

Volume 11 Issue 1

THE JOURNAL OF
THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES
DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

STEREOSCOPE



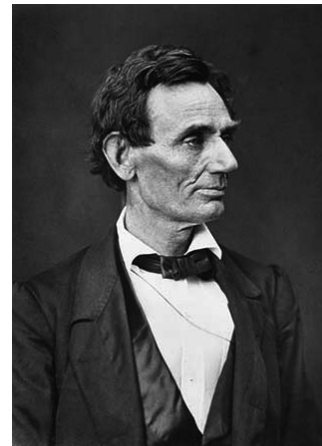
150th Celebration of the Western District of Michigan – March 12, 2013

A message from Historical Society president David J. Gass

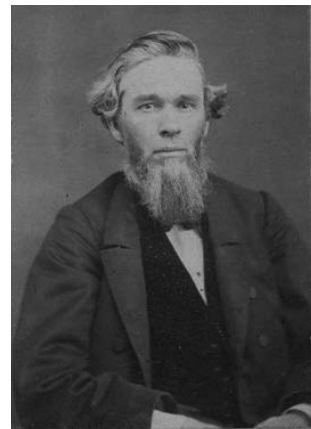
I want to encourage all FBA and Society members (and their spouses/guests) to attend the March 12th gala event celebrating Abraham Lincoln's nomination of Solomon Withey as the first district judge for the newly-created Western District of Michigan. What makes this appointment so interesting and worthy of celebration is that it occurred at the mid-point of the Civil War, during perhaps the most perilous year in American history. March 12, 1863 was at the low point of the Union's prospects for victory. Two difficult years of war remained – although, at the time, it seemed as if the end might never come. And it was far from clear then that the Union would even survive.

The events of the time were momentous. The appointment came some six months after Antietam, the bloodiest day of the Civil War, ten weeks after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation took effect, and just nine days after the union draft was signed into law. The appointment also came just before the start of the spring campaigns, two months before the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, four months before Gettysburg and the surrender of Vicksburg, and eight months before President Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address.

In a remarkable historical coincidence, the new federal courtroom, where the Imperial Room of the Amway now stands, was opened on the first day of the Battle of



Abraham Lincoln



Solomon Withey

Officers

President Emeritus

James A. Mitchell

President

David J. Gass

Vice President

Michael W. Puerner

Treasurer

James S. Brady

Secretary

Mary Andrews

Trustees

Tracey Cordes
Paul Denenfield
David J. Gass
Elliot Gruszka
Mark S. Hurwitz
Raymond S. Kent
Raymond B. Loeschner
John H. Logie
Michael A. MacDonald
Patrick E. Mears
James A. Mitchell
Jahel H. Nolan
Eugene E. Smary
Gleaves Whitney

Ex Officio Trustees

Hon. Robert H. Bell
Hon. Hugh W. Brenneman, Jr.
Hon. Paul L. Maloney

Committee Chairs

Membership
John H. Logie

Oral History Project
Gordon Olson

Archives
Michael A. MacDonald

Fundraising
Michael W. Puerner

Archivist
Mary Andrews

Journal Editor
Patrick E. Mears

Oral Historian
Gordon Olson

Please submit any proposed materials
for publication to:

The Historical Society for
the USDC, WD of MI
110 Michigan Street, N.W., Room 399
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

The Stereoscope reserves copyright to authors of signed articles. Permission to reprint a signed article should be obtained directly from the author, and *The Stereoscope* should be acknowledged in the reprint. Unsigned material may be reprinted without permission provided *The Stereoscope* is given credit.

Gettysburg. According to *The Grand Rapids Daily Eagle*, July 1, 1863:

U.S. Court Room. A large, convenient and well lighted room has just been finished, in splendid style, in Ball's Block, for a U.S. courtroom. The walls, doors, window frames, etc., have been painted and grained in the best style of the painter's art. Tasty inside blinds, matching the walls in finish, have been put upon the windows, and a finely finished, elevated bench, for His Honor, Judge Withey, has been erected at one end of the hall, with a desk for the Clerk, to match in appearance, in front of it. To make the room complete in appearance and comfort, the floor has been covered with grass or hemp carpeting, and the room is to be provided with arm or office chairs. Altogether, this is one of the most convenient and tasty court rooms we ever saw, alike creditable to the man who planned the work and the artists who did it.

To the best of our knowledge, this gala is the first ever celebration of the formation of the Western District of Michigan. To put the event in historical perspective, the 50th anniversary would have occurred one year after the Titanic sank; and the 100th anniversary would have taken place during the last year of John Kennedy's presidency. And, while 150 years seems like a long time, it is merely two lifetimes away.

You will not want to miss this important historical event. And if you enjoy history and the Civil War, the 150th Celebration will be interesting, entertaining, and memorable. The festivities for this black-tie-optional event at the Amway Ambassador Ballroom will include:

- Reception with the Third Michigan Volunteer Company and the 5th Michigan Regimental Band, renowned for its Civil War-era music
- Premiere showing of the period mini-documentary, "Order in the Court," narrated by Grand Rapids historian Gordon Olson
- Presentation of the Colors, by "History Remembered"
- Remarks by President Abraham Lincoln
- Invocation by the great, great grandson of Lincoln's pastor, Phineas D. Gurley
- Civil War-era music by GRSO violinist Diane McElfish Halle, accompanied by GRSO pianist emeritus Nancy Mitchell Poltrock
- Keynote address by nationally-recognized Presidential Historian **Richard Norton Smith**. Mr. Smith has served as director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library. And, he was a founding director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

The reception will begin at 6:00 p.m., during which time the band will treat us with period music. It will be followed by dinner at 7:30 p.m. and remarks by Richard Norton Smith at 8:30 p.m. Seating is limited, so act quickly by making your reservation and sending your payment of \$75 per person (payable to the Historical Society of WD Mich) to Ellen Farrar, c/o U.S. Attorney's Office, P.O. Box 208, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501-0208.

A Brief and Shining Moment: Abraham Lincoln and Latin America

By Patrick E. Mears, Esq., Barnes & Thornburg LLP

Detras de Washington viene al espíritu invencible el nombre de Lincoln, el que termina la obra liberatriz que el señor aristócrata del Sur no se atrevió a acometer; el que realiza sus provisiones de grandeza futura; y lanza a los Estados Unidos en el mar proceloso de la historia contemporánea . . .

After Washington comes the name of Lincoln of the invincible spirit, he who ended slavery that the aristocrat of the South did not dare to undertake; he who made provisions of future greatness; and launched the United States into the stormy sea of contemporary history . . .

Domingo F. Sarmiento, *Vida de Abrah Lincoln* (1865)

In one of the first scenes in Steven Spielberg's recent film epic, *Lincoln*, President Abraham Lincoln speaks with two pairs of Union soldiers, one white and one black, just prior to being transported to Wilmington, North Carolina for one of the climatic battles of the War Between the States. The conversation quickly centers on Lincoln's Gettysburg Address delivered two years previously. The two white soldiers were present at Gettysburg when Lincoln unveiled his broad vision of a government of, by and for the people and they began to recite its text at Lincoln's subtle prompting. One of the two black Union soldiers later finished the recitation. Spielberg's point was that all American citizens—black and white—were carefully listening to Lincoln and his conception of democracy throughout the war.

Lincoln's audience was not limited, however, to the inhabitants of the United States. The whole world was watching. In Europe, the English, dependent upon Southern cotton and therefore having a stake in the war's outcome, initially supported the Confederacy. France, which invaded Mexico in 1862 and installed the Hapsburg Maximilian as the nonindigenous Emperor of Mexico, kept close watch on Lincoln and his possible invocation of the Monroe Doctrine to expel the foreign usurper. Latin America, however, was perhaps most keenly interested in Lincoln's thoughts and actions

during the Civil War, especially Mexico which had forfeited to America a huge swath of its northern reaches as a result of the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and the resulting Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Mexican people and other Latin Americans sensed a

difference in the Illinois' railsplitter's attitude toward them and their embryonic governments as compared with the pronouncements of other American politicians. Because of Lincoln's overtures of friendship made in the context of Mexican-United States relations and Lincoln's actions in severing the bonds of slavery in the United States, many newly formed Latin American



Abraham Lincoln

governments and their peoples embraced and honored Lincoln and his ideals. Viewed in the context of the relations between the United States and its southern neighbors from the early Nineteenth Century onwards, these actions taken by perhaps our greatest President generated a substantial reservoir of good will in Latin American nations that survives to this day.

The Historical Background

The Spanish Conquest of the New World and Subsequent Independence of Spain's Latin American Colonies

Shortly after the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus, the Kingdom of Spain embarked on a series of conquests that resulted in the establishment of Spanish colonial rule from Mexico in the north to what is now Argentina and Chile in the "Southern Cone" of the South American continent, excepting a few English, Dutch and French colonies on the continent's northern coast¹ and the Portuguese colony of Brazil. In Mexico and Peru, the Spanish Conquistadors dramatically defeated powerful Aztec and Inca forces in pitched battles. In other, sparsely settled regions, the Spanish simply seized the land by brute force and governed the local tribes, encountering some violent resistance during the process. In the southern regions of Chile and Argentina, however, the armed opposition of the local Mapuche Indians to the extension of Spanish rule was stiff and prolonged and not finally overcome until near the end of the Nineteenth Century.

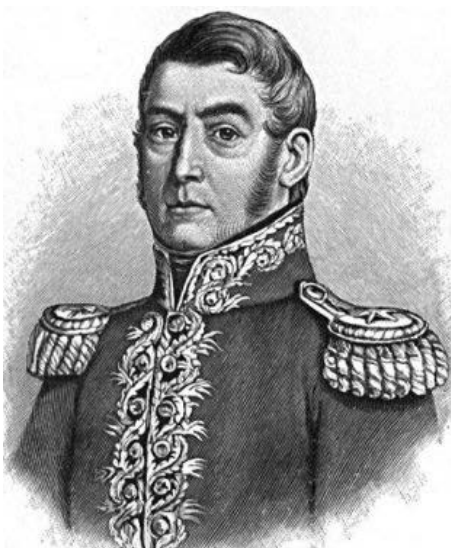
The social structure of Spain's Latin American colonies was rigidly hierarchical, with the Peninsulares, those settlers born in Spain, at the top of the social, political and ecclesiastical pyramid. Immediately below this group were the Creoles, who were primarily of Spanish descent but had been born in the colonies. Further down the chain were the mixed-race mestizos, Indians and blacks. As Carlos Fuentes explains,

"[i]n 1810, eighteen million people lived under Spanish rule between California and Cape Horn. Eight million were still considered Indians, aboriginal to the Western Hemisphere. Only one million were pure blacks, brought from Africa in the slave trade. And only four million were

Caucasian, both peninsular Spaniards and Creoles, that is, descendants of Europeans born in the New World. Now, the Creoles (mostly of Spanish descent, but there were a few French, German and Irish names here and there—O'Higgins, O'Reilly) outnumbered peninsular Spaniards nine to one. But in their turn, the white Spanish Americans were vastly outnumbered by Indians, blacks, and the new mixed-race individuals."²

Events occurring in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century led to the creation of an increased political consciousness of the Creoles, who began to question their relative powerlessness vis-à-vis the Peninsulares. First, the Bourbons, who succeeded the Hapsburgs in ruling Spain in the 1700s, began a march towards modernization which, among other things, resulted in increased trade between the Latin American colonies and nations other than Mother Spain. This trade greatly benefitted the Creole class, transforming many of them into wealthy merchants. Second, the French and American revolutions offered a promise of redistributing political power with non-ruling social classes, such as the Creoles. Finally and most immediate at the time, was the invasion of Spain, then an ally of France, by Napoleon in 1808, that resulted in the deposition of the Bourbon king and his replacement by Napoleon's brother, Joseph. Two years later, a native Spanish government established itself in the city of Cadiz and adopted a liberal constitution in the absence of the Bourbon king, Ferdinand VII, who had fled from Napoleon's Grande Armée. During this period, the Creoles in Spain's Latin American colonies, many of whom were merchants and heavily involved in local politics, met informally or in organized proceedings in local town halls ("cabildos") to debate how the colonies should be governed in light of this political and military maelstrom. Should the royalist governors continue to rule or should a new, democratic governance be adopted to replace them? These debates intensified and resulted in organized armed revolution by the Creoles after Napoleon's army was expelled from Spain and Ferdinand VII, upon his return, revoked the liberal constitution of the Cadiz Cortes.

The wars for independence from Spain raged throughout the continent for more than ten years.³ In what is now Venezuela and



Jose de San Martin

Columbia, Simon Bolívar recruited an army to eject the royalists from the northern portion of South America.⁴ Bolívar was joined in his efforts by Jose de San Martin, an Argentine army officer who had fought with the Spanish army against the French in Spain.⁵ Bernardo O'Higgins⁶ of Chile, the illegitimate son of an Irish immigrant who became a Viceroy of Peru through his native intelligence, hard work and merit, fought against the Spanish in Argentina and Chile. Lord Thomas Cochrane, a former officer of the English navy who distinguished himself in the Napoleonic Wars, was recruited by Bernardo O'Higgins and contributed to the Chileans' eventual victory by a rare combination of bravado, bravery and deception.⁷ Eventually, the royalist armies were defeated and dispossessed from the newly created republics of Latin America, retaining only the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico as Spain's sole possessions in the New World.

The Formulation and Declaration of the Monroe Doctrine

On December 2, 1823, United States President James Monroe announced in his annual State of the Union message to Congress what has now become known as the "Monroe Doctrine." This position statement was developed in the context of a month-long debate of Monroe's cabinet during November, 1823 and resulted from the threat, jointly perceived by the British and American governments, of possible military intervention by members of the Holy Alliance (*i.e.*,

France, Austria, Russia and Prussia) in the affairs of the newly established republics of Latin America. In 1820, the Holy Alliance (excepting the French) adopted the "Troppau Circular," announcing the Alliance's right to suppress any European revolutionary movement that the Alliance believed endangered its security. Three years later, France invoked this principle and neutered the Spanish constitutionalists by restoring the monarchy of the Bourbon King Ferdinand VII. Reacting to France's intervention in Spain, the British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, approached the American ambassador to England, Richard Rush, with a proposal to issue a joint declaration warning the Holy Alliance to keep its hands off Spanish America. Although this offer was not accepted by President Monroe for divers reasons, Canning's initiative directly led to the development of the Monroe Doctrine during the late fall and early winter of 1823.

Monroe's State of the Union message of 1823 contained 6,397 words and addressed a plethora of issues facing the national government. The Monroe Doctrine itself is contained in three nonsequential paragraphs on foreign affairs consisting of 954 words. According to one historian, the doctrine "informed the Holy Allies that the United States would consider any intervention in Spanish America as a threat to its own security, but sugarcoated this warning by pledging not to interfere in European affairs as well as to respect functional colonial arrangements established before December 2, 1823."⁸ The portion of the Monroe Doctrine containing this warning against European powers meddling in Spanish America was stated by Monroe as follows:

With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers. The political system of the allied powers is essentially different in this respect from that of America. This difference proceeds from that which exists in their respective Governments; and to the defense of our own, which has been achieved by the loss of so much blood and treasure, and matured by the wisdom of their most enlightened citizens, and under which we have enjoyed unexampled felicity, this whole nation is devoted. We owe it, therefore,

to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintain it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States. In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security. . . .

It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference. If we

look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new Governments, and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she can never subdue them. It is still the true policy of the United States to leave the parties to themselves, in hope that other powers will pursue the same course. . . .⁹

The Rise of the Caudillos, The Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and Lincoln's Opposition to the War

By 1846, the political landscape in the new Latin American republics had changed dramatically. Two of the military leaders who had expelled the Spanish armies during the wars of independence, San Martin and O'Higgins, died in exile—San Martin in France and O'Higgins in Peru.¹⁰ Simon Bolivar, after being hounded out of Bogota in 1830, narrowly evading an assassination attempt and under criticism by former supporters and the new American minister plenipotentiary, William Henry Harrison,¹¹ trekked from Bogota to Santa Marta in Gran Colombia where he passed away, likely from tuberculosis.¹² In addition, republican reformers had been in many instances replaced by caudillos—charismatic military strongmen who ruled with iron fists for the benefit of themselves, their followers and local oligarchies. One example of this class of tyrants was Juan Manuel de Rosas of Argentina, who exercised supreme power in Argentina from 1829 to 1852 after the resignation of the democratic and reformist president, Bernardo Rivadavia, and Rosas' elimination of rival warlords. According to Fuentes,

“[t]he landowners and cattle barons had found their man in Rosas. Through sales and donations, he assured the continuing power of Buenos Aires, the *estancia* and the *saladero*, as well as the concentration of land. Revenue for the government and its supporters was supplied through control of the Buenos Aires customs house. Rosas' wealthy allies were further enriched by outright confiscation of the property of their political enemies. And the landed interests were supremely gratified by Rosas' expansion of territory for grazing through wars against



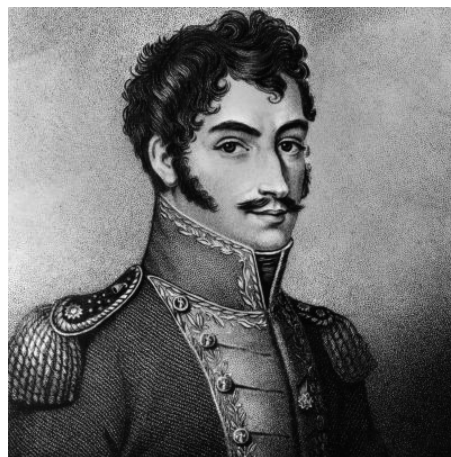
Mexican-American War

the Indians . . . ; Rosas organized the *mazorca*, probably the first Latin American death squad, to silence his enemies. Sarmiento tells how, in the city of Córdoba, the local chief of the *mazorca*, one Bárcena, arrived at a ball and rolled out onto the dance floor the severed heads of three young men whose families were present.”¹³

Another caudillo whose rule plagued the new state of Mexico was General Lopez de Santa Anna, described as “the prototype of the comic-opera Latin American dictator, . . . wily and seductive [who] managed to combine these traits with sheer gall, getting to be president of Mexico eleven times between 1833 and 1854. A grotesque figure, a cockfighter and ladies’ man. . . .”¹⁴ It was Santa Anna who, as President of Mexico and military commander, enjoyed the dubious honor of losing northern Texas along with the entire northern tier of Mexican territories to the United States in “Polk’s War,” the Mexican American War of 1846 to 1848.

The Mexican-American War arose from a number of causes, all of which came to a head during the 1830s and 1840s. First, prior to Mexican independence, Spain and the United States disagreed over the location of the border between Mexico and the United States in the area that now encompasses the State of Texas. This dispute appeared to have been resolved by the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, but questions still remained. After Mexico’s independence from Spain, Americans migrated from neighboring states into the area of Texas then claimed by Mexico in response to encouragement from that government. In 1835, these settlers rebelled against Mexican rule and eventually won their independence by force of arms at the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836. Shortly thereafter, President Andrew Jackson recognized the independence of the Texas Republic.¹⁵

Texas thereafter lobbied the United States for annexation as a separate state of the Union but this process soon ground to a halt in response to the economic depression in the United States caused by the Panic of 1837. Nevertheless, President John Tyler and his Secretary of State, Abel P. Upshur, negotiated with Texas an annexation treaty in early 1844 which stalled in the United States Senate as the nation approached a presidential election. The presidential candidate put forward by the Whig Party, Henry Clay of Kentucky, adopted a careful and gradualist approach towards



Simon Bolívar

annexation which was at that time out of step with the desires of the American electorate. His opponent, James K. Polk of Tennessee, was an ardent expansionist committed to the philosophy of America’s “Manifest Destiny.” Polk narrowly won the election and, upon his inauguration, began to press for annexation, which was eventually accomplished on July 4, 1845. Polk, however, wanted more Mexican territory beyond the boundaries of the former Texas Republic and, to that end, dispatched U.S. Army General Zachary Taylor with an army into the disputed territory to provoke an armed conflict with Mexico. The expected clash occurred on the banks of the Rio Grande across from the Mexican town of Matamoros, with war between the two nations resulting.

General Taylor advanced with his troops across the Rio Grande and into what is now Northern Mexico, capturing the important city of Monterrey after an intense, three-day battle. Thereafter, Taylor emerged as the victor in the bloody struggle at Buena Vista against Santa Anna. Concurrently, U.S. Army General Winfield Scott made an amphibious landing of his troops at Veracruz, capturing that fortress town and then advanced westward towards Mexico City. After successfully storming Chapultepec Castle and breaching Mexico City’s walls, Santa Anna and his army fled to the nearby cathedral town of Guadalupe Hidalgo, leaving Scott in possession of the Mexican capital.

In the meantime, the American public began to tire of the war, raising objections that the American expeditionary forces, many of whom were untrained and undisciplined state militias, were massacring Mexican civilians without justification and that the level

of American casualties was skyrocketing with no clear end to the war in sight. This dissatisfaction resulted in the Whig Party taking control of the House of Representatives in the off-year election of 1846. One of the victors in this election was freshman Congressman Abraham Lincoln of Illinois' Seventh Congressional District.

Prior to the convening of the Thirtieth Congress on March 4, 1847, Henry Clay, who had lost a son at the Battle of Buena Vista, made a watershed speech in Lexington, Kentucky on the war, which speech Lincoln attended. Clay charged that the war was unnatural and unnecessary and was one of "offensive aggression" engineered by Polk, who had lied to the American people about its origin. Clay correctly identified the "spot" of the first skirmish of the war as having occurred in an area clearly within the boundaries of Mexico as identified in the Adams-Onís Treaty.¹⁶

Polk's assertion in his State of the Union address delivered to Congress on December 7, 1847, characterizing the war as "just" was immediately challenged by the Whig members of Congress. In response, the House of Representatives passed an amendment to a bill advising Polk to consult with congressional representatives on steps to end the war and censuring the President for "unnecessarily and unconstitutionally" commencing the war. Lincoln voted in favor of this amendment and, on December 22, 1847, introduced his "Spot Resolutions" in the House, challenging Polk's claim that the first armed clash between the two armies occurred on American soil. In these resolutions,

"Lincoln stated that the House was 'desirous to obtain a full knowledge of all the facts which go to establish whether the particular spot on which the blood of our citizens was so shed or was not on our own soil.' Eight resolutions sought specific information. The first: 'Whether the spot on which the blood of our citizens was shed, as in his messages declared, was or was not in the territory of Spain, at least after the treaty of 1819, until the Mexican revolution.' The second: 'Whether that spot is or is not within the territory which was wrested from Spain by the revolutionary Government of Mexico.' The other six resolutions extended the analysis to determine

whether the territory on which the casualties was ever under the government or laws of Texas or of the United States. The House never acted on Lincoln's resolutions, but they underscored the Whig position that Polk lacked persuasive grounds to begin the war."¹⁷

On January 12, 1848, Lincoln elaborated on the grounds for his vote on the amendment that Polk had "unconstitutionally commenced" the war. In this speech given on the floor of the House of Representatives,

"Lincoln called attention to Polk's claim that in the hostilities that began in disputed territory, American blood had been shed on American soil. As Lincoln noted, President Polk had stated that 'hostilities were commenced or blood was shed—American blood was shed on American soil. And of so much importance did the President deem the declaration that the place, the very spot where blood was first spilled was our own soil, that he followed it up, and repeated that declaration in almost the same language in every successive message, certainly in every annual message since. The President seemed to attach great importance to the assumed fact that the soil was our own where hostilities commenced. . . .' Lincoln added that whoever 'carefully examined' Polk's message 'would find that, like one in the half insane excitement of a fevered dream,' that Polk had made a number of inconsistent arguments in favor of the war. 'He talked like an insane man.'"¹⁸

After on-again, off-again peace negotiations conducted by the United States and Mexico, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ending the war was signed by the belligerents and ratified by them in March, 1848. The treaty, among other things, ceded to the United States the northern portion of Mexico, including what is now the states of California, Colorado and New Mexico, and fixed the border between the two nations at the Rio Grande River in return for a payment of \$15 million. This lamentable war had finally terminated and Abraham Lincoln had made his first mark on the American political scene, an event that did not go unnoticed in the former Spanish colonies south of the border.

The Relationship Between Abraham Lincoln and Benito Juarez

Although the two men never met, Abraham Lincoln and Benito Juarez, presidents of the United States and Mexico during the 1860s, formed and maintained a positive and cooperative working relationship until Lincoln's assassination in April, 1865. Both men were roughly the same age, Lincoln having been born in poverty on a small farm in Hodgenville, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809. Juarez was born three years earlier in the small Oaxacan village of San Pablo Guelato. Juarez's parents, both of Zapotec Indian stock, died when the child was merely three years old; young Benito was then raised by his grandmother and uncle. At the tender age of twelve, Benito Juarez left his village and walked 40 miles to the colonial city of Oaxaca to live there with his sister, a domestic servant.¹⁹

Shortly after his arrival in the city, Benito was taken in by a local bookbinder and devout lay Franciscan, Antonio Salanueva, who taught the boy how to read, write and speak the Spanish language. After attending primary school, Juarez was accepted to study for the Catholic priesthood at the Oaxaca seminary. Seven years later, he transferred to the newly established and secular Institute of Arts and Sciences in the city. Gravitating towards the study of law, Juarez received a Bachelor of Laws degree from the institute and, two years later, was admitted to practice law before the Mexican Supreme Court. In 1834, Juarez embarked upon his political career when he was elected as a Deputy to the Mexican National Congress. After practicing law and serving as a local judge in Oaxaca, Juarez married Doña Margarita Maza in 1843.²⁰

During the Mexican-American War, Juarez was elected again to the Mexican National Congress and, later, as Governor of Oaxaca State. According to one of Juarez's early biographers,

"Oaxaca, under his rule, became the model Province of the Republic, and its prosperity, its tranquility, and its loyalty were admitted by the friends and foes of the Indian Governor, whose name became generally known throughout the length and breadth of Mexico, not so much as that of a brilliant administrator, as that of an honest man."²¹



Benito Juarez

Juarez served in this role as state governor for five years. Shortly after his term of office ended, the constitutional government of Mexico was overthrown in April, 1854, by Santa Anna, acting in league with former army officers and the Roman Catholic clergy. After seizing power, Santa Anna was proclaimed Dictator of Mexico. One of his first acts in this role was ordering the arrest and imprisonment of Juarez. A few months later, the captive escaped from prison and landed in New Orleans, where he studied English and Constitutional Law. Only two years after Juarez's escape, Santa Anna was himself deposed and Mexico adopted a new, liberal constitution. In October, 1855, a new President of Mexico was elected, who appointed Juarez to his cabinet as Minister of Justice and Religion. During his ministerial term, Mexico adopted what became known as the *Ley Juarez*, which abolished all judicial immunities for the clergy and military in the civil courts and eliminated all special courts for the privileged classes.²²

One and one-half years after his ministerial appointment, Juarez resigned his post and returned to Oaxaca to practice law. Later in 1857, Mexico adopted another, liberal constitution, which elevated the *Ley Juarez* to constitutional status and also decreed that all ecclesiastical property not being used for

religious purposes must be sold by its owners. Ignacio Comonfort was thereupon elected as President of Mexico under this new constitution who, in turn, named Juarez to his cabinet as Minister of the Interior, President of the Mexican Supreme Court and Vice-President of the Republic. Juarez commenced his official duties in these new positions upon his arrival in Mexico City on November 2, 1857.²³

In the meantime, trouble was brewing. In December, 1857, President Comonfort, acting in conjunction with the clergy and military, adopted the "Plan of Tacubaya," pursuant to which Comonfort would declare himself Dictator of Mexico and repeal the new constitution. After publicly announcing this "Plan," the military arrested Juarez and imprisoned him in the National Palace. When Comonfort balked at declaring himself Dictator, the military acted and General Felix Zuloaga was sworn in as Mexico's new President. With the aid of Comonfort, however, Juarez was sprung from prison and escaped to the city of Guanajuato. There, Juarez was sworn in as the rival but constitutionally legitimate President of Mexico. Predictably, a civil war ensued between the followers of Juarez and the supporters of Zuloaga, referred to in Mexico as the "War of the Reform" or the "Three Years' War."²⁴

This armed struggle featured a number of pitched battles and even a naval clash in Veracruz harbor. The constitutional armies eventually emerged as the victors by defeating the Zuloaga forces at the Battle of

Calpulapan on the outskirts of Mexico City on December 22, 1860. Juarez then became the acknowledged and unchallenged leader of Mexico. Interestingly, in the midst of this civil war, United States President James Buchanan officially recognized the Zuloaga government as the legitimate government of Mexico and began negotiations with it to purchase railroad rights across the northwest corner of Mexico and a transport right-of-way across the southern Mexican Isthmus of Tehuantepec for transshipment of people and goods between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Although the latter negotiations resulted in the McLane-Ocampo Treaty of 1859, the United States Senate refused to ratify it.²⁵

The end of the Three Years' War, however, failed to bring peace to the North American continent. The dispute over slavery in the United States was exacerbated by the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Laws in 1850 and the United States Supreme Court's decision in the Dred Scott case seven years later, which declared that slaves were the property of their American masters and that a slave's relocation from a slave state to a free state did not result in his or her freedom. In the American political sphere, the Whig Party eventually disbanded, to be replaced by the newly created Republican Party which Abraham Lincoln promptly joined. Lincoln's election as President of the United States in a three-way race in 1860 caused South Carolina and other slave states to threaten to secede from the Union based on their fear that Lincoln's presidency would result, sooner rather than later, in the abolition of slavery in the United States.

Lincoln's election, however, resulted in a normalization of relations with Mexico and its new president, Juarez, which relations improved steadily during Lincoln's administration. The first breath of fresh air occurred after Lincoln's election but prior to his inauguration. Sometime before January, 1861, Juarez directed his Minister to the United States, Matías Romero, to arrange a visit with Lincoln at his home in Springfield, Illinois, in order to discuss the normalization and improvement of foreign relations between the two states. Romero was born in Oaxaca in 1837, was a committed reformist and a long-time political ally of Juarez and who held a number of important positions in the Mexican government between 1857 and 1898, the year of his death. Romero



Matias Romero

served as Minister to the United States for a total of 26 years, uninterruptedly between 1859 and 1868.²⁶

According to Romero's own official correspondence, he arrived in Springfield on January 18, 1861, for his visit with Lincoln held on the following day. At this meeting, Romero and Lincoln conducted extensive discussions during which Romero delivered to his host a personal note from Juarez translated into English. An extract from a letter authored by Romero and dated January 23, 1861, described this interview as follows:

"Entering into the subject of Mexican affairs, the machinations of the clergy and the army were, I explained to him, entirely responsible for the constant revolutions that had devastated Mexico since its independence. To conserve their privileges and impose their rule on the nation, they had overthrown every constitution and maintained the country in constant turmoil. According to official reports received that very day, however, both these groups had now been completely conquered, therefore remaining unable to raise the standard of rebellion again. Now Mexico's hopes to enjoy peace and prosperity are not only solidly based but assured. I told President Lincoln that the constitutional government desires to maintain the most intimate and friendly relations with the United States, to whose citizens it proposes to dispense complete protection and to concede every form of facilities toward developing the commercial and other interests of both republics. Mexico wants to adopt the same principles of liberty and progress which are followed here, traveling the same path to arrive at the grandeur and unequalled prosperity currently enjoyed in the United States. I told him also that the constitutional government had viewed the recent triumph of Republican ideas in this country with satisfaction. Such ideas are very much in harmony with the principles rooted very deeply in the hearts of Mexicans. Therefore, the policy of the Republican administration with regard to Mexico is expected to be truly fraternal and not guided by the egotistic and antihumanitarian principles which the Democratic administrations had pursued in respect to Mexico, principles that

resulted in pillaging the Mexican Republic of its territory in order to extend slavery.

Lincoln appeared to listen to all that I said with pleasure. When I had concluded, he explicitly, almost vehemently, insisted that he was very interested in the peace and prosperity of Mexico. During his government, Lincoln claimed, far from placing any obstacles to the attainment of those ends, he will do what he can to assist their realization. While he is in power, he added, Mexico should be assured he will do her entire justice on all questions that are pending or that will subsequently occur between the two republics. In all matters, Lincoln concluded, he will treat Mexico with sentiments of the highest consideration and of true sympathy. During the conversation and in conclusion he expressed his belief that no question would arise that would suffice to dampen his determination in this particular.

He immediately made clear to me that he intended to meditate on Mexican affairs and, as soon as time would permit, he would write me regarding the sentiments he had just expressed and on any considerations that might later occur to him in view of what I told him and of the various pamphlets I left with him concerning the situation in Mexico

Among the various questions he asked about Mexico was one inquiring into the condition of the peons in the Republic because there exist exaggerated ideas here of the situation among the Indians working in the hacienda system. They are allegedly in a more abominable servitude than the Negroes on Southern plantations. Furthermore, it is believed that the abuses which, unfortunately, are committed in some areas of Mexico are general throughout the Republic and are authorized by law. I explained in detail how such abuses were committed. He professed great pleasure in learning that such practices were contrary to the laws of the Republic and that, when Mexico has a solidly established government, it will attempt to correct these abuses.

On January 21st I visited Lincoln again to take leave of him²⁷

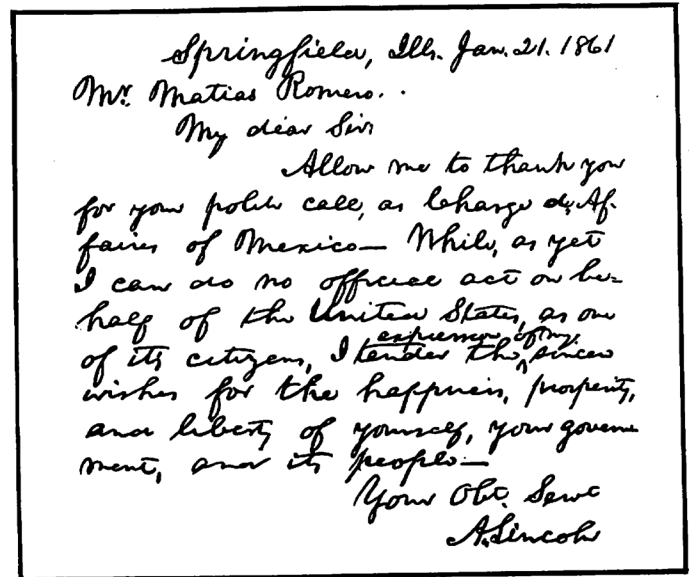
On that same day, Lincoln delivered to Romero a handwritten note, thanking him for his "polite call" and granting Lincoln's "sincere wishes for the happiness, prosperity and liberty of yourself, your government and your people."

The offers made by Romero to Lincoln were dramatic ones given the poor state of relations between the United States and Mexico at that time. According to one author,

"... just 13 years prior Mexico had lost half its territory after its war with the United States. The humiliation had galvanized a new Mexican nationalism based largely on anti-Yankee sentiment. In the United States, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo merely whet the appetites of the Southern expansionists, and every succeeding American ambassador to Mexico up to the Lincoln administration had proposed further annexation. Though the Gadsden Purchase for the Mesilla Strip of northern Sonora was the only deal consummated in that time, Ambassador James Gadsden had settled for a fraction of the territory originally sought by the Pierce administration: the northern frontier states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora and Baja California.

Jose Maria Mata, a Mexican envoy to Washington during the Buchanan administration, summed up his country's collective fear and frustration over its neighbor's territorial drive. It 'borders on mania,' he wrote. 'I have proposed to make it clear . . . that if we are disposed to make fair and profitable concessions for the development and security of American interests, in no case and for no reason would we agree to alienate a single foot of territory.' And the liberals had a good idea of where the drive came from: they blamed American territorial aggressions on Southern slave interests in the Democratic Party bent on expanding the limits of the peculiar institution."²⁸

Lincoln also expressed his respect and concern for Mexico and its people by appointing former United



Springfield, Ill. Jan. 21. 1861
Mr. Matias Romero.
My dear Sir
Allow me to thank you
for your polite call, as Charge d'Aff.
of Mexico. While, as yet
I can do no official act on be-
half of the United States, as an
of its citizen, I tender the
wishes for the happiness, prosper-
ity, and liberty of yourself, your govern-
ment, and its people.
Yours Obedt. Servt
A. Lincoln

Lincoln's letter to Romero

States Senator, Whig politician and staunch opponent of "Polk's War," Thomas Corwin of Ohio, as Minister to Mexico in March, 1861.²⁹ Corwin, in his role as Ohio Senator during the Mexican-American War, earned the reputation as one of the severest critics of that conflict and of President Polk. According to one of Juarez's biographers, Lincoln's appointment of Corwin was a positive development in the relations between the two North American neighbors:

"The appointment of Corwin, like the election of Lincoln, presaged a new deal in American diplomacy. With the rise to power of the Republican party and with control of the Federal government by the Northern and Western States, a pioneer era opened in the relations of the two countries; the sectional split revealed the roots of the past, and it was generally recognized on both sides of the border that the long, wretched history of American imperialism represented sectional rather than national interests and was due to the almost unbroken domination of the American government by Southern statesmen. Honest Tom Corwin, as he was called in Ohio, did much to honor his name in Mexico. He was the only recruit to the diplomatic corps who presented his credentials unconditionally, and by his accurate and unbiased reports on conditions in Mexico he performed a service to both countries

and succeeded in creating mutual confidence and sympathy and effacing many of the bitter memories of the past. His mission prospered; and when an agent of the Confederacy appeared on the scene, all doors were closed to him.”³⁰

Lincoln made other ambassadorial appointments that were designed to elicit good will and understanding from other South American republics. In Peru,

“a ready-made war had been prepared for [Lincoln] by President Buchanan. The Peruvian government had seized two American vessels loaded illegally with guano in November, 1860. Diplomatic relations were broken off. The stage was set for the foreign war which some people hoped would unite North and South. Now Lincoln dashed their hopes to the ground. He reversed his predecessor’s policy and re-established friendly relations. Christopher Robinson—good Republican from Rhode Island, recently defeated in his race for Congress—was sent to Lima with instructions to extend cordial greetings to all the countries in the Western Hemisphere which had ‘commercial, social and political institutions’ similar to those of the United States. The Peruvian offer to arbitrate the American dispute, which President Buchanan had turned down, Lincoln accepted. For referee the King of Belgium was agreed upon. His Majesty looked over the briefs and declined to act. The United States had no case, he said. Lincoln immediately bowed to the Peruvian contention. If [Secretary of State] Seward was sincere in believing that foreign conflict would reunite the North and South, he watched the chief brush aside a convenient war without remonstrance.”³¹

Another wise Lincoln appointment of a Minister to a South American republic was that of Thomas H. Nelson to Chile. Nelson, a defeated Republican candidate for Congress like Robinson, has been described as “famous for his nice manners and winning personality. Spanish temperaments were sure to warm to him as they would to Corwin.” And warm to Nelson the people of Chile did. On December 8, 1863, Minister Nelson organized the rescue operations during the catastrophic Church of the Company of Jesus fire in Santiago in which more than 2,000 people perished.

For these efforts the Chilean government recognized Nelson as a “true hero of Chile.”³²

The Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address

The bombardment of Fort Sumter by Confederate shore batteries on April 12, 1861, signaled the beginning of the War Between the States, which would continue unabated for four long and bloody years. It then became Lincoln’s turn to manage a nation and its armies through a civil war. As previously noted, underlying causes of the war included the continuing existence of the institution of slavery and the Southern states’ refusal to accept the outcome of the 1860 presidential election. Lincoln, who opposed slavery, issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, in the form of a directive to all Executive departments of the United States government based upon his powers as commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Union. This order declared that all slaves in the Confederate States of America to be forever free and ordered the United States Army to treat slaves in areas captured from the Confederacy as emancipated and not to be returned to their former masters.

Later that year, Lincoln delivered his immortal Gettysburg Address on November 18th while dedicated the National Cemetery there. This speech, which lasted for only a few minutes, promised dedication to the “unfinished work” of the Founding Fathers, which included a “new birth of freedom” and that the “government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from this earth.”³³

The French Occupation of Mexico (1862-1867)

The cost of the Three Years’ War resulted in Juárez’s decision to delay debt payments to its three major international creditors, *i.e.*, Spain, France and England, while the fighting continued. At the end of the war, the Mexican treasury was essentially empty and Mexico faced obligations to pay approximately \$160 million to its international creditors without the means of doing so. On October 31, 1861, France, Britain and Spain signed the Convention of London, which pledged them to an “alliance of intervention” to collect this debt from Mexico by force. At the same time, however, these three powers stated that they would not seek any territorial

acquisitions or any other “peculiar advantage” from Mexico nor would they interfere in Mexico’s internal affairs, all of which was likely a nod to the Monroe Doctrine. The United States was also a large creditor of Mexico at this time but Lincoln declined an invitation to join this alliance. Lincoln’s Minister to Mexico, Thomas Corwin, expressed to Lincoln his belief that the alliance’s promises of limiting their activities to debt collection were lies and that the three powers intended to conquer Mexico and establish a monarchy there. As later events would prove, Corwin was essentially right—France’s Napoleon III determined to conquer Mexico by force of arms and to install a puppet emperor there.³⁴

During 1861, Corwin urged Lincoln to enter into a treaty with Mexico whereby the United States would loan it \$9 million to make partial debt service payments to forestall intervention by the three powers and even negotiated the terms of such a treaty with the Juarez government.³⁵ On December 7, 1861, Lincoln submitted to the United States Senate the “project” of such a treaty and requested the Senate’s advice thereon. Three months later, however, the Senate rejected this proposal, adopting a resolution stating that it would not be advisable “to negotiate a treaty that will require the

United States to assume any portion of the principal or interest of the debt of Mexico, or that will require the concurrence of European powers.” Nevertheless, Lincoln tried again on June 23, 1862, in his Message to the Senate of that day, where he advised the Senate that Corwin had signed two treaties accomplishing this objective and that they had been ratified by Mexico. Consequently, Lincoln laid the treaties before the Senate and requested their approval by the Senate. Unfortunately for Mexico, the Senate’s consent never came.³⁶

In the meantime, on January 8, 1862, English, Spanish and French military forces landed at Veracruz to collect on their claims. Shortly thereafter, commissioners from the creditor alliance began negotiations with Juarez’s government about a means for repayment, which negotiations ultimately failed. In the meantime, Napoleon III sent more troops to Mexico and the other two members of the alliance, realizing that the French were more interested in adding to their empire than in being repaid, eventually withdrew their armies. The French military buildup and its preparations for war resulted in the first significant armed struggle over the continued independence of Mexico at Puebla on May 5, 1862. The Mexican army there defeated the French forces in a battle now famously commemorated throughout Mexico and elsewhere as “Cinco de Mayo.”³⁷

Nevertheless, the French army continued its advance and occupied Mexico City on June 7, 1863, as the government of Juarez relocated to the city of San Luis Potosi two hundred miles north. On April 10, 1864, Corwin’s fears were fully realized when Ferdinand Maximilian, an Archduke of the imperial Austrian Hapsburg family, was declared Emperor of Mexico at his palace in Miramar. In late May, 1864, Maximilian and his wife, Charlotte (or “Carlota,” as she was called in Mexico), landed at Veracruz. Napoleon III’s venture was predicated on the assumption that after French troops stabilized the country, they would be withdrawn and Maximilian would retain power through the imperial Mexican army trained by the French with Austrian and Belgian volunteers. Napoleon III also counted on the Confederate States of America being the victors in the American Civil War and that the Confederacy would be too weak in the aftermath of that war to intervene militarily in Mexico. As one historian



Cinco de Mayo

has written, these assumptions were all wrong, thereby causing Maximilian's venture to be doomed from the start:

"Maximilian had come at last. He had appeared on the stage where his tragedy was to be played out, making his first entrance more than halfway through the play, when everything had already been determined and there was little he could do to change the disastrous course events were taking. After the initial French aggression and the execution of the guerrillas, Maximilian could never hope to win liberal sympathy in Mexico or the United States; he would not be able to retain the support of Mexican Conservatives who had invited him to come if Napoleon III continued his policy of antagonizing the Church; and French troops could not stay in Mexico forever."³⁸

Historians seem to agree that, although Lincoln would have preferred to have provided more assistance to the Juarez government in its efforts to expel the French invader and its puppet ruler, Lincoln "had his hands full with the Civil War" and could not afford to send arms other than on a sporadic basis to the constitutional Mexican army. Lincoln was also concerned that, at least during the first few years of French intervention when the fate of the Union hung in the balance, more significant and visible aid to Juarez could cause the French to give more military aid to the Confederacy, especially in supplying it with naval frigates and rams.³⁹ Juarez, for his part, kept faith with Lincoln by refusing to accept a Confederate delegation let by John T. Pickett sent to Mexico City to treat with his government. Juarez's response to this overture was to imprison Pickett for thirty days and then expel him from the country.⁴⁰

As the year 1865 began, it became clear to the world that the South would lose the American Civil War, which gave Napoleon III more reason to entertain the thought of pulling his forces out of Mexico. With Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia in April, 1865, at Appomattox, the South's fate was sealed. Napoleon's reaction to these events was predictable:

"In the summer of 1865. . . Napoleon was weary, uneasy, and on the defensive. The initial miscalculation which had led him to synchronize intervention with the

war of secession in the United States and to speculate on the dissolution of the Union and the triumph of the South could no longer be corrected, because it was linked to another original error. The power of Mexican resistance, which he had underestimated, had prevented him from consummating his conquest during the first two years when the fortunes of the Confederacy were in the ascendant, and had maintained the instability of the Empire until the triumph of the Union was assured. Historically correct as the timing of the venture was, the delays in its execution had turned the clock against him. Faced with the growing hostility of the American people and the nervousness of the French public, he was forced to wind up the adventure as quickly as possible."⁴¹

In 1867, the French forces had all been withdrawn from Mexico and Maximilian was on the run from Juarez's forces with no popular support. His wife, Carlota, had previously left Mexico for Europe, leaving Maximilian to his fate. On May 15, 1867, Maximilian surrendered to the liberal forces in the city of Querétaro along with two of his Mexican generals, Miramon and Mejia. On June 19, 1867, by order of Juarez after a military trial, Maximilian and his two generals were executed by firing squad in Querétaro, thereby finally terminating Napoleon III's Mexican adventure. In the meantime, however, Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on the night of April 14, 1865.

The Latin American Reaction to Lincoln and His Martyrdom

After Lincoln's assassination, a number of Latin American countries—notably Cuba, Argentina and Chile—"prompted expressions of mourning. Lincoln became an iconic figure in Latin America during the late nineteenth century and remains so today . . . [A] multitude of references to him can be found in the writings and speeches of Latin Americans of varying views."⁴² The following section discusses only a few of these written encomiums and physical monuments to our Sixteenth President.

Benito Juarez

As the American Civil War approached its terminus in the Spring of 1865, Juarez began to relax somewhat. More American aid became available to his troops and

Juarez became more optimistic about Mexico's chances of success against the French. In April, 1865, he wrote to this family that he "celebrate[d] and applaud[ed] the inflexibility of Mr. Lincoln, for his triumph, even though belated, will be of more benefit to us than a quick peace with a sacrifice of humanity; the final result, as my unforgettable Pepe used to say, that with time and our tenacious resistance we shall wear out the French and compel them to abandon their iniquitous enterprise of subjugating us, without foreign assistance, and that is the greatest glory I desire for my country. It is enough for us that the North destroy slavery and do not recognize Maximilian."⁴³

In May, 1865, shortly after learning of the fall of Richmond, Virginia to Union forces, Juarez also was informed of Lincoln's assassination. Juarez wrote to his family about this disastrous act:

"[T]he latest courier from El Paso made us all happy, and had we not received at the same time the fatal news of the infamous assassination of President Lincoln, our satisfaction would have been complete. I have felt this disaster profoundly, for Lincoln, who was working with such constancy for the full freedom of his fellow men, merited a better fate than the knife [sic] of a cowardly assassin."⁴⁴

Benito Juarez expired on July 18, 1872, in Mexico City, still President of Mexico at his death.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was born in San Juan, Argentina on February 15, 1811 and is considered by many to be the founder of the modern Argentine Republic. He worked during his lifetime as a journalist, educator and politician. He was an opponent of caudilloism, which he rejected as barbaric, and of Juan Manuel de Rosas, the Argentine tyrant. Sarmiento's greatest literary achievement was his book, *Facundo*, which was a critique of Rosas and written during his political exile in Chile.

In 1865, Sarmiento was appointed Plenipotentiary Minister to the United States shortly after Lincoln's assassination. During his diplomatic sojourn in the United States from 1865 to 1868, Sarmiento received an honorary degree from The University of Michigan. When he returned to Argentina in 1868, he was elected as President of the Argentine Republic and held that position until 1874. Sarmiento passed away in Asuncion, Paraguay on September 11, 1888. His remains now rest in the Recoleta Cemetery in Buenos Aires.

In addition to *Facundo* and *Life in the Argentine in the Days of the Tyrants; or Civilization and Barbarism* (1886), Sarmiento authored the first Spanish language biography of Abraham Lincoln entitled, *Vida de Abrahán Lincoln decimo sexto presidente de los Estados Unidos*, which was published in New York in 1865 during Sarmiento's term as Minister to the United States. In this biography, Sarmiento concluded that Lincoln's



Domingo Faustino Sarmiento



José Martí



Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna

great accomplishment was that he had “completed the United States as a [form of] government, by bringing it forth unscathed from internecine conflict; as a society, by erasing the stain that tainted its liberties by abolishing slavery; as a people, by coming to power through the influence of his work, his conviction along, and carrying with him to the Presidency the working people whose hands were roughened if honorable, but whose minds were cultivated.”⁴⁵

José Martí

José Martí was a man of many talents. In addition to being a poet, essayist, journalist, philosopher, professor and publisher, he is also universally known by the sobriquet, the “Apostle of Cuban Independence.” Probably best known in the United States as the author of the lyrics to the song “Guantanamera,” Martí was born in Havana, Cuba in 1853, where his father worked as a prison guard. During his childhood in Havana, slavery was legal and widespread in Cuba, being abolished by Spain only in 1886. While attending school at age 12, Lincoln was assassinated and Martí and his friends “expressed their pain—through group mourning—for the death of a man who had decreed the abolition of slavery in a neighboring country. . . . [Martí] came to resent Spanish rule of his homeland at an early age; likewise, he developed a hatred of slavery, which was still practiced in Cuba.”⁴⁶ The recent Cuban film, “El Ojo de Canario,” tells the story of young José Martí and recreates the moment when Martí learns of Lincoln’s death at his school during lessons; a film clip of this scene may be accessed on YouTube.

One contemporary historian has posited that Martí emphasized Lincoln’s character as a “natural man” because of his affinity with the people of humble origin. Martí compared Lincoln to “that other natural man,” Walt Whitman:

“In Martí’s eyes, Lincoln’s poor, rural upbringing lent him an unrivaled legitimacy as a leader of his people who fulfilled the ideals of U.S. independence: ‘out of the truth of poverty, with the innocence of the forest and the sagacity and power of the creatures that inhabited it, emerged, in the hour of the national readjustment, that good, sad guide, the woodcutter Lincoln.’ Lincoln’s background enabled him to do what

Martí, in his famous manifesto for the cultural independence of Latin America, ‘Nuestra America’ (‘Our America,’ 1891), urged all governments in Latin America to do, namely to govern not according to precepts borrowed from places with a wholly different history, but, rather, with knowledge and understanding of ‘the elements that constitute [their own] country.’”⁴⁷

Tributes to Lincoln from Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna of Chile

Extraordinary tributes were offered by the then-envoy of Chile to the United States, Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, shortly after Lincoln’s death. Mackenna was born in Santiago, Chile on August 25, 1831 and was the grandson of General Juan Mackenna (Sean MacCionath) of Monaghan County, Ireland, who fought with Bernardo O’Higgins in the War of Chilean Independence from Spain.⁴⁸ Benjamin Mackenna received a law degree from the Universidad de Chile in 1856 and was also an accomplished journalist and author in his country. One of his most enduring achievements, still visible in Santiago, was to transform into a public park Cerro Santa Lucia, a hill in the center of Santiago and place where Santiago’s founder, Pedro de Valdivia, constructed the city’s first fortifications.

On July 1, 1865, Mackenna delivered a written eulogy on President Lincoln’s untimely death to Thomas Nelson, American Minister to Chile, who had earlier been recognized for his services to Chile in the devastating fire of December 8, 1863 at the Church of the Company of Jesus in Santiago. This eulogy began with the declaration that “a sudden and overwhelming calamity has befallen America. The bells of all the cities have tolled mournfully; the flags of all the nations have been draped with the habiliments of woe; all countenances display deep anguish; . . . in a word it may be said, without hyperbole, that the world discovered by Columbus has been overwhelmed with grief.”

Continuing, Mackenna contrasted the nobility of Lincoln with the cravenness of two of his predecessors, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan:

“Abraham Lincoln was one of the uncommon and greatest of men, because, as a political man, he possessed the love of truth—that grand and rare virtue amongst the politicians who now rule

the world. . . .Prior to his appearance, to govern was to lie. . . .Before him, Franklin Pierce had, by that human abomination which courtiers loudly applaud, and style ‘intriguing ability,’ placed the Union on the brink of the abyss into which it was afterwards precipitated by James Buchanan’s decrepit imbecility—convenient pabulum for the felony of thousands of hidden traitors for four long years.”

Mackenna crafted in this piece an insightful parallel between Washington and Lincoln, affirming that Lincoln, with his emancipation of the slaves, had completed the work that George Washington had begun:

“Between the initiatory mission of George Washington and the culminating mission of Abraham Lincoln, the American race has passed through an entire era. The *colonist* and the *slave* were the two extremes of that grand spiritual transformation of the inhabited globe known as ‘Democracy.’ Washington changed the first into a *citizen*, and passed away, great, sublimed, almost sanctified, to be claimed by all the ages. Lincoln changed the second into a *man*, and for this he falls a martyr, the whole earth his sepulchre. Heroes in goodness! Blessed be ye throughout all ages and amongst all men.”

Two days later, Mackenna introduced a motion in the Chilean House of Deputies requesting funds to purchase portraits of Washington and Lincoln and to display them in the Reception Hall of the Department

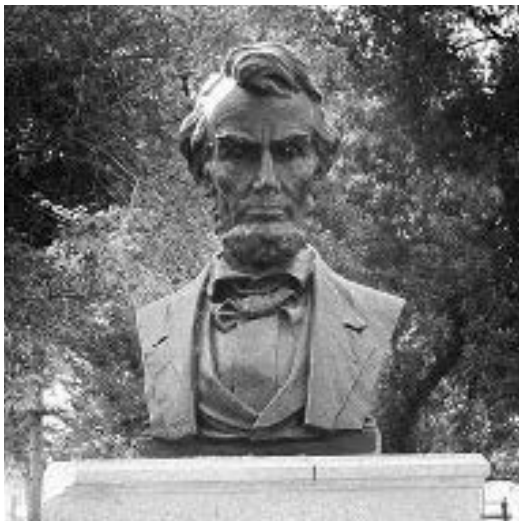
of Foreign Affairs in Santiago as a tribute to their achievements. In this motion, Mackenna affirmed that “during the existence of Chile, as an independent nation, she has had no more faithful and considerate friend than the United States Government, under President Lincoln’s administration.” Later in this document, Mackenna recognized the sympathetic American reaction to the devastation and massive loss of human life caused by the Church of the Company of Jesus fire two years earlier:

“It is pleasing to us that the first and most condoling diplomatic note addressed to the Government of this Republic, after the terrible calamity by which it was afflicted in December of 1863, was that of the Representative of the United States, at the same time that the Cabinet at Washington was, of its own volition, taking part with us in our national rejoicings, by issuing orders that simple, though significant, honors should be paid to our flag and Representatives on the national holidays of Chile, thus giving an unprecedented example of national courtesy towards us.”⁴⁹

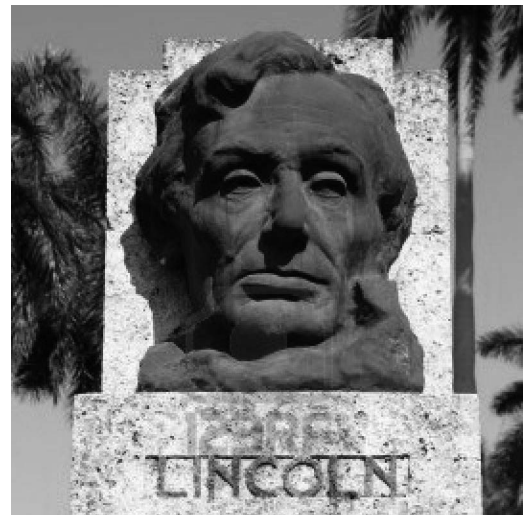
Chilean Blog on the Gettysburg Address

On August 6, 2008, a Chilean educator, Dr. Claudia Gilardoni, published a blog entitled “Lincoln and Chile?,” wherein she described the impact of the Gettysburg Address on Chile and the other, newly independent republics of South America. In her own words:

“When the battle of Gettysburg was being fought,



Bust of Lincoln in Santiago



Lincoln in Havana

the President of Chile was José Joaquín Pérez Mascayano. At that time all Latin American countries had their eyes on the American Civil War issue, and Chile was no exception. We were a young and newly independent country: independence from Spain had been fought for and obtained less than 50 years before and the Chilean population was still thrilled with this new feeling of freedom.

Slavery in Chile was not unusual before the Independence and went on for some time after our period as a Spanish Colony (1535–1818) had ended. Although only some Spaniards had had slaves in Chile, Latin America did have a slave traffic and African slaves were imported to this part of the continent also. The Jesuit congregation in Chile had slaves for manual labor and household chores, but chronicles from that period stated that slaves received good treatment from this congregation. Although Chile had abolished slavery in 1811, it continued for some years afterwards as part of larger commercial deals.

In that context, the Gettysburg Battle was an example to Latin American countries, many of which felt it was relevant to their own issues.

Abraham Lincoln's message, and his Gettysburg address reflected the spirit of the whole new American continent: emancipation, liberty, and, most important of all, recognition of the civil rights of every human being, whatever his race. His words were an inspiration and he was recognized in Latin America and in Chile as a leader of freedom."

Dr. Claudia Gilardoni, *Lincoln and Chile?*, <http://cornellreading.typepad.com/gettysblog/2008/08/lincoln-and-chi.html> (last viewed on January 14, 2013)

Monuments to Lincoln in Latin America

Public monuments commemorating Abraham Lincoln and his achievements abound in Latin America. Many countries have named streets, highways and schools after him. A mammoth bronze statue of



Statue of Lincoln in Havana

Lincoln breaking the chains of slavery towers over Tijuana, Mexico. A bust of Lincoln graces Parque Forestal in the center of Santiago, Chile. Havana, Cuba boasts at least two significant Lincoln monuments, one a full-sized bronze figure and the other, a large metal bust incorporated into a stone base.⁵⁰ Lincoln Partido in Argentina's Buenos Aires' province is named in honor of the Sixteenth President of the United States. The naming of this city occurred only a few months after Lincoln's assassination.

Conclusion

Although Abraham Lincoln's time as an elected, federal politician was brief—his career only lasted seven years—he managed almost singlehandedly to transform the character and quality of the relations between the United States and the former Spanish possessions in



Tijuana's Statue of Lincoln

the New World. Nowhere was this change more dramatically manifested than in Mexico, where Lincoln enjoyed a constantly strengthening relationship with a true kindred spirit, Benito Juarez. Mexico and the other independent nations of Latin America could not help but notice and presumably admire Lincoln's principled objections to the prosecution of the Mexican-American War, his opposition to and eventual eradication of slavery in the United States, and his assistance to and

cooperation with Latin American republics, especially his resistance to the French invasion and attempted colonization of Mexico during the American Civil War. Unfortunately, these advances in foreign relations were cut down early by an assassin's bullet and, as the United States industrialized at an accelerated pace after 1865, America adopted imperial attitudes and created a minor empire in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, other Caribbean islands and in Central America. Unfortunately, we will never know whether Lincoln's absence from the performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre on April 14, 1865, would have changed the course of this history.

Endnotes

- 1 These colonies are now Guyana (formerly, British Guiana), Suriname (formerly, Dutch Guiana) and French Guiana.
- 2 Carlos Fuentes, *The Buried Mirror: Reflections on Spain and the New World*, p. 234, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston

1992), hereinafter cited as "Fuentes."

- 3 John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions: 1808-1826*, W.W. Norton & Company (2d ed. 1986).
- 4 John Lynch, *Simon Bolivar: a Life*, Yale University Press, New Haven (2d ed. 2007).
- 5 John Lynch, *San Martin: Argentine Soldier, American Hero*, Yale University Press, New Haven (2009).
- 6 Stephen Clissold, *Bernardo O'Higgins and the Independence of Chile*, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York (1969).
- 7 Nicknamed the "Sea Wolf" by the French, Lord Cochrane's "life and exploits served as one source of inspiration for the naval fiction of nineteenth and twentieth century novelists, particularly C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower and Patrick O'Brian's Jack Aubrey. Wikipedia, *Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Cochrane,_10th_Earl_of_Dundonald (last viewed January 16, 2013).
- 8 Jay Sexton, *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth Century America*, p. 60, Hill and Wang, New York (2011). See also Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Latin American Policy of the United States: An Historical Interpretation*, pp. 48-72, Harcourt, Brau and Company, New York 1943).
- 9 Yale Law School, *Monroe Doctrine; December 2, 1823*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp (last viewed on January 16, 2013).
- 10 See, e.g., Carleton Beals, *Eagles of the Andes: South American Struggles for Independence*, Chilton Books, Philadelphia (1963).
- 11 William Henry Harrison, the ninth President of the United States and hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, was appointed the American Minister to Gran Columbia by President John Quincy Adams in 1828, after serving three years as U.S. Senator from Ohio. As Minister, Harrison criticized Bolívar as a fledgling military dictator, writing to him that "the strongest of all governments is that which is most free." Bolívar responded by observing that the "United States . . . seemed destined by Providence to plague America with torments in the name of freedom." Harrison was recalled as ambassador by the newly elected President Andrew Jackson in 1829. Wikipedia, *William Henry Harrison*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Harrison (last viewed on January 16, 2013).
- 12 After being declared an outlaw in Venezuela, Bolívar departed from Bogotá in the middle of the night on May 8, 1830, planning to emigrate to France. This nocturnal departure did not prevent the inhabitants of Bogotá from emptying their chamber pots on Bolívar's head during his leave-taking. Bolívar died on December 17, 1830 at the age of 47 before he was able to depart for France. His final journey from Bogotá to Santa Marta is imaginatively described in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's 1989 novel, *The General and His Labyrinth*. Fuentes, p. 258.
- 13 Fuentes, pp. 266-267.
- 14 Fuentes, p. 268.

- 15 For excellent recently published histories of the Mexican-American War and its origins, see Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln and the 1846 Invasion of Mexico*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York (2012) (hereinafter cited as "Greenberg"); Timothy J. Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and its War With the United States*, Hill and Wang, New York (2007).
- 16 Greenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-237.
- 17 Louis Fisher, *The Mexican War and Lincoln's 'Spot Resolutions'*, p. 5, The Law Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (August 18, 2009).
- 18 *Id.*, pp. 6-7. For the complete text of Lincoln's January 12, 1848 speech, see *Abraham Lincoln Speech: The War With Mexico*, <http://www.animatedatlas.com/mexwar/lincoln2.html> (last viewed January 16, 2013).
- 19 W. Wendell Blancké, *Juarez of Mexico*, pp. 18-26, Praeger Publishers, Inc., New York (1971).
- 20 *Id.*, pp. 26-40.
- 21 Ulrick R. Burke, *A Life of Benito Juarez: Constitutional President of Mexico*, p. 60, Remington and Company, Ltd., London (1894) (hereinafter cited as "Burke").
- 22 Burke, pp. 61-64.
- 23 Burke, pp. 70-72.
- 24 Burke, pp. 73-75.
- 25 Ralph Roeder, *Juarez and His Mexico*, pp. 161-265, The Viking Press, New York (1947) (hereinafter cited as "Roeder").
- 26 Thomas D. Schoonover, *Mexican Lobby: Matías Romero in Washington 1861-1867*, p. ix-xviii, The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky (1986).
- 27 *Id.*, pp. 2-3.
- 28 William Moss Wilson, *Lincoln's Mexican Visitor*, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/01/17/lincolns-mexican-visitor> (last viewed on January 22, 2013).
- 29 For a brief biography of Thomas Corwin, see Harp Week Biography, *Thomas Corwin*, <http://www.abrahamlincolncartoons.info/SubPages/Biography.php?UniqueID=15> (last viewed on January 13, 2013).
- 30 Roeder, pp. 350-351.
- 31 Jay Monaghan, *Abraham Lincoln Deals With Foreign Affairs: A Diplomat in Carpet Slippers*, pp. 67-68, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska (1997) (hereinafter cited as "Monaghan").
- 32 Monaghan, p. 68; Wikipedia, *Thomas H. Nelson*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ThomasHNelson> (last viewed on January 22, 2013).
- 33 For a classic history of the historical background of the Gettysburg Address and the changes it wrought in American democracy, see Gary Willis, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America*, Simon & Schuster, New York (1992).
- 34 See generally, Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian & Juarez*, Phoenix Press, London (1993) (hereinafter cited as "Ridley"). See also Roeder, *op. cit.*, pp. 383-513; Monaghan, *op. cit.*, p. 151, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska (1997).
- 35 Roeder, p. 188.
- 36 See, e.g., *1862: Treaty With Mexico*, <http://www.classicreader.com/book/3767/75/> (last viewed on January 13, 2013).
- 37 See, e.g., Ridley, *op. cit.*
- 38 *Id.* at p. 165.
- 39 Monaghan, p. 350.
- 40 See, e.g., Jim Tuck, *Mexico's Lincoln: The ecstasy and agony of Benito Juarez*, <http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/274-mexico-s-lincoln-the-ecstasy-and-agony-of-benito-juarez> (last viewed on January 13, 2013); Leonard Gordon, *Lincoln and Juárez: a Brief Assessment of Their Relationship*, 48 *The Hispanic American Historical Rev.*, p. 75 (Feb. 1968).
- 41 Roeder, p. 602.
- 42 Richard Carwardine and Jay Sexton, eds., *The Global Lincoln*, p. 206, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England (2011) (hereinafter cited as "The Global Lincoln").
- 43 Roeder, *op. cit.*, p. 598.
- 44 *Id.* at p. 600-601.
- 45 The Global Lincoln, pp. 208-209.
- 46 Wikipedia, José Martí, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jos%C3%A9_Mart%C3%AD (last viewed on January 21, 2013).
- 47 The Global Lincoln, p. 211.
- 48 The Mackennas are one of a number of important Anglo-Chilean families of English or Irish descent whose forbears migrated to Chile and supported independence from Spain in the first two decades of the Nineteenth Century. Another such family is the Edwards clan, which owns a significant interest in the *El Mercurio* newspaper. Augustin Edwards McClure (1878-1941) was perhaps its most famous scion, having founded the Santiago edition of *El Mercurio*, authored works of history, such as "My Native Land" (in English), having been elected as a member of the Chilean National Congress, and having acted as President of the General Assembly of the League of Nations from 1922 to 1923. Another member of this clan is Jorge Edwards Valdes (1931-____), a novelist and journalist, who also served as Chilean Ambassador to UNESCO in Paris. He is the author of *Persona Non Grata*, a novel based upon his experience in Cuba under Castro. In 1999 he was awarded the prestigious Miguel de Cervantes Prize for lifetime achievement of outstanding writers in the Spanish language.
- 49 The quotations from Mackenna's eulogy and motion may be found at Benjamin Vincuña Mackenna, *A Sketch of Chile, Expressly Prepared for the Use of Emigrants*, <http://books.google.com/books?id=pQB92EVMYbAC&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+sketch+of+chile,+expressly+prepared+for+the+use+of+emigrants&hl=en#>.
- 50 In Oliver Stone's 2003 documentary film about Fidel Castro, *Comandante*, Castro displays three political busts in his office: one of Simon Bolívar, one of José Martí and one of Abraham Lincoln.

The Historical Society for the United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan Membership Application

2012 Annual Dues

Student (\$15)\$15 x__ = \$ ____
 Individual (\$25)\$25 x__ = \$ ____
 Contributing (\$100)\$100 x__ = \$ ____

2012 Founding Membership Categories

Pillar (\$300)\$300 x__ = \$ ____
 Sustaining (\$500)\$500 x__ = \$ ____
 Patron (\$1,000)\$1,000 x__ = \$ ____
 Grand Patron (\$2,500)\$2,500 x__ = \$ ____
 Benefactor (\$5,000)\$5,000 x__ = \$ ____
 Subtotal = \$ ____

FBA Member Discount (15%) - \$ ____
 Total amount enclosed \$ ____

The annual membership year runs from November 1 through October 31.

Membership contributions are cumulative. *E.g.*, a member who makes contributions eventually totaling \$2,500 becomes a Life Member.

Student Member's Name: _____

Individual Member's Name: _____

Contributing Member's Name: _____

Founding Member's Name: _____

Contact person if different from Contributing or Founding Member

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax Number: _____

Please make checks payable to: *The Historical Society for the USDC, WD of MI*

Mail the application, check and completed questionnaire (next page) to:

The Historical Society for the USDC, WD of MI
 110 Michigan Street, NW, Room 399, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2313

Contributions are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Please indicate if this is a gift membership or if it is a special contribution.

 (Name of donor, intended honoree, memoriam, etc.) Amount _____

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

(submit with check and application form)

Dear New Member:

Please let us know of your interests and skills and whether you would be willing to share those with the Historical Society. Help us by completing this short questionnaire.

Name: _____

Firm name, Employer name, or Organization represented: _____

Special interests or experience in the field of history, local history or legal history: _____

Suggestions for programs, projects, or activities for the Historical Society: _____

Please check all the following that interest you:

- ☐ Writing articles for the Historical Society newsletter
- ☐ Layout and/or production of a newsletter
- ☐ Annual Meeting (planning and production)
- ☐ Oral History Project
- ☐ Research in specific legal history areas
- ☐ Fund development
- ☐ Membership Drive
- ☐ Archival Collection and Preservation
- ☐ Legal Issues relating to archival and oral history collections (copyright, ownership, etc.)
- ☐ Exhibit Preparation
- ☐ Small Group Presentations to Adults
- ☐ Small Group Presentations in Schools
- ☐ Other (Please describe) _____



In This Issue

150th Celebration of the Western District of Michigan – March 12, 20131

A Brief and Shining Moment: Abraham Lincoln and Latin America3

