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## Lincoln at Pace Law School

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## **Lincoln at Pace Law School**

Marie Stefanini Newman and  
Taryn L. Rucinski

From March 5, 2012 to April 11, 2012 the third floor of the Gerber Glass Law Center at Pace Law Library played host to the traveling exhibition *Lincoln: the Constitution and the Civil War*<sup>1</sup>, which was organized by the National Constitution Center<sup>2</sup> and the American Library Association Public Programs Office (ALA)<sup>3</sup>, and made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.<sup>4</sup> Originally conceived of by author and producer Philip

B. Kunhardt III,<sup>5</sup> and developed by the National Constitution Center, this exhibit focused on three pivotal crises of Lincoln's presidency including: "the secession of Southern states, slavery, and wartime civil liberties."<sup>6</sup> Pace Law Library was honored to be the only law school selected from among fifty libraries (200 sites nationwide) to host the exhibit including "public, research, and special libraries; historical societies; museums; civic, community, and heritage organizations; and institutions of higher learning from 2009 through 2015."<sup>7</sup>

### The Application Process

The exhibit process began in early 2011 when ALA first began advertising the exhibit and soliciting applications to host it.<sup>8</sup> Not only did host institutions need to have sufficient space to set up the 1,000-square-foot exhibit, but also they were required to host an opening event and two public programs related to the themes of the exhibit and presented by qualified scholars. In short order, Associate Library Director John (Jack) McNeill, in conjunction with Law Library Director Marie Stefanini Newman, submitted an online application making the case for the Law Library.<sup>9</sup> The underlying concept of Pace Law School as a host site for this exhibit was to tie the historic issues involved with Lincoln and wartime civil liberties to the Law School's ongoing discussion of the "continuing War of Terror [which] . . . includes many of the same tensions between Executive action and the constraints of Constitutional government."<sup>10</sup> To bolster the application, Jack contacted likely members of the Law School faculty, two of whom committed to speak at public events associated with the exhibit.

The application also highlighted the quality of the space that the Law Library could devote to the exhibit. The configuration of the Gerber Glass Law Center proved to be a great advantage in making our case. The third floor of the building is part of the Law Library, but not connected to the stacks. It is a good-sized area that normally provides auxiliary study space for students and remains open even when the rest of the library is closed. Because it is open extended hours, we had security cameras installed to safeguard the exhibit, another requirement for grant recipients. Adjoining the study area are a computer learning center, a storage room, and a classroom that holds approximately eighty people. In our application, we proposed using the third-floor study space to house the exhibit and the classroom as the space for our public events. It would prove to be an ideal arrangement. On August 1, 2011, Pace was notified of its selection,<sup>11</sup> and the library staff switched into high gear to begin its preparations.<sup>12</sup>

### The Exhibit

On February 27, 2012, the exhibit arrived at the library in an array of large cardboard boxes, each of which contained a colorful plastic carton that had been specifically designed to house and

<sup>6</sup>LINCOLN: THE CONSTITUTION AND THE CIVIL WAR (2011), available at [http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org/offices/iles/content/po/programming/lincoln/files/311696\\_%20ALA%20LINCOLN.pdf](http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org/offices/iles/content/po/programming/lincoln/files/311696_%20ALA%20LINCOLN.pdf) (official program brochure).

<sup>7</sup>NAT'L CONST. CENTER, <http://constitutioncenter.org/> (last visited June 21, 2012).

<sup>8</sup>Public Programs Office (PPO), AM. LIBR. ASS'N (ALA), <http://www.ala.org/offices/ppo> (last visited June 21, 2012).

<sup>9</sup>NAT'L ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, <http://www.neh.gov/> (last visited June 21, 2012).

<sup>10</sup>Philip B. Kunhardt III, *Lincoln's Contested Legacy*, SMITHSONIAN.COM (Feb. 2009), <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Lincolns-Contested-Legacy.html>.

<sup>11</sup>Email from Sofiana Krueger, ALA PPO Program Coordinator, to John McNeill, Assoc. Dir. Pace Law Library (Aug 1, 2011, 1:17PM EST) (on file with author).

<sup>12</sup>*Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War, Selected Sites, Tour 2*, ALA, <http://www.ala.org/offices/ppo/programming/lincoln/sitestour2> (last visited June 26, 2012) (listing Pace Law School as stop no. 125).

protect the exhibit materials during shipping. After the space was cleared of furniture and the exhibit unpacked, it took eight members of the staff approximately four to five hours over a period of two days to assemble the exhibit. The adjoining storage space proved invaluable in providing secure space for the empty cartons and storage containers during the run of the exhibit.

Confusing and comical at times, the assembly process nevertheless went swiftly. Several members of the set-up team had watched a helpful ALA video<sup>13</sup> which showed each step of the set-up process and serves to demystify it.<sup>14</sup>

The end product was a series of three stand-alone, three-prong, pop-up structures that were covered in floor-to ceiling heavy-duty laminated panels labeled “Divided,” “Bound,” and “Dissent.”<sup>15</sup> The three structures reproduced various historical documents, images, and anecdotes reflecting the secession of the southern states, the “constitutional hurdles [Lincoln had to overcome] in order to abolish slavery . . . [and a discussion of] civil liberties in times of war . . . and relates Lincoln’s responses to the post-9/11 challenges faced by the United States.”<sup>16</sup>

### Getting Out the Word

To support the exhibit, the Pace Law Library staff turned out en masse to assist in every way imaginable. It was truly a team effort. Advertising was handled by both the Law Library and the Pace Law School Communications Department.<sup>17</sup> Press releases were sent out in order to attract members of the local community, and the exhibit was featured prominently on the Law School website. The exhibit comes with a few large posters that were distributed around the campus in high-traffic areas, and staff members created smaller signs for mass distribution. As a result, librarians were running through the halls of the Law School affixing posters to doors and bulletin boards. In addition, we were supplied with informative brochures that we distributed at the public events and made available in the exhibit area; the brochures provide a brief overview of why Lincoln continues to matter today as well as a well-chosen bibliography of books and websites for further exploration. Jack McNeill designed an attractive program for the opening event. We created attractive bookmarks that were available in the exhibit area. Our color printer was going nonstop!

In an attempt to reach out to students and involve them, Jack McNeill and Lawyer/ Librarian for Research Services Margaret R. Moreland decided to host a series of four “Thursday Night at the Movies” showings (with free snacks!) in the classroom adjacent to the exhibit. We hoped that using that space to show movies would encourage attendees to stay and explore the exhibit. Movies

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<sup>13</sup> *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War: Setting up the Exhibit*, VIMEO (Aug. 15, 2011), <http://vimeo.com/26391571>.

<sup>14</sup> Taking down the exhibit proved to be as painless as setting it up. Again, it was a straightforward process.

<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Dominiak, *Q&A with Dr. Steve Frank, Curator of “Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War,”* PROGRAMMING LIBR. (May 26, 2011), <http://www.programminglibrarian.org/blog/2011/may-2011/qanda-with-dr.-steve-frank-curator-of-lincoln-the-constitution-and-the-civil-war.html>. See also *Walkthrough of the “Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War” with curator Dr. Steve Frank*, YOUTUBE (June 1, 2011), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hNVUPM5SOg>.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret R. Moreland, *Lincoln and Grant (Writing, that is)*, PACE L. LIBR. BLOG (Mar. 20, 2012), <http://library.blogs.law.pace.edu/2012/03/20/lincoln-and-grant-writing-that-is/>.

<sup>17</sup> Host sites receive \$750 to defray the cost of publicity and other expenses. The money cannot be used to pay for food or refreshments at the public events. Thullen, *supra* note 8.

included such notable titles from the library's Law in Film Collection<sup>18</sup> as: *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939);<sup>19</sup> *The Andersonville Trial* (1970);<sup>20</sup> *Glory* (1989);<sup>21</sup> and *The Conspirator* (2010).<sup>22</sup> Later, blog posts promoting the exhibit and movies were authored by Margaret Moreland and Electronic Services Librarian Lucie Olejnikova.<sup>23</sup>

#### Enhancements to the Exhibit

Moreover, to complement the traveling exhibit, Pace enlisted the assistance of part-time Reference Librarian Taryn Rucinski to coordinate the library's own exhibit and online research guide, both entitled *Lincoln, Habeas Corpus and the Suspension of Civil Liberties During the Civil War*.<sup>24</sup> The physical exhibit was housed in small display case in an area adjacent to the main Lincoln exhibit and featured monographs, law review articles, films, and rare books from the Law Library's collection.<sup>25</sup> In addition, the display included copies of political cartoons featuring Lincoln and habeas corpus to give it more visual interest.<sup>26</sup>

Taryn Rucinski also created an electronic research guide using Springshare that featured the following tabs: The Exhibit; Habeas Corpus & Civil Liberties During the Civil War; Law Review & Journal Articles; Resources in Print; Film Collection; Papers of Abraham Lincoln; Links & Other Education Resources; Interactive Resources; Speaker Biographies; and Pace Display.<sup>27</sup> This research guide was made available on a touchscreen computer located in the exhibit area. The result of the staff's efforts was a coordinated, integrated promotion of the exhibit and the themes it sought to explore.

#### The Opening and Public Events

The exhibit opened officially on March 5th and a gala reception was held on March 6th at 5pm. The well-attended reception, which was opened by Jack McNeill with comments by Professor Newman, included a wine-and-cheese buffet and light hors d'oeuvres. The opening was followed by the first of two public lectures planned for the exhibit. Mark. R. Shulman, Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs and International Affairs, and Adjunct Professor of Law, presented a talk entitled "What Abraham Lincoln Can Teach Us About Confronting National Security Threats in the

<sup>18</sup> The Law in Film Collection includes commercial films and documentaries with legal themes, and documents on environmental themes. It is extremely popular with members of the Law School community. The collection runs the gamut from silent movies to recent releases.

<sup>19</sup> YOUNG MR. LINCOLN (Twentieth Century Fox 2006).

<sup>20</sup> THE ANDERSONVILLE TRIAL (Image Entertainment 2003).

<sup>21</sup> GLORY (TriStar Pictures 2007).

<sup>22</sup> THE CONSPIRATOR (Roadside Attractions 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Moreland, *supra* note 16; Lucie Olejnikova, *Movie Night at the Pace Law Library: Glory*, PACE L. LIBR. BLOG (Mar. 29, 2012), <http://library.blogs.law.pace.edu/2012/03/29/movie-night-at-pace-law-library-glory/>; Lucie Olejnikova, *Movie Night at the Pace Law Library: The Conspirator*, PACE L. LIBR. BLOG (Apr. 12, 2012), <http://library.blogs.law.pace.edu/2012/04/12/movie-night-at-pace-law-library-the-conspirator/>.

<sup>24</sup> Taryn L. Rucinski, *Lincoln, Habeas Corpus, and the Suspension of Civil Liberties During the Civil War*, PACE L. LIBR. LIBGUIDES (June 27, 2012), <http://libraryguides.law.pace.edu/lincoln>.

<sup>25</sup> See *id.* at "Pace Display," <http://libraryguides.law.pace.edu/content.php?pid=304313&sid=2579137> (a PowerPoint presentation is available describing the resources included in the exhibit).

<sup>26</sup> All images courtesy of THE LERMAN INST., <http://www.lehrmaninstitute.org/> (last visited June 26, 2012); THE LINCOLN INST., <http://www.abrahamlincoln.org/> (last visited June 26, 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Rucinski, *supra* note 24.

21st Century.”<sup>28</sup> Professor Shulman suggested that “Lincoln’s measured approach, made palatable by transparency, to dealing with secession, emancipation of slaves, and the suspension of habeas corpus ... spawned ... controversy and ... scholars continue to examine the long term effects of Lincoln’s actions.”<sup>29</sup> There was a lively question-and-answer period following the talk, and a number of guests stayed after it was over to speak with Professor Shulman at greater length. It was gratifying to see so many students and members of the public at this event.

The second public lecture was given on March 21, 2012 when Professor of Law Jeffery G. Miller spoke about “Lincoln’s Constitution and the Unitary Executive Theory.”<sup>30</sup> According to Professor Miller, this theory, which holds that the President controls the entire executive branch, is newly controversial because of actions by recent Presidents. Comparing these actions to decisions made by Lincoln during the Civil War, Professor Miller made contrasts and drew parallels. Guests were left to ponder the enduring conflict between the Constitution’s guarantees of personal liberty and the President’s duty to protect the country.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, the Lincoln exhibit required a tremendous amount of time, work, and effort on the part of many members of the library staff. To make this effort the success that it was, the entire library staff came together as a team. The Lincoln exhibit proved to be a significant opportunity for the library to foster discussion of some critical contemporary issues through the lens of history, and was a showcase for the library’s collection, staff, and services. During the process we discovered the staff’s many hidden talents, had a lot of laughs, and learned a lot about each other.

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at Pace Law School.*



<sup>28</sup> Mark R. Shulman, Assistant Dean, Graduate Programs and Int’l Affairs, and Adjunct Professor of Law, *What Abraham Lincoln Can Teach Us About Confronting National Security Threats in the 21st Century*, Address at the Opening of the Exhibit *Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War* at the Pace Law Library (Mar. 6, 2012), <http://libraryguides.law.pace.edu/content.php?pid=304313&sid=2534725> .

<sup>29</sup> Moreland, *supra* note 16.

<sup>30</sup> Professor Miller stepped in at the last minute when the originally scheduled speaker could not be present due to illness.