the national capital, he would have a longer, less direct route of march to the river crossings in and around Williamsport, Maryland. All of these factors meant that Lee’s army seized and held the advantage throughout the retreat, much to President Abraham Lincoln’s consternation. However, days of heavy rains caused the Potomac River to rise rapidly beyond flood stage, meaning that Meade would get his opportunity to bring the Gray Fox’s still-dangerous army to bay.

Lincoln and Meade did not know each other. Unlike his predecessors in army command, the general and the commander in chief had no personal relationship. This made effective communications all the more difficult. The fact that nearly all of their communications were either by telegraph or letter left room for misinterpretation and misconstruction, and that only made a difficult situation worse. Lincoln, a notorious armchair general, wanted Meade to move rapidly and pounce on Lee’s army while it was trapped against the banks of the flooded Potomac River.

All along, Lincoln, through his general-in-chief, Major General Henry W. Halleck, had been urging Meade to attack, and the Pennsylvanian himself was determined to do so. However, Lee’s army made its escape before the Army of the Potomac could launch an all-out assault along the lines on the morning of July 14, 1863. When Meade reported that Lee’s army had escaped, he received a blistering telegram from Halleck in response. “The escape of Lee’s army without another battle has created great dissatisfaction in the mind of the President, and it will require an energetic pursuit on your part to remove the impression that it has been sufficiently active heretofore.” Halleck accurately echoed the sentiments of the Lincoln administration.

“We had them in our grasp,” complained President Lincoln to his secretary, John Hay. “We had only to stretch forth our hands and they were ours. And nothing I could say or do could make the Army move.” On July 17, Lincoln proclaimed at a cabinet meeting, “Meade had made a terrible mistake.” On July 22, Stanton wrote, “Since the world began no man ever missed so great

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(Continued from page 3)

an opportunity of serving his country as was lost by [Meade’s] neglecting to strike his adversary.”

Offended by the tone of Halleck’s wire, Meade turned to his old friend, Brig. Gen. Rufus Ingalls, the Army of the Potomac’s quartermaster general, and asked, “Ingalls, don’t you want to take command of this army?”

“No, I thank you,” replied Ingalls. “It’s too big an elephant for me.”

“Well,” retorted Meade, “it’s too big for me, too.” The testy and insulted army commander requested that he be relieved of command of the Army of the Potomac, a request quickly declined by Halleck.

President Lincoln vented his frustration in a letter to the army commander—however, he never sent this letter. “I have just seen your dispatch to General Halleck, asking to be relieved of your command, because of some supposed censure of mine. I am very—very—grateful to you for the magnificent success you gave the cause of the country at Gettysburg; and I am sorry now to be the author of the slightest pain to you,” wrote Lincoln. However, he did not try to hide his disappointment. “Again, my dear general, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee’s escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our late successes, have ended the war. As it is the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so South of the river, when you take with you very few more than two thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect, and I do not expect you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it.” One can only wonder what effect this letter would have had on Meade had Lincoln forwarded it.

Meade withstood storms of protest over his conduct of the pursuit of Lee’s army, and within days, calls for his relief went up. However, there was no one else to take command of the Army of the Potomac. “What can I do with such generals as we have?” complained Lincoln to his Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles. “Who among them is any better than Meade? To sweep away the whole of them from the chief command and substitute a new man would cause a shock and be likely to lead to combinations and troubles greater than we now have,” he concluded. While Lincoln believed a great opportunity had been lost, he realized that there were no good alternatives.

On July 18, Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, commander of the Army of the Potomac’s Eleventh Corps, wrote to the president in defense of Meade. “As to not attacking the enemy prior to leaving his stronghold beyond the Antietam it is by no means certain that the repulse at Gettysburg might not have been turned against us,” wrote Howard. “At any rate the Commanding General was in favor of an immediate attack but with the evident difficulties in our way the uncertainty of a success and the strong conviction of our best military minds against the risk, I must say, that I think the general acted wisely.” After reading Howard’s words, Lincoln reconsidered his position and held out an olive branch to the tempestuous army commander.

A week after Lee’s army crossed to safety, Lincoln responded to Meade. “I am now profoundly grateful for what was done, without criticism for what was not done,” wrote the president. “General Meade has my confidence as a brave and skillful officer, and a true man.”

Unfortunately, the Committee on the Conduct of the War, an ad hoc commission made up of Radical Republicans from both the House of Representatives and Senate, did not feel the same way. The Joint Committee convened a series of hearings during the winter of 1863-64, intending to find reasons to...
remove Meade from command. The hearings dragged on into early spring, and members of the Committee trotted out any general officer of the Army of the Potomac most likely to be unfriendly to Meade, and elicited their opinions on the general’s conduct of the campaign. Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio, one of the most prominent of the Radical Republicans, led the cabal against Meade. Finally, in February 1864, the Committee abandoned its efforts, clearly having failed. However, the experience left a bitter taste in Meade’s mouth when the Committee managed to portray him as a mediocre and uncommitted general who permitted Lee’s army to escape largely unmolested. That, perhaps, was the greatest tragedy of all—George Gordon Meade had conducted a nearly flawless campaign, had won the Civil War’s pivotal battle, and had made the correct choice in not attacking the nearly impregnable defensive position occupied at Williamsport by Lee’s army.

Perhaps the Richmond Enquirer put it best:

Lincoln, Seward, Halleck, and the whole Yankee press, are hugging themselves in the delusion that they already see the end of the war, and that [that] end is, to us, the death of our liberty, and the beginning of an interminable servitude. To their taunts and sneers we reply, in the defiant language of Paul Jones, “We have not yet begun to fight.”... This people has never yet put forth its strength to half its extent, furious as has been the war in which it has been engaged, mighty as have been its struggles, glorious as have been its victories... What we have done is scarcely a type of what we can do.”

The bias and forced rhetoric of these words aside, for those who had lived through Gettysburg and slogged through its retreat—those who would see more bloody earth at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and Appomattox—these words rang true with a dark portent that none could have ever anticipated.


Ibid., 69.


O. R. vol. 27, part 1, 93.


Ibid.

For a detailed evaluation of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War’s efforts to undermine George Gordon Meade, see Bruce Tap, “Bad Faith Somewhere: George Gordon Meade and the Committee on the Conduct of the War,” North & South 2 (August 1999): 74-81.

Richmond Dispatch, July 17, 1863.

Eric J. Wittenberg is an attorney and author of over a dozen books and numerous articles on the American Civil War. His specialty is the cavalry operations of both the Union and the Confederates in the eastern theatre. This article is drawn from the research and writing of the just published One Continuous Fight: The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia July 4-14, 1863, which he co-authored with J. David Petruzzi and Michael F. Negent.
An American Dream Concert

Kathryn Harris

The event held on the evening of February 11, 2008 was unlike any other Lincoln birthday celebration that our Association has sponsored. The brainchild of Association President Dick Hart, “An American Dream” featured orchestral music by the Illinois Symphony Orchestra (ISO); vocal music by Springfield and Bloomington singers; and spoken word by Springfield, Bloomington, and guest narrators.

To celebrate Lincoln’s 199th birthday, to commemorate the centennial of the Springfield 1908 Race Riot, and to celebrate the foundings of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the ALA, “An American Dream” presented a unique partnership opportunity between the ALA and the NAACP.

With funding and additional support provided from community organizations including State Farm Insurance, The Illinois Humanities Council, Horace Mann Insurance, Merrill Lynch, Illinois Arts Council, University of Illinois at Springfield, SIU Physicians and Surgeons, Bloomington Performing Arts Center and the ISO, “An American Dream” included Negro spirituals, the words of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, WEB DuBois, Ida B. Wells and others who struggled so that ALL Americans might achieve the “American Dream.”

IN MEMORIAM

Winifred L. Barringer
(1921-2008)

Winifred Lois Douglas Wain Barringer passed away in Springfield on February 21, 2008. Winifred was the wife of former ALA President Dr. Floyd Barringer and mother of former ALA Treasurer and Board Member, Judith.

Born September 25, 1921, at Dormy Nook, her family home in the New York Catskill Mountains, in 1929, she sailed to England on the Aquitania to live with her grandparents at The Grange, in Ripley, Derbyshire.

Winifred graduated from the Calder Girls School in Cumberland, the Children’s Hospital in Derby and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham as a nurse. It was at the QE that she met Dr. Floyd Barringer, who went there as a volunteer for medical services with Doctors For Britain to help in the war effort.

Winifred and Floyd married on June 2, 1945, in Ripley and returned to America on April 6, 1946. In 1950, they moved to a farm west of Springfield, which they named Thirkelow Meadows after Winifred’s ancestral home in England from the 1600s.

Winifred was an avid collector of English and early Illinois antiques. She and Floyd were responsible for saving a number of historic homes in Springfield. From 1968 to 1983, they owned the Elijah Iles House, Springfield’s oldest home, and had it placed on the National Register of Historic Places, which preserved the house for future restoration. Her mid-1800s Illinois furniture, glass and pottery collections are currently on display at the Elijah Iles House. In the late ’60s, Winifred and Floyd restored Springfield’s Freeman Hughes House and opened it as a museum.
R. Eden Martin grew up in Sullivan, Illinois, and has practiced law in Chicago since 1967. He was a partner and Chairman of the Management Committee of the international law firm of Sidley Austin, and is today Counsel to the Firm. He also serves as President of The Commercial Club of Chicago and its Civic Committee. He is a Life Member and past Chairman of the Board of the Chicago History Museum, and a member of the Board of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation in Springfield. He is the author of several books on the history of Moultrie County, Illinois. See his website at edenmartin.com.

Mark E. Neely, Jr. is McCabe-Greer Professor of Civil War History at Pennsylvania State University. A prolific writer on Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War era, Neely is best known for his Pulitzer Prize winning *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties*. His recent research has explored party organization and behavior in the Civil War, as reflected in *The Union Divided: Party Conflict in the Civil War North* and *The Boundaries of American Political Culture in the Civil War Era*.

**WHAT ARE THE ALA PLANS FOR FEBRUARY 12, 2009?**

Funny you should ask. At this moment, I cannot give you specifics other than to say that we will have a full calendar of events for both February 11th and 12th.

The ALA has been working closely with the Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Lincoln Home National Park to plan for a variety of events that will honor the legacy of Abraham Lincoln. The ALA will have its traditional banquet on the evening of February 12 with speaker(s) to be announced. Look for details in the next issue of *For the People*.
DAY BY DAY

CALENDAR OF COMING ALA EVENTS

June 20, 2008    Judge Treat Monument Dedication  
Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield

September 7, 2008    Lincoln Press Conference, Ravinia  
George Buss, Lincoln impersonator, will field  
questions from the press.

October 10, 2008    2:00   ALA Board of Directors Meeting and Dinner  
Old Main, Knox College, Galesburg

October 11, 2008    The Lincoln Colloquium, Knox College, Galesburg

October 16, 2008    Lincoln Press Conference, Peoria  
George Buss, Lincoln impersonator, will field  
questions from the press.

February 11, 2009 5:30    ALA Reception and Opening of Lincoln in Illinois  
Great Hall, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

February 12, 2009 10:00    ALA Board of Directors Meeting, Springfield  
Morning: Meet the Authors.  Afternoon: Naturalization Ceremony  
Hall of Representatives, Old State Capitol, Springfield  
6:00   Lincoln Day Banquet  
200th Anniversary of Lincoln’s Birth  
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield