



# Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission

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*Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Anniversary Subcommittee*

**July 21, 2008**

## Staff Status Report

### Adoption of Subcommittee Recommendations

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission has adopted the recommendations of its Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Anniversary Subcommittee to offer various commemorative activities, programs, and events as a part of the commemoration. The commemoration period was initiated by the Commission, in collaboration with the Lincoln Society of Virginia, at the Annual Lincoln Cemetery Ceremony in Harrisonburg on February 12, 2008. This event was highly successful. To announce the commencement of the Lincoln Bicentennial Commemoration, House Joint Resolution 225 (2008) was introduced on behalf of the Commission by Delegate Jennifer McClellan. This resolution commends The Lincoln Society of Virginia for its work to advance understanding and appreciation of the presidency of the 16th President of the United States, and for its outstanding work and service to the Commonwealth. The resolution also promotes the national observance of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln and Virginia's recognition of this historic occasion through the leadership of the King Commission.

At the Commission's May 29, 2008, meeting, it directed the Subcommittee to proceed with the implementation of the adopted recommendations as soon as possible, and to keep the Commission apprised of its work.

### Collaboration and Prospective Partnerships

Dr. John McGlennon, subcommittee member, represented the King Commission and the Lincoln Bicentennial Subcommittee at the May 29, 2008, meeting of the Lincoln Bicentennial National Commission in Washington, D.C. Dr. McGlennon reported that the meeting allowed Washington, D.C. area cultural, historical, and civic organizations to provide information about their respective plans for the coming year, and to highlight events scheduled between February 12 and April 30, 2009, which includes the rededication of the Lincoln Memorial in May 2009. This will be a major national event and the President may participate in it. He also shared with the attendees the plans underway in Virginia to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of Abraham Lincoln. There will be a coordinated calendar produced this summer by the National Commission in which the King Commission may wish to post on its website.

### Proposed Schedule of Events

The commemorative activities recommended by the Lincoln Bicentennial Subcommittee have been adopted by the King Commission, which has directed the Subcommittee to implement them as soon as possible. A schedule for the commemorative programs and activities recommended by the Subcommittee is proposed as follows. However, specific strategies for accomplishing each endeavor should be discussed and decided.

#### February 2008

- Launch the observance of the Lincoln Bicentennial with kick-off activities on February 12, 2008, with the Lincoln Society of Virginia's Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony at the Lincoln Homestead Cemetery in Harrisonburg, Virginia.
- Introduce a resolution recognizing the Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony, noting that the MLK Commission acknowledges as an authentic event.
- Acquire Lincoln books and materials to be used during commemoration for the King Commission.

#### July 2008

- Establish the MLK Commission as the clearinghouse for Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial events in Virginia.
- Develop a logo for the Bicentennial.
- Announce the Lincoln Bicentennial Commemoration of the King website

**Continued**

- Develop a public relations campaign and media packet.
- Request the assistance of members of the King Commission and its subcommittees and other nonlegislative citizens, and develop relationships with local, state, and national organizations to garner support for the commemoration.
- Determine the need for fundraising and develop a list of potential donors and philanthropic organizations. If necessary, submit grant applications for financial assistance.

#### **August 2008**

- Construct a recommended reading list for use by Local Reading Clubs, public and private schools, and others interested in the Lincoln Bicentennial activities.
- Establish a Speakers' Bureau composed of Lincoln scholars and other persons knowledgeable about American history to lead Local Reading Clubs, seminars, symposia, and colloquia, and serve as resource persons for classroom teachers.
- Organize local musical tributes.
- Pursue establishing new historical markers at Petersburg and Richmond—Lincoln related sites.
- Request the consortium of social studies educators in Virginia to establish "Abraham Lincoln" as the theme of its 2009 Annual Conference.
- Develop opportunities for teachers, (e.g. Teacher Institutes and seminars), to become knowledgeable about Abraham Lincoln and to integrate his life as appropriate in classroom instruction consistent with the Standards of Learning.
- Promote "Abraham Lincoln" as the theme of National History Day in 2009.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration or partnership with History Hotline, A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts, and the Time Travelers Program.

#### **September 2008**

- Pursue partnerships with:
  - Comcast for the telecast of Bicentennial events, PSAs, vignettes, interviews, public affairs shows, newsmakers segments, sound bites for children, potential partnership with CSPAN, etc.
  - Verizon for digital historical markers and ring tones, \*L
  - Roanoke and Richmond symphonies, and university symphonies and others to perform A Lincoln Portrait: The Music of Abraham Lincoln by Aaron Copeland, et al.
  - The Lincoln Society of Virginia
  - Virginia Historical Society for exhibits, seminars, symposia, Local Reading Clubs, etc.
  - Library of Virginia for exhibits, seminars, symposia, Local Reading Clubs, etc.
  - Virginia Foundation for the Humanities for radio programs on With Good Reason, the Humanities Feature Bureau and the History Hotline; for programs at the Virginia Festival of the Book in 2009; and for articles in Virginia Vignettes distributed in newspapers and through the Department of Education to teachers and schools
- Maximize opportunities to partner with PBS and public radio, local television and radio stations, and the Virginia Forum.

#### **October 2008**

- Utilize the Commission's website to provide information and a bibliography concerning Lincoln, information concerning his Virginia connections, communications and publicity for programs and events during the commemorative period, and links to the National Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, other state committees, and respected Lincoln websites, museums, historical societies, etc.
- Re-activate the Commission's Calendar of Events to post Lincoln Bicentennial events planned or hosted by other organizations and the Commission, such as the Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony and Symposium.
- Organize and promote the creation of "Local Reading Clubs," which would read a selected book about Lincoln and, at an appointed time, gather to discuss the book under the leadership of an historian or other Lincoln specialists. A few recommended sources were Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln by Doris Kearns Goodwin; The Age of Lincoln by Orville Vernon Burton; Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography by Dr. William Lee Miller; and The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics by James Oakes.

**November—December 2008**

- Sponsor essay and art contests for K-12 students, with the winners announced February 2009.

**January 2009**

- Launch the commemoration with a gala musical tribute to Abraham Lincoln, followed with a “by invitation only reception, in which the King Commission presents its annual awards.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration or partnership with History Hotline, A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts, and the Time Travelers Program.
- Direct educational opportunities to students through collaboration with the Department of Education, SCHEV, and VCCS.
- Offer seminars, symposia, and colloquia featuring Lincoln scholars and specialists, and other persons with expertise in American history.

Initiate the Local Reading Clubs.

**February 2009**

- Offer seminars, symposia, and colloquia featuring Lincoln scholars and specialists, and other persons with expertise in American history.
- Promote exhibits pertaining to Abraham Lincoln in January and February 2009.
- Conclude the Bicentennial observance as follows:
  - Thursday, February 11, 2009—Annual Lincoln Day Ceremony at Lincoln Homestead Cemetery
  - Friday, February, 12, 2009—Reception at the Governor’s Mansion, hosted by the Governor
  - Saturday, February 13, 2009—Dinner