

FORTENBAUGH LECTURE

The Robert Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture is the outgrowth of a series of Civil War Conferences held annually at Gettysburg College from 1957 to 1961. Organized by Professor Fortenbaugh and his colleagues in the Department of History, the conferences attracted some of the outstanding historians of the nation. Papers presented at these conferences appeared in various scholarly publications such as C. Vann Woodward's *The Burden of Southern History* (1960). The proceedings of two conferences were published in their entirety in book form: *Why the North Won the Civil War* (1960), edited by David Donald, and *Politics and the Crisis of 1860*, (1961), edited by Norman A. Graebner.

The Fortenbaugh Lecture is presented each year on November 19, the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. It was sustained during its first two decades by an endowment contributed by Mr. and Mrs. Clyde B. Gerberich of Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania in honor of Professor Fortenbaugh, Mr. Gerberich's classmate (Gettysburg, 1913) and long-time friend, who taught history at their alma mater from 1923 until his death in 1959. The endowment has been substantially supplemented by the Harry D. Holloway Fund, a grant of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and benefits from the continuing contributions of friends of the Lecture and the College.

The first Fortenbaugh Lecture was delivered in 1962 by Bruce Catton; the twentieth by C. Vann Woodward in the 150th year of Gettysburg College in 1981. With the twenty-first lecture by Jacques Barzun, in 1982, the College commenced the annual publication of the lectures. The lectures published thus far are:

Jacques Barzun, *Lincoln's Philosophic Vision* (1982)

David Brion Davis, *The Emancipation Moment* (1983)

James M. McPherson, *Lincoln and the Strategy of Unconditional Surrender* (1984)

Eugene D. Genovese, *"Slavery Ordained of God": The Southern Slaveholders' View of Biblical History and Modern Politics* (1985)

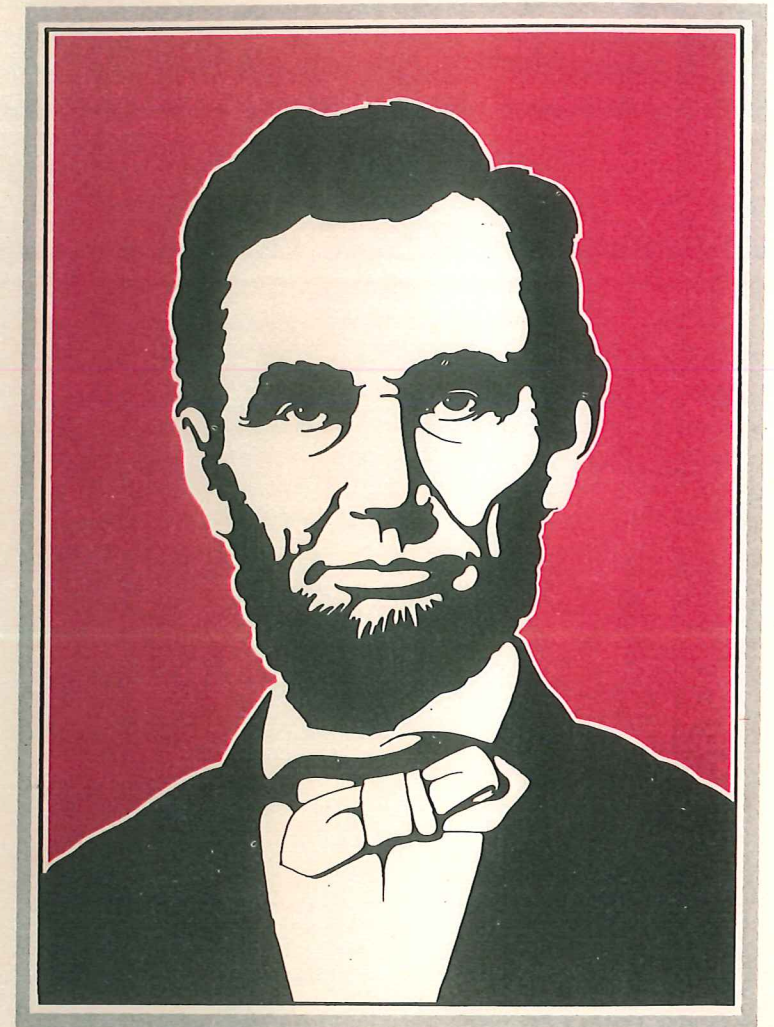
Oscar Handlin, *The Road to Gettysburg* (1986).

Marcus Cunliffe, *The Doubled Images of Lincoln and Washington* (1987).

26th ANNUAL

FORTENBAUGH MEMORIAL LECTURE

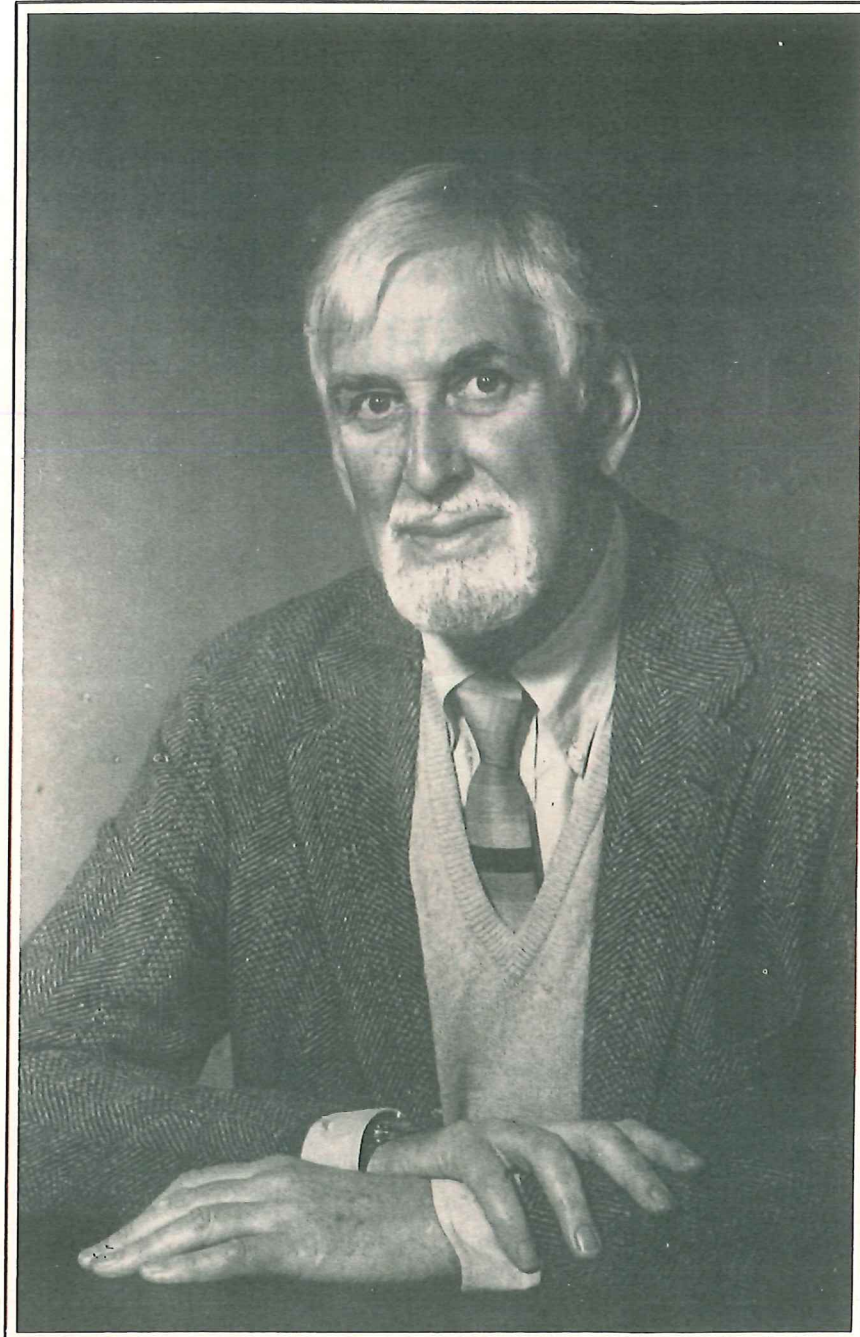
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE



THE DOUBLED IMAGES
OF LINCOLN
AND WASHINGTON

MARCUS CUNLIFFE

THE DOUBLED IMAGES
OF LINCOLN
AND WASHINGTON



Photograph by Will Lane, November 19, 1987, Gettysburg.

Marcus Cunliffe

THE DOUBLED IMAGES OF LINCOLN AND WASHINGTON

MARCUS CUNLIFFE
University Professor
The George Washington University

26th Annual
ROBERT FORTENBAUGH MEMORIAL LECTURE
Gettysburg College
1988

COPYRIGHT © 1988

Preface

European students of the history of the United States are producing works that Americanists everywhere must take into account. Yet, it is too early to say that the discipline abroad, as a whole, has come of age—with the chief exception of the United Kingdom. British scholars form the vanguard of European Americanists, and among the best known is Marcus Cunliffe. Not long ago Peter Parish, Director of the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London, described Cunliffe in a *New York Times Book Review* essay as “the most authentic and most creative British scholar of American studies yet to appear on the British academic scene.”¹ Befitting a “founding father” of a field of study, to cite another characterization,² Cunliffe has ranged widely over the terrain of American Studies. His work considers themes as diverse as literature, presidential politics, and military history, and encompasses both the first and the sixteenth presidents of the United States. For the bicentennial year of the founding of this nation under the Constitution it was “altogether fitting” that he should combine these last two interests to examine the doubled images of Lincoln and Washington, the “spiritual metamorphosis” of two men who vanished “into the American body politic.”

Spring, 1988
Farm by the Ford
Gettysburg

Gabor S. Boritt

¹Peter J. Parish, “American History Arrives in Europe,” *The New York Times Book Review*, February 3, 1985, p. 29.

²Michael J. Heale in *Guide to the Study of United States History Outside the U.S., 1945-1980*, Lewis Hanke, editor, “With the Assistance of Many Historians in Many Lands” (5 vols., White Plains, NY: Kraus, 1985), vol. 3, p. 368.

Two identical nuclear-power aircraft carriers are currently under construction at Newport News, Virginia, at a conjectured cost of \$3.5 billion apiece. They are proclaimed to be the biggest and the best of their kind. It seems altogether appropriate that they are to be named the *Abraham Lincoln* and the *George Washington*¹. For, to all appearances, Lincoln and Washington (or Washington and Lincoln? In many contexts the order is reversible) loom over the rest of American history, and even today are omnipresent images. Washington is on the dollar bill and on the twenty-five cent coin. Lincoln has pride of place on the lowly penny and the modestly substantial five-dollar note. Theirs are the monuments, lined up along the same axis as the Capitol, that greet the visitor to the District of Columbia—itsself named in honor of the nation's first President. The recent Vietnam Memorial is deliberately angled to point in one direction to the shrine of Lincoln and in the other to the soaring obelisk of the Washington Monument.

A few years ago they were represented together in profile on a postage stamp, Washington in pure white and Lincoln in complementary black. Their primal duality is emphasized in a mass of earlier visual renderings and inscriptions. Sometimes these renderings allotted different yet equal roles to the two men: Washington as father of his country, Lincoln as the nation's noblest son; Washington as founder of the Union, Lincoln as its savior. Sometimes the point was to suggest that they were incomparable except in their resemblance to each other. In fairly typical vein, a 1941 issue of *Lincoln Lore* declared: "No two names in American history are more often associated than those of Washington and Lincoln. When you hear one name pronounced, you expect to hear the other in almost the same breath. When you see a portrait of one, you expect to see a profile of the other facing it." The article goes on to list evident parallels, such as English ancestry, lack of regular or advanced education, youthful athletic prowess, experience as surveyors, deserved reputation for honesty, military and presidential involvements, and—needless to say—the closeness of their birthdays. "The period between February 12 and February 22," said *Lincoln Lore*, "has now become somewhat of a Festival of Patriotism, and more emphasis is being placed on the interval each year." Similar notions were voiced by Theodore Roosevelt in a presidential address at Arlington National Cemetery, on Decoration Day, 1902: "Washington and Lincoln... stand head and shoulders above all our other public men, and have by common consent won the right to this pre-eminence." Their birthdays were public holidays. But there should be "few such holidays. To increase their number is to cheapen them." In a further address at Valley Forge in June 1904, where Roosevelt's main

subject was George Washington, he remarked: "I am not here to say anything about Lincoln, but I do not see how any American can think of either of them without thinking of the other too, because they represent the same work." Roosevelt went on to draw matching lessons from the twin "landmarks of history," Gettysburg and Valley Forge, the first signifying a "single tremendous effort," the other a "long-sustained" endurance.²

The nearness has even led to a further tendency to collapse the two heroes into a single composite persona. Charlie Brown's sister, in a *Peanuts* cartoon, sets out to tell her class about George Washington, turns out to have sketched Lincoln instead, but carries on as if the mistake hardly matters. The writer Mary McCarthy recalls how, at school in the 1920s, teachers expected students to declare a preference for one man over the other—to determine, that is, whether "Mount Vernon [would] outshine a log cabin and a powdered wig a scraggly set of chin whiskers."³ In grade school, twenty years later, the budding poet Sylvia Plath also encountered and was bewildered by the supreme figures of the American pantheon:

Every morning, hands on hearts, we pledged allegiance to the Stars and Stripes... and sang songs full of powder smoke and patriotics to impossible, wobbly, soprano tunes. One fine, high song, "For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain," always made the scampi-sized poet in me weep. In those days I couldn't have told a fruited plain from a mountain majesty and confused God with George Washington (whose lamblike granny-face shone down at us ... from the schoolroom wall between neat blinders of white curls)...⁴

Commerce and Congress have added to the confusion by merging the two anniversaries into one super-sale event, the "Presidents' Birthday," in order to reawaken the American consumer from possibly unpatriotic post-Christmas torpor. For American children, the blurring may have another and quite old element. Little Sylvia Plath perceived George Washington as a sort of androgynous "granny", thanks to his spotless wig. The bewhiskered Lincoln could hardly be mistaken for a woman. Yet he is commonly described as covering his shoulders with a shawl, and as displaying a grandmotherly tenderness for youngsters in trouble. The duo are not merely fathers but parents.⁵



Chas. Shober, *Behold Oh America, Your Sons. The greatest among men, Chicago (1865)*. Lithograph, 9 x 11 in. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Are Washington and Lincoln then the only significant American heroes? Obviously not. For one thing, two other mammoth aircraft carriers, of the same "Nimitz" class, have been budgeted for. Washington D.C. is a city of monuments. In addition to our pair, Thomas Jefferson has his lavish marble rotunda, and dozens of other figures (nearly all male) are commemorated there. The earliest post-Revolutionary epic poem, Joel Barlow's *Vision of Columbus (1787)*, placed the great explorer at the center of his drama. He was, so to speak, the guest of honor, preceding Washington and Lincoln, in the "Columbian Ode" recited by Harriet Monroe in October 1892, to mark the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus' landfall, and the opening of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. A juvenile biography of the same epoch, *Abraham Lincoln: Plough-Boy, Statesman, Patriot*, began by announcing: "The names of three men—Christopher Columbus, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln—stand apart in the history of America. The first of the three... was an Italian, who discovered the New World. The second was an Englishman, who founded the United States. And the third was an American, who saved the Union and gave freedom to the slave."⁶ No doubt 1992 will be another big occasion for the sailor from Genoa.

Benjamin Franklin too has exercised a powerful hold over the American imagination, symbolizing North American rather than hemispheric characteristics. Franklin, we are told, came a close second to Washington as an exemplary figure in the nation's nineteenth-century schoolbooks; and he is still far from negligible in the reckoning.⁷ Parson Weems's famous *Life of Washington* (the one that introduces the story of the hatchet and the cherry-tree) has Ben Franklin on hand to greet Washington on arrival in heaven—Franklin having got there ahead of him—as if to indicate that Washington, “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen,” was not quite first in every such competition. Among conspicuously prominent presidents are Jefferson; Andrew Jackson, who forever tips his hat to the West in Clark Mills's bold equestrian statue, within full view of the White House; another soldier-president, Ulysses S. Grant; Theodore Roosevelt; his Democratic rival, Woodrow Wilson; and Teddy Roosevelt's distant cousin, another Democrat, Franklin D. Roosevelt. One could name also-rans, who in their day had thousands of devoted admirers. The “godlike” orator, Senator Daniel Webster, for example, appealed to the biographer, George Ticknor of New England, as second only to George Washington in his soaring dedication to the “great institutions of the country,” which reciprocally “have inspired and called forth the greatest efforts of his uncommon mind.” Webster was for Ticknor like the mythical giant Antaeus, who maintained his strength through renewed contact with his native soil.⁸

Jefferson and Teddy Roosevelt make a foursome with Washington and Lincoln in the epic heroes' gallery blasted out of a cliff by Gutzon Borglum and his workmen at Mount Rushmore, South Dakota, between the world wars. General Grant's prestige stood extraordinarily high up until his death in 1885, and beyond. If Washington had founded and Lincoln preserved the Union, Grant was the warrior who safeguarded it. A design for a medallion celebrating Grant's elevation to the presidency showed him profiled with Washington and Lincoln as the TRIUMVIRI AMERICANI (PATER 1789, SALVATOR 1861, CUSTOS 1869). Grant's funeral was staged as an event of awesome significance, on a scale to match the obsequies for his two great predecessors. When the coffin arrived by train in New York, according to Grant's popular biographer William Makepeace Thayer, the city “was arrayed in mournful emblems so elaborate that the market of black fabrics was exhausted. Nothing like it was ever witnessed in that city.” Thayer estimated that several hundred thousand people must have filed past the coffin while the dead man lay in state.⁹

Thayer, who also produced biographies of Washington and Lincoln (in addition to *Benjamin Franklin: From Printing Office to the Court of St. James*), strove to prove that Grant belonged from childhood with the other two. He retailed an anecdote of the ardently American ten-year-old Ulysses feeling obliged to fight (and overcome) a no less ardently pro-British Canadian cousin who had dared to call Washington a “rebel” and a “traitor”. Thayer depicted young Grant as a lover of sports, who had little formal learning, like Washington and Lincoln, and found “no school great enough to educate him,” save the school of hard knocks.¹⁰ As late as 1899, when the Hall of Fame was opened in Brooklyn, Grant tied with Lincoln in second place, just behind Washington, when Americans were invited to vote for their favorite heroes.

In addition to this edifying trilogy Thayer churned out a juvenile life of James A. Garfield, *From Log Cabin to White House*, likewise a bestseller, described in promotional literature as “pre-eminently suitable for presents, prizes, and school libraries.” Horatio Alger, another prolific rags-to-riches author, included among his self-help homilies *Abraham Lincoln, the Young Backwoods Boy; or, How a Young Rail Splitter Became President* (1883) and a companion treatment, *From Canal Boy to President; or, The Boyhood and Manhood of James A. Garfield* (1891)—the latter of these echoing the title of Thayer's already published *George Washington: His Boyhood and Manhood*.¹¹ Garfield not only shared with Lincoln early poverty and a yearning for self-betterment: he died from an assassin's bullet in 1881. Twenty years later the same fate caused the death of President William McKinley. He, Garfield, and Lincoln were bracketed as the trio of Republican martyrs. At his death, McKinley too received the accolade of a grand funeral and a mass of eulogies. The assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 brought something of the same shock, anger, and upsurge of communal emotion. Americans could all recall what they were doing when they first heard of the shooting of President Kennedy, in the same way their ancestors would always remember how the news from Ford's Theatre had crashed upon them. Little Jane Addams in Illinois, four-year-old daughter of a founding member of Lincoln's Republican party, recounts in her autobiography her father's grim intimation that “the greatest man in the world had died.” Henry James, beginning his author's career in Boston, confesses long afterward to a memory of “shame”: the “dawn of April 15th,” when Lincoln died, was also the dawn of James's twentieth birthday.¹²

The caisson that bore John F. Kennedy's coffin had been used for Franklin Roosevelt in 1945. In the sequence of American presidential

heroes, F.D.R. is frequently ranked today with Washington and Lincoln: by some criteria he even stands above them.¹³ If Borglum's Mount Rushmore were being executed after 1945, we may presume that a place would have been found for the second Roosevelt.

Nevertheless Lincoln and Washington do still stand apart from all others in the American pantheon, with the arguable exception of F.D.R. Franklin is undoubtedly famous and admired. Inventors and authors—Edison, Emerson, Whitman, Twain—are certainly accorded a place. But they do not quite attain the front rank. That, apparently, is reserved for political-cum-military leaders, who unlike Webster (or Lincoln's idol Henry Clay) actually reach the White House. Assassination, it is claimed, greatly enhances their placement; but, unlike Garfield and perhaps Kennedy, they must hold office for a reasonably long span. Other positive factors include, it is said, holding office during wartime, tallness (an obvious plus for Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and F.D.R.), pre-presidential authorship, energetic use of the veto power, and a high rate of cabinet turnover.¹⁴ However, these comparative presidential ratings, no matter how ingeniously calibrated, fail to fit the special case of George Washington and may tend to underpraise other figures, women among them.¹⁵

Among non-presidential candidates, military service alone is not enough. Some heroes, such as Robert E. Lee, have to sectional an appeal, though they may be revered in their own part of the country. Some, like Webster and Grant, are held to fall from grace, during or after their own lifetimes.

As for our Washington-Lincoln pair, it is worth noting that Borglum's original design, to be carved out of granite "needles" near to Mount Rushmore, was for two and only two gigantic standing figures—those (need we specify?) of Washington and Lincoln. Theodore Roosevelt vehemently disapproved of certain predecessors, among them Jefferson (this "scholarly, timid, and shifting doctrinaire"—the right person, one might think, to be on the never-quite-accepted \$2 bill). His primary division was between the "weak" presidents, among whom he singled out James Buchanan and William Howard Taft, and the "strong" (Lincoln, Jackson, and Washington, plus himself by implication). After Theodore Roosevelt's death his widow gently discouraged talk of a monument to be erected in his memory in the nation's capital. They had always felt, she said, that the city belonged to Washington and Lincoln, whose basic primacy should remain unchallenged.¹⁶

We may note parenthetically that this virtuous, self-denying stance was more honored by politicians in the breach than in the observance. However, a more important issue is to explain the stages by which Lincoln attained parity with Washington, and then came to be even more idolized by most Americans than his great predecessor.

The initial apparent puzzle is that Lincoln and his administration were often ridiculed and execrated. True, President Washington also met with criticism, especially in his second term, when he was accused of becoming a figurehead for Alexander Hamilton and other ambitious and unscrupulous Federalists.¹⁷ True also, a good deal of the abuse aimed at Abraham Lincoln was partisan. It is not astonishing that he was attacked by Southern spokesmen, by some Democrats and by Confederate sympathizers, as well as by Radical Republicans who charged that he was weak and indecisive, especially in handling slave emancipation and plans for Southern Reconstruction. (Is it so surprising that foreign magazines and newspapers such as *Punch* and the influential London *Times* should have echoed the diatribes of Lincoln's own countrymen?) Henry Watter-son, wartime editor of a Confederate army newspaper, naturally enough resorted to invective—calling the Union chieftain, for example, "a man without mind or manners," a "shapeless skeleton in a very tough, very dirty, unwholesome skin... born and bred a rail-splitter... and a rail-splitter still." Politically hostile Northern editors could be counted upon, perhaps, to label Lincoln a "half-witted usurper," or "the head ghoul in Washington." The historian-Democrat George Bancroft, no friend of Republicans, understandably if uncharitably called Lincoln "ignorant" and "incompetent." The impatient abolitionist orator Wendell Phillips, again understandably, could complain in 1862 that the President was a mere procrastinating politician or, as Phillips put it in a much-quoted phrase, a "first-rate *second-rate* man."

In retrospect such denunciations tend to cancel one another out, and so not to constitute fundamental criticism. How could the same man be both closet Copperhead *and* "an abolition orang-outang, a tyrant *and* "a weak-kneed man, a poor... horse that *must be led*"? Harder to deal with, though, are reactions to Lincoln from people whom one might have expected to be warmly appreciative. Lincoln's Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch, for instance, did admire the President, and said so in his memoirs. He also, however, described Lincoln as "unprepossessing, in manners ungraceful, in taste unrefined, or at least peculiar." The novelist Nataniel Hawthorne, visiting the capital in 1862 and having a chance to observe Lincoln, wrote an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, portions of



John Sartain, *Abraham Lincoln, The Martyr/Victorious*, after design of W. H. Hermans, New York (1865). Engraving, 13 7/8 x 18 1/8 in. Courtesy of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. From Harold Holzer, Gabor S. Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (1984).

which the editor suppressed or Hawthorne amended. Thus Hawthorne referred to the "uncouthness" of "Uncle Abe." In print this appeared as "the Western plainness of the President." The future philosopher William James, living in a genteel boarding-house in Cambridge as a Harvard undergraduate, spoke of a Miss Upham, the proprietress, as "declaiming against the vulgarity of President Lincoln." This was in 1862. A year later, Ralph Waldo Emerson confided to his journal:

Lincoln. We must accept the results of universal suffrage, & not try to make it appear that we can elect fine gentlemen. We shall have coarse men, with a fair chance of worth & manly ability.... You cannot refine Lincoln's taste, or extend his horizon; he will not walk dignifiedly through the traditional part of the President of America, but will pop out his head at each railroad station & make a little speech, & get into an argument with Squire A. and Judge B.; he will write letters to Horace Greeley, and any Editor or Reporter or saucy Party committee that writes to him, & cheapen himself. But this we must be ready for, & let the clown appear, & hug ourselves that we are well off, if we have got good nature, honest meaning, & fidelity to public interest, with bad manners, instead of an elegant roué & malignant self-seeker.¹⁸

This rather equivocal reaction is manifest too in the diary of George Templeton Strong, a high-minded New Yorker who served as a volunteer official of the Sanitary Commission and became fairly well acquainted with the President. An entry for January 1862 says of Lincoln: "He is a barbarian, Scythian, yahoo, or gorilla in respect of outside polish (for example, he uses "humans" as English for *homines*), but a most sensible, straightforward, honest old codger." By September Strong had decided that the "honest old codger" (he again used the phrase) was a failure: "His only special gift is fertility of smutty stories." On December 18, 1862, after the bungled battle of Fredericksburg, Strong was even more depressed: "A year ago we laughed at the Honest Old Abe's grotesque genial Western jocosities, but they nauseate us now." In May 1864, along with some words of praise, Strong again characterized Lincoln as a "poor old codger." In September, disagreeing with someone that the President has "neither ability or honesty," Strong still could not summon up overwhelming enthusiasm: "Lincoln is an honest man, of considerable ability (far below the first grade)." Again, as with Wendell Phillips, the notion that Lincoln is at best a good second-rater. And in March 1865, as Union victory drew near, the emphatically self-assured Strong revealed

himself nevertheless unable to form a judgment on Lincoln's Second Inaugural address—now universally regarded as a gloriously wise and moving utterance:

It is certainly most unlike the inaugurals of Pierce, Polk, Buchanan, or any of their predecessors; unlike any American state paper of this century. I would give a good deal to know what estimate will be put on it ten or fifty years hence.

On April 11th, immediately after the news of Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Strong was more ready to reach a high valuation, but still with hesitations. Many people, he said, "hold Lincoln a sensible, commonplace man, without special talent, except for story telling, and it must be admitted that he sometimes tells stories that [do] ... not become a gentleman and the holder of the exalted place. But his weaknesses are on the surface, and his name will be of high account fifty years hence...." Fifty years! Would it take so long for Lincoln's virtues to shine out over his deficiencies?¹⁹

In 1865, Washington's pre-eminence was beyond dispute, although it has been ingeniously suggested in recent years that Lincoln and men of his generation may have resented and sought to emulate the heroic primacy of the Founding Fathers, Washington above all.²⁰ In the 1860s and for long after, Washington's was *the* supreme standard of reference. Edward Everett, principal orator at the Gettysburg dedication in November 1863, had stumped the country in the previous decade, delivering a celebrated lecture on "The Character of Washington" to raise funds for the restoration of Mount Vernon. Public figures of every stripe, North and South, invoked his name, as did the advocates of temperance and other good causes. Washington's was the exalted standard for Americans to match. Often their fall from grace was expressed as a contrast: a plunging descent, it was said of Grant's administration, from Washington who could not tell a lie to Gilded Age politicians who could not tell the truth, or who could not tell the difference.²¹

In the predominant nineteenth-century picture, Washington embodied not only modesty and integrity, but dignity and poise. He was and in legend looked the part of officer-and-gentleman. Literally as well as figuratively, his was a commanding presence. Nathaniel Hawthorne, visiting the studio of the sculptor Hiram Powers, in Florence, Italy, noted Powers' observation that European royalty "have a certain look that distinguishes them from other people, and is seen in individuals of no lower rank." But Powers then commented that Washington had it, and

Hawthorne added: "I, too, recognize this look in the portraits of Washington,... a mild, benevolent coldness and apartness...." Washington was to his countrymen not just a gentleman, but a sort of prince among gentlemen.²² His contemporaries, while suspicious of overweening arrogance, expected a certain gravity of demeanor from the president. The chief magistrate epitomized, said John Adams, the "dignity of the commonwealth". James Madison believed that a great man in office would "refine and enlarge the public views."²³

Gentlemen, in Washington's and in Lincoln's time, did not indulge in colloquialisms or other familiarities. Geniality was approved on appropriate occasions, but not vulgar jocosity. Wit as an attribute of cultivation was desirable: humor, in the sense of cracking jokes, was not. Indeed, suspicion of levity among public men lingered on until after Lincoln's demise. Robert M. LaFollette of Wisconsin was greatly impressed by the seriousness of James A. Garfield, whom he heard speak in 1880:

He was ... of fine presence, dignity, and power; splendid diction and rather lofty eloquence. I do not remember a suggestion of humor.... I remember he impressed me more as a statesman and less as a politician than any of the men I had heard up to that time.²⁴

Lincoln, on the other hand, did not look the part, particularly to people who were bookish, cosmopolitan, or affluent. Even Walt Whitman and Nathaniel Hawthorne considered him ugly, at least when first glimpsed, and ungainly. Lincoln lacked "dignity" and "refinement." His eloquence was not immediately apparent, perhaps because he did not assume the manner deemed correct for public performance. His comicality gave offense, especially when the President was alleged to have cracked jokes among the dead and dying. Worse still, Lincoln's jokes were rumored often to be "coarse" or "smutty." Whitman, living in Washington in 1863, tried to reassure friends that the President was actually an admirable person "underneath his outside smutched mannerism, and stories from third-class country barrooms (it is his humor)." In later years Whitman grew to adore Lincoln. He reminisced on how stories about the President were invented and disseminated in the wartime capital by government clerks, "full half of whom had nothing to do. All day long these boys would loaf about, talk together, invent stories—invent filthy stories: their minds ran upon such themes.... Then in a day or two the story would turn up in the papers foisted on Lincoln ... thenceforth to take a place among the 'facts' of his life."

But there is evidence that some of the stories *were* in Lincoln's repertoire; and that sometimes they were deemed not suitable for polite company. A staff officer at McClellan's headquarters, where Lincoln dined in March 1862, informed his father that the President "told a story at our mess-table, which was very funny, but too broad to repeat here."²⁵ On the whole this officer, Harvard-educated and a supporter of General McClellan, did not care for Lincoln. Nor, as we have seen, did other Boston Brahmins such as Wendell Phillips. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., and his son Henry, passed on rather negatively one-sided recollections of the conduct of President Lincoln, whom Henry Adams portrayed at the inaugural ball as a maladroit figure as worried by social etiquette as the self-made businessman at a Boston dinner party in William Dean Howells's novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham*.²⁶

George Templeton Strong, who knew Lincoln better than these people, was increasingly disposed to admire the President for honesty, perseverance, and a certain shrewdness he could not quite define. Strong's recurrent epithet, "the old codger," like the widespread nicknames "Old Abe" and "Honest Abe," seemed to have combined affection with disparagement, or at least a vein of mockery, of which Lincoln himself was well aware. "Abe" was an undignified contraction. "Honest Abe" could be taken for a tradesman's slogan. "Old" suggested decrepitude as much as sagacity. The gradual spread of "Father Abraham," we may think, represented a deepening approval of the man Hawthorne visualized as a Yankee schoolteacher.²⁷

The murder of Lincoln, stunning and horrifying though it was, did not immediately persuade the entire population that they had lost a great leader, still less that he was on a level with Washington. Some prescient observations were made by Karl Marx, in an article contributed to a Vienna newspaper in 1862, following the Emancipation Proclamation: "In the history of the United States and in the history of humanity, Lincoln occupies a place beside Washington."²⁸ But the great mass of reaction, and reinterpretation, naturally came after the assassination in April 1865. Some of the Radical Republicans were almost cynical. In what was supposed to be a eulogy, Wendell Phillips declared that "God ... has withdrawn [Lincoln] at the moment when ... the nation needed a sterner hand for the work God has given to do." For Phillips and his associates, "the removal of a man too great and too trusted is often a natural gain in times like these." Zachariah Chandler, writing to his wife a week after Lincoln's death, spoke of Andrew Johnson's accession as "a godsend to the country." God had retained Lincoln as long as he had a use, then "put a bet-



Cover for *The New Yorker*, February 15, 1988, by Lee Lorenz. 11 x 8 1/2 in. Courtesy of *The New Yorker*.

ter man in his place."²⁹ Charles William Eliot, nephew of George Ticknor and future president of Harvard, was touring in Europe with a family party. He wrote home to express his shock at the murder and produce a slightly grudging epitaph:

I don't like to hear Lincoln's name put too near Washington's, but his character seems to me a rough and ungraceful but truly noble growth of republican institutions. You can count on your fingers the names which History will rank with his.... He did not lead the people—he rather followed the wisest and best thought of the people, and his successors will do likewise.

Henry Adams, also going round Europe with a family party, sent a peculiarly flippant letter from Italy to his brother Charles Francis Adams, Jr., (May 10, 1865):

I have already buried Mr. Lincoln under the ruins of the Capitol, along with Caesar, and I don't mean this merely as a phrase. We must have our wars, it appears, and our crimes, as well as other countries. I think Abraham Lincoln is rather to be envied in his death, as in his life somewhat; and if he wasn't as great as Caesar, he shows the same sort of tomb.

Ellen Sturgis Hooper came with her sister Marian (the future Mrs. Henry Adams) to Washington, D.C. in May 1865 to see the "Grand Review" of troops. Neither young woman seems to have written about Lincoln, except for Ellen's mention of a talk with a devoutly religious ex-slave, whose feelings she seems to respect rather than wholeheartedly to share: "like an old prophetess... her direct vision of this army that was coming—her faith that warmed your heart. There was... an intense feeling about Lincoln—and Faith that, though he was taken, the Lord never did his work by halves...."³⁰

Some such reservations persisted. Not surprisingly, a few Southerners continued for a while to vilify Lincoln. As late as 1871, the South Carolina poet Paul Hamilton Hayne could refer to the dead President as a "gawky, coarse, ...whisky drinking ... Blackguard...."³¹ The English critic Matthew Arnold, discussing the lack of "distinction" in the United States of the 1880s, allowed that Washington and Alexander Hamilton possessed that quality. But they, he maintained, belonged to the "pre-American age." Lincoln, while "shrewd," "humorous," "honest" and the like, indeed, "a man deserving the most sincere esteem ... has not distinction."³² Arnold's ruling exasperated some Americans, Mark Twain among them: was humorlessness a sign of ordinariness? Others however agreed

with the verdict, if not always openly. A review of Henry Cabot Lodge's new biography of George Washington in *Harper's Monthly* (October 1889; "Editor's Study," presumably by the novelist-critic William Dean Howells, who had in 1860 produced a campaign biography of Lincoln) warned readers, "if we would be just, not to regard even Lincoln as the peer of Washington; for Washington was all that Lincoln was..., with a vast breadth of military ... achievement beside and beyond. Both men centered in themselves the national love, but Washington was as the father where Lincoln was the brother of his country." This may be regarded as a sort of transitional formulation, carrying also the rather conservative verdict that while Washington (the opposite of Lincoln) was "a thorough republican, he was not socially a democrat."

Henry Adams's brother Brooks, a friend of Theodore Roosevelt, continued to think Washington the ideal American leader; he explained this view in two 1903 lectures at the Naval War College. Up to his dying day in 1893, the Brahmin historian Francis Parkman deplored Lincoln's displacement of Washington as a hero for schoolboys. The California novelist Gertrude Atherton, who wrote with gushing admiration of Alexander Hamilton (in *The Conqueror*), confessed she did not extend this emotion to Lincoln: indeed, "I hate the sight of him." Woodrow Wilson, eventually a professed devotee of Lincoln, took some time to arrive at this position. In 1894, offering his opinion on "great Americans," he said that Lincoln's mind never quite lost "the vein of coarseness that marked him grossly when a youth."³³

However, Lincoln's own reputation began to soar. As soon as they got word of his death people almost unconsciously associated his memory with that of Washington—and not to Lincoln's detriment. George Templeton Strong, on hearing of the assassination, instinctively looked up the records of Trinity Church, where he was a vestryman, to find what procedure had been followed when Washington died. A Presbyterian minister in another New York church asserted: "No-one since Washington is so enshrined in the hearts of the people." Henry George, working in San Francisco as a young typesetter, reacted immediately, describing the dead president as "the martyr of Freedom.... the Proclamation of Emancipation signed with the name and sealed with the blood of *Abraham Lincoln* will remain a landmark.... his memory will be cherished with that of Washington." Colonel Selden Connor (later Governor of Maine) was in a Washington hospital, recovering from wounds, at the moment of Lincoln's funeral. In a letter to his sister he said: "the sound of minute guns booming a hoarse requiem for the nation's highest, most

loved and honored man, now cold in death, comes in at my open window.... President Lincoln was a great and good man, and not even the great and good Washington deserved more of the country." Connor added the consolatory epitaph that was in the minds of admirers as well as detractors: "the impression prevails, and it is certainly my own, the nation will benefit by the martyrdom of her great son."³⁴



Max Rosenthal, *The Last Moments of Abraham Lincoln/President of the United States*, after design of Joseph Hoover, Philadelphia (1865). Hand-colored lithograph, 23 x 17 7/8 in. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. From Harold Holzer, Gabor S. Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (1984).

There is an element of ritual hyperbole in such declarations. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*: the impulse is to cover the memory of the deceased in fragrance, to pretend that he had been as loved in life as the obituaries said. In Lincoln's case several separate factors converged to ennoble his reputation. His violent death at the war's very end, coming on Good Friday, solemnized and almost sanctified him. The insistence of the sermonizers (and more particularly of the Radical Republicans) that the death was opportune, sounds perhaps insincere or perfunctory. But Lincoln's passing had in fact a curiously profound utility for Americans, at least those in the North, seeking to justify the war, which had at times seemed a shapeless, interminable contest. Bishop Matthew Simpson of the Methodist Episcopal Church, delivering the invocation at the White House funeral ceremony on April 19, 1865, produced a compelling if abstract

reason for Lincoln's passing: "Thou hast shown that our Republican government is the strongest upon the face of the earth." The historian John Lothrop Motley told a friend: "I have got over my grief for [Lincoln's] murder in the conviction that he has gained in this sudden departure. His work was done. His wise cheerfulness which the vulgar mistook for vulgarity, his patience and his magnificent simplicity and truth are no longer absolutely indispensable to us."³⁵ Lincoln, apparently, perished in order that the Union might live. In Selden Connor's words: The survived republic is his ... monument." He had gone to Heaven, there to be greeted by Washington. He had also achieved a type of spiritual metamorphosis, vanishing into the American body politic. Somehow this mysterious apotheosis accounted for his death, explained the war, concluded the dreadful bookkeeping of that conflict, and aligned him with the nation's other *Pater Patriae*. "Old Abe" was in more ways than one now Father Abraham. On Washington's death too, his memorialists had been almost unanimous in stressing the greatness of his accomplishment, and that his task was done.

To this tally we may add the consideration, already referred to in connection with Theodore Roosevelt, that as the role of the presidency began to be re-interpreted in the direction of activist leadership, Lincoln, once perceivable as a "despot", emerged, along with Washington (and a newly re-assessed Andrew Jackson) as hero-models for chief magistrates of the Roosevelt and Wilson stamp. Ambitious, politically minded Americans endeavored now to "get right with Lincoln" as they (Lincoln included) had hitherto claimed kinship with Washington. Teddy Roosevelt, at his inauguration in March 1905, wore a ring containing a strand of Lincoln's hair.³⁶ The Republicans displayed a large Lincoln portrait at every "sizeable campaign rally." But the Democrats also sought to align themselves with Lincoln as well as Washington, as early as Grover Cleveland's 1884 campaign. Free-silver Populists laid claim to Lincoln, with Washington and Jefferson, in electioneering material of 1896. Wilson, Roosevelt and Taft all did so in the 1912 presidential election campaign—the Democrats, like the Populists, emphasizing too their affiliation not just with Washington but with Thomas Jefferson.

Lincoln appealed to Theodore Roosevelt as a "strong" president, then, and that vitalized image allured Woodrow Wilson as well. But even while he was alive Lincoln began to symbolize another and profounder side of America, that of the common man. The message had indeed already been spread by the followers of "Old Hickory" Jackson and "Old Tip" Harrison. "Abe" the "Rail-Splitter" was assumed to prove attractive to

a sizeable proportion of a mass electorate—to more, that is, than would be repelled by such maneuvers. But the contrary assumptions of loftiness, almost of regality, remained strong so far as the White House was concerned. Politics was one thing, statesmanship another and higher matter. While Lincoln held office, his behavior did not entirely please upright people such as Emerson, who in theory were wholly committed to democracy, but who wanted it to be “refined”, not “vulgar” democracy.

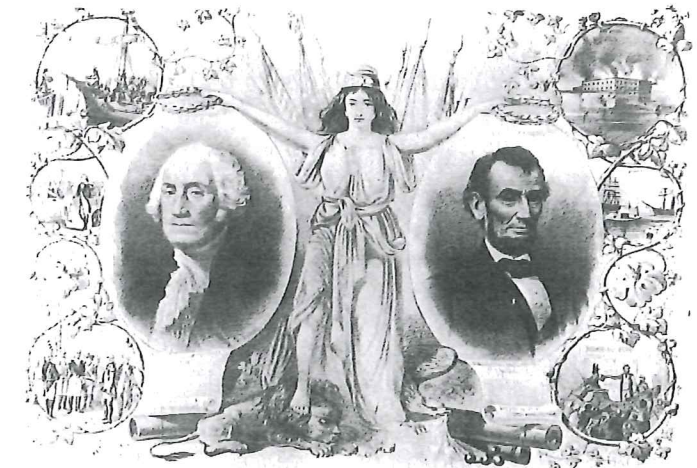
Expectations were altering, and Lincoln’s conduct helped the process along. The formulae of Washington-Lincoln equivalence sometimes sought to “gentrify” Lincoln, and sometimes to “popularize” Washington. Lincoln’s son Robert strenuously objected to the statue of his father by George G. Barnard (completed in 1917) which portrayed a gangling figure inelegantly clad. Biographers sought to present George Washington as a fiercely “human” being, fond of wine, women and song and capable of profanity when under stress.³⁷ But these never entirely pleased the public. Instead, a doubling of compatible unlikes emerged. It was signalled in “Abraham Lincoln, a Horatian Ode,” composed soon after the assassination by Richard Henry Stoddard. Stoddard spoke of Lincoln as his “country’s father,” and as a man of the “People”—“No gentleman, like Washington.” Many another comparison, not seeking to defame either man, is nevertheless offered as a contrast. In a 1928 synagogue address, Washington is “the statesman, the scholar, the gentleman, the aristocrat and patrician, the scion of the blue-blooded hierarchy of the South,” while “Father Abraham” figures as “farm hand, boatman, poor country lawyer with no family connections.” But “both were needed ... God-sent and divinely ordained.” The country was “founded by Washington, and recemented and saved by Lincoln.” A 1942 pamphlet reiterates the contrast, and the double need, for the “aristocrat” and the “commoner.” Young Henry George had caught this sense of a “democratic” Lincoln, as distinct perhaps from a “republican” Washington, back in April 1865: “No other system would have produced him; through no crowd of courtiers could such a man have forced his way; his feet would have slipped on the carpets of palace stairs, and Grand Chamberlains ordered him back.”³⁸

Even where the circumstances are clearly very different, a basically similar rhetoric of public-spirited, patriotic, incorruptible, ultimately exhausting service is evoked, together with images of reconciliation. The Georgia journalist and orator Henry W. Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, delivered a sensationally popular speech in New York in 1886, hailing the re-united North and South and lauding Lincoln as “the first

typical American, the first who comprehended within himself all the strength and gentleness, all the majesty and grace of this republic.... He was the sum of Puritan and Cavalier, for in his ardent nature were fused the virtues of both, and in the depths of his great soul the faults of both were lost.” The subject of this panegyric may not have recognized himself in it, any more than George Washington might have concurred with the occasional efforts of the Wisconsin historian Frederick Jackson Turner to recast him as a frontier expansionist.³⁹ But it picks up a notion advanced as early as July 1865, by James Russell Lowell. His Harvard Commemoration Ode recalled the memory of “our Martyr-Chief,” shaped by Nature from the “sweet clay” of the “unexhausted West,” owing nothing at all to Europe,

Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,
New birth of our new soil, the first American.

Though a cosmopolitan Easterner Lowell was proud of his nationality, especially when he felt it impugned by foreigners. His vision of Lincoln is someone as far removed as possible from Europe and its hierarchies—a man necessarily of humble origins, self-made, irreverent on many subjects, and therefore of the West.



Columbia's noblest Sons

Kimmel & Forster, *Columbia's noblest Sons*, New York (1865). Lithograph, 19 1/4 x 13 1/2 in. Courtesy of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. From Harold Holzer, Gabor S. Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (1984).

If Lincoln was the "first" true American, what of Washington, "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen"? In some respects the Lincoln claim supersedes that of Washington. Washington's primacy, it might seem, is temporal. In fact, if Lowell and Grady (and Matthew Arnold) are correct, Washington is not fully an American: he is half-English. Or he is untypical, unrepresentative because he is an "aristocrat." Or his great stature has perhaps been equalled, even surpassed, by subsequent epoch-making circumstances. This has undeniably happened in relation to Lincoln. Over the years, the illustrations that showed Lincoln a newcomer to Heaven, brought into elysium by a benevolently omnipotent Washington, yield to depictions of equal status, and by degrees to scenes in which Lincoln holds the foreground. Washington's presence, in such compositions, is commonly suggested by a shadowy head-and-shoulders bust, as if to suggest that the prominent, "living" Lincoln pays dutiful tribute to an honored ancestor, yet is his own master. Another formula avoids a direct comparison. Washington is assumed to be the unchallenged leader of his own era, the eighteenth century; Lincoln, for instance in an essay by Charles R. Brown, dean of the Yale Divinity School, is singled out as *The Greatest Man of the Nineteenth Century* (1922).

George Washington the man has been characterized as one of the three chief American wonders—the others being Niagara Falls and the Brooklyn Bridge. Not everyone would accept that estimate, or confine the tally to three. Other wonders have been created or discovered with the passage of time. Lincoln's friend William Herndon once told him how awed he had been by Niagara, and asked Lincoln for his opinion of the Falls. Lincoln supposedly answered: "The thing that struck me most forcibly ... was, where in the world did all that water come from?" The humorous expression is characteristic, and pleasing to us, for we are more inclined to appreciate habitual joking than were public figures of the Washington era. Equally characteristic is Lincoln's concealment from Herndon that he had actually himself been stirred by the sight of Niagara, above all by the thought that the water had been flowing and falling since long before Columbus, or Christ, or Moses, or Adam. He had reflected that the physical aspects—the tonnage of water, the noise and spray and rainbows—were not what drew people in their millions to gaze upon Niagara Falls. What people made of the spectacle, their inner responses and emotions, provided the real meaning.⁴⁰

He would have considered that in the time-span of Niagara, neither he nor Washington loomed very large; also that there is something sub-

jective, fluctuating, almost factitious about the making and unmaking of historical reputations. If he were able to listen in on today's evaluations of himself and of Washington, F.D.R. and other heroes, from the perch above the clouds provided by the printmakers—if, that is, he had not better things to do—he might conclude, with a wry smile, that there is nothing substantial or permanent in the usual palaver about myths, images, legends, ratings, and so on.

But he would be wrong, though endearingly so. Despite the contriving and commercialism, and sometimes the cant and corniness of the image-makers, there is a genuine substance to the nation's leading heroes. Washington and Lincoln are with good reason first equal, although with varying emphasis on what constitutes firstness. There is certainly a place in America's appreciation for "aristocrats," in the White House as elsewhere, provided that they are "democratic aristocrats." There is a place too for "aristocratic democrats"—the natural aristocracy, the representative men, the uncommon people of common origins whom Jefferson and Emerson struggled to identify.⁴¹ George Washington was a gentleman, yes, but never an aristocrat in the full European understanding of the word. Aristocrats do not keep meticulous accounts of expenditure in their own handwriting, and submit them to their legislative superiors, as Washington did, with a bourgeois punctilio worthy of Ben Franklin. Nor of course was Lincoln the "uncouth" yokel pictured by contemporaries. His qualities of modesty, sadness and sensibility, and his extraordinary gift of language, have proved profoundly appealing. In both cases this appeal transcends national boundaries. If Lincoln figures as the Great Emancipator, Washington's decision to free the Mount Vernon slaves is an honorable prelude.

The Washington-Lincoln images are doubled because in the final analysis we perceive a substantial overlap, after allowing for the obvious large generational differences. The pairing indicates a tradition of American reverence for dead heroes (less for live ones) that has been modified over the decades, but that does not really entail a repudiation of old demigods. Lincoln and Washington jointly serve to remind Americans of cherished beliefs in country, courage, continuance.

Notes

1. *Washington Post*, September 26, 1987, p. A.11.
2. *Lincoln Lore*, no. 621 (March 3, 1941); *Address and Papers of Theodore Roosevelt*, ed. Willis Fletcher Johnson (New York, Unit Book Publishing Co., 1909), pp. 48-49, 147-148, 208-210. *Lincoln Lore* has raised its contributions to a significant scholarly level, under the editorship of Mark E. Neely, Jr., director of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum, Fort Wayne, Indiana, which houses an excellent collection of visual and other research material. There are some paired Washington-Lincoln prints in *The Lincoln Image*, by Harold Holzer, Gabor S. Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr. (New York, Scribner's, 1984). In assembling visual representations, I am much indebted to Mark Neely and the Warren Library and Museum; to Gabor S. Boritt; and, for research assistance and photographic work, to Nan Thompson Ernst and Sarah Brown. I am indebted to Keith Melder, National Museum of American History, and to Mary Ison, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
3. Mary McCarthy, "Personal History," *New Yorker*, July 14, 1986, pp.34-46.
4. Sylvia Plath, *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* (New York, Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 52-53. I owe this reference, with other interesting material, to Mary V. Dearborn, *Pocahontas's Daughters: Gender and Ethnicity in American Culture* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 87-88. And see Edmond S. Meany, *Lincoln Esteemed Washington* (printed and published Seattle, Frank McCaffrey, 1933), p. 5: "The American People love to honor Lincoln and Washington above all their National Heroes — not least in the annual ceremonies of commemoration in our second month's precious fortnight, containing the pair of birthday anniversaries."
5. Looking back on his boyhood in upstate New York the novelist Henry James recalled a venerable great aunt, "a model of antique spinsterhood" who bore a "striking resemblance to the portraits, the most benignant, of General Washington. She might have represented the mother, no less adequately than he represented the father, of their country." *Notes of a Son and Brother*, chapter 13 (1914; reprinted in Henry James, *Autobiography*, ed. Frederick W. Dupee, New York, Criterion Books, 1956), p. 508. A print to commemorate the 28th annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (1896) shows five etherealized figures, mantled in skirtlike robes. George Washington is in the center with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton on either side, and flanking females to represent Utah and Wyoming (first to confer womanhood suffrage). See Martha Banta, *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 547-548.
6. William G. Rutherford, *Abraham Lincoln: Plough-Boy, Statesman, Patriot* (London: Sunday School Union, n.d.) p. 9.
7. Ruth Miller Elson, *Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), pp. 190-191.
8. David B. Tyack, *George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 213-216.
9. William M. Thayer, *From The Tan-Yard to the White House*, (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1885), p. 402.
10. William M. Thayer, *From the Tan-Yard to the White House*, p. 32-38. In July 1865 old Winfield Scott sent a telegram to Grant, "from the oldest general to the ablest." Grant's biographer, William S. McFeely (*Grant: A Biography*), New York, W.W. Nor-

- ton, 1981, p. 235) justly calls this a graceful tribute. It may however also carry another allusion, rather more in keeping with Scott's reputation for vanity. In apocryphal legend, Frederick the Great once presented a sword to the comparatively youthful George Washington, with the same inscription. If as seems likely Scott was drawing upon this well-known old story, he was paying a double compliment: to Grant as a second Washington, and to himself as another Frederick the Great.
11. John G. Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man: Changing Concepts of Success in America* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 96, 266; Richard M. Huber, *The American Idea of Success* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1971, reprint Pushcart Press, 1987), pp. 50-52.
 12. Chapter two of Addams's autobiography, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910), where this memory is preserved, is entitled "The Influence of Lincoln." See Allen F. Davis, *American Heroines: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 163-164; and Henry James, *Autobiography*, pp. 490-491. Kennedy's funeral procession passed near to the Lincoln Memorial on the way to Arlington National Cemetery. The marchers could catch sight of Daniel Chester French's seated figure of Lincoln: "many... [looked] upward to the brooding head of stone. The band fell silent as it rounded the shrine; only the drums were heard." *Four Days: The Historical Record of the Death of President Kennedy* (New York, American Heritage, 1964), p. 117. A cartoon by Bill Mauldin (p. 133) showed French's Lincoln huddled forward, hands over eyes in grief.
 13. Two polls of presidential greatness, conducted in 1948 and 1962 by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., ranked the top figures in the same order"
 1. Abraham Lincoln
 2. George Washington
 3. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 4. Woodrow Wilson
 5. Thomas JeffersonA subsequent, more elaborate ordering asked questions about prestige, strength, activity, idealism, practicality, and flexibility. The combined scores of these rated the top five as: 1. Lincoln 2. F.D. Roosevelt 3. Washington 4. Jefferson 5. Theodore Roosevelt. (Gary M. Maranell, "The Evaluation of Presidents: An Extension of the Schlesinger Polls," *Journal of American History* 57 (June 1970), pp. 104-113; and see Dale Keith Simonton, *Why Presidents Succeed: A Political Psychology of Leadership* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987). Such calculations tend to place Washington in a somewhat artificial "Presidential" category, and so distort his standing on some more generalized "hero" level.
 14. Simonton, pp. 188-195.
 15. Oddly enough, not a criticism to be leveled against W.M. Thayer. His publications encompassed one called *Women Who Win*, and one based on the life of Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College.
 16. Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography* (New York, Macmillan, 1913; reprint New York, Da Capo, 1985), pp. 378-379, and letter to G.O. Trevelyan, June 19, 1908, cited in John P. Roche and Leonard W. Levy, *The Presidency* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1964), pp. 20-22. The Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt anecdote (for which reference, thanks to Peter Thompson) occurs in a lecture, "The City of Washington and Lincoln," delivered by Charles Moore at the Cosmos Club, Washington D.C. (minutes of the 206th meeting of the Columbia Historical Society, February 1923).
 17. See for example Tom Paine's "Letter to George Washington" (Paris, July 30, 1796) and James D. Tagg, "Benjamin Franklin Bache's Attack on George Washington," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 100 (April 1976), pp. 191-230.

18. Watterson's attacks are cited in Michael Davis, *The Image of Lincoln in the South* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1971), p. 162. For other criticisms quoted here, see Roy P. Basler, *The Lincoln Legend: A Study in Changing Conceptions* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1935), pp. 52-57; David H. Donald, "Died of Democracy," in Donald, ed., *Why the North Won the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1960), p. 86; Dixon Wecter, *The Hero in America: A Chronicle of Hero Worship* (New York, Scribner's, 1941; reprint Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1963 — a work that has retained much of its sparkle), p. 243; Don E. Fehrenbacher, "The Anti-Lincoln Tradition," in *Lincoln in Text and Context: Collected Essays* (Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 197-213. Contemporary references to Wendell Phillips' jibe ("first-rate second-rate man") include Karl Marx' 1862 article, (see footnote 28; Sideman, p. 205), and remarks by the visiting English journalist Edward Dicey, whose *Six Months in the Federal States* (1863) did not stint criticism of Lincoln (see Dicey, *Spectator of America*, ed. Herbert Mitgang, London, Gollancz, 1972, pp. 90-97). McCulloch's comments are in his *Men and Measures of Half a Century* (New York, Scribner's, 1889), p. 188. Hawthorne's remarks on Lincoln in 1862 are discussed in Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Letters, 1857-1864*, ed. Thomas Woodson et al. (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1987) pp. 456-462. "I should not wonder at many mistaking Abe Lincoln the first two or three years in Washington": Whitman's reminiscence of the confusing wartime atmosphere, in Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol. 5, *April 8 - September 14, 1889* (Carbondale, Southern Illinois Press, 1964), pp. 361-362. William James's boarding-house conversations are recorded in Henry James, *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914), reprinted in *Autobiography*, ed. Frederick W. Dupee (New York, Criterion Books, 1956), p. 328. Comments by Radical Republicans are cited also in Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union*, vol. 2, *War Becomes Revolution* (New York, Scribner's, 1960), e.g. pp. 169, 301, and in T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1941, reprint 1960), *passim*. June ? 1863, *Emerson in His Journals*, ed. Joel Porte, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 511; and see p. 526 for an April 1865 verdict rather more positive.
19. *Diary of George Templeton Strong*, ed. Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas (4 vols., New York, The Macmillan Co., 1952), vol. 3, *The Civil War, 1860-1865*, pp. 204, 256, 281-282, 442, 484, 561, 580.
20. The principal speculative presentations along these lines are: George B. Forgie, *Patricide in the House Divided: A Psychological Interpretation of Lincoln and His Age* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1979); Dwight G. Anderson, *Abraham Lincoln: The Quest for Immortality* (New York, Knopf, 1982); and Charles B. Strozier, *Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings* (New York, Basic Books, 1982). All three build upon the suggestion of Edward Wilson's *Patriotic Gore* (1962), that Lincoln's early Springfield Lyceum address (1838) revealed his own unconsciously inordinate ambitions in the guise of warning the nation against the dangers of tyrannical rule. To a varying extent, all are likewise intrigued by the notion that Lincoln may have been led to ponder the Washington legend by a youthful reading of Mason Locke Weems' *Life of Washington* (1800; enlarged in further editions to incorporate the famous hatchet-and-cherry-tree anecdote). These theories have appealed to some scholars: see for example John P. Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984), pp. 303-312. Forgie's interpretation has in general found more favor than that of Anderson, and rather more than Strozier's. Somewhat skeptical comments on these versions of psychohistory are offered in Don E. Fehrenbacher, "The Deep Reading of Lincoln," in *Lincoln in Text and Context: Collected Essays* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1987), pp.

- 214-227; Richard N. Current, "The Myth of the Jealous Son," in his *Arguing With Historians: Essays on the Historical and the Unhistorical* (Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1987), pp. 52-60; Marcus Cunliffe (on Anderson) in Gabor S. Boritt and Norman Forness, eds., *The Historians' Lincoln: Pseudohistory, Psychohistory, and History* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1988); and in *Lincoln Lore*, nos. 1776 and 1777 (February and March 1987).
21. The same ironic humor was applied to the Nixon administration. And the contrast has not quite lost its force in 1987. Calvin Trillin, poking fun at the "spin-control" manipulators of our era, imagines a new version of the cherry-tree legend; "I cannot tell a lie," says little George. "A cherry-tree was chopped down." Calvin Trillin, *If You Can't Say Something Nice* (New York, Ticknor & Fields, 1987). Washington's renown is analyzed by numerous historians, including Marcus Cunliffe, Daniel J. Boorstin, Lawrence J. Friedman, Peter Karsten, and Michael Kammen. Among recent contributions, see Garry Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment* (New York, Doubleday, 1984), and Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York, Free Press, 1987).
22. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The French and Italian Notebooks*, ed. Thomas Woodson (Centenary Edition, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1980), pp. 312-313. The meeting took place in June 1858. On Washington and gentry standards, see Robert H. Wiebe, *The Opening of American Society* (New York, Knopf, 1984), pp. 41-47.
23. Wiebe, p. 42.
24. Robert M. LaFollette, *Autobiography* (1911), pp. 16-17 cited in Marcus Cunliffe, *The Presidency* (third edition, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 200. As late as 1987, Representative Morris K. Udall, well known for his repartee, and a 1976 candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, suggested the disadvantages of humor by producing a book with the title *Too Funny to be President*.
25. Cunliffe, *Presidency*, p. 201; Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden*, vol. 5, *July 16 - October 13, 1888*, (reprint New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 1961), pp. 542-543; *War Diary and Letters of Stephen Minot Weld, 1861-1865* (1912; second edition, Boston, Massachusetts Historical Society, 1979), p. 83; and George B. Hutchinson, *The Ecstatic Whitman: Literary Shamanism and the Crisis of the Union* (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1986), pp. 1-21. Some fairly broad instances of Lincoln humor are provided in Charles B. Strozier, *Lincoln's Quest for Union: Public and Private Meanings* (New York, Basic Books, 1982), pp. 214-218; and see the entry on "Humor" in Mark E. Neely, Jr.'s excellent *Abraham Lincoln Encyclopedia* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1982; reprint New York, Da Capo Press, 1984), pp. 153-155.
26. "Abraham Lincoln and the Adams Family Myth," *Lincoln Lore* no. 1667 (January 1977); Martin Duberman, *Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886* (1961; reprint Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 256-257, 387-388; Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1918), p. 106. At the ball, Henry Adams saw "a long, awkward figure; a plain, ploughed face; a mind, absent in part, and in part evidently worried by white kid gloves...above all, a lack of apparent force."
27. "Unquestionably, Western man though he be, and Kentuckian by birth, President Lincoln is the essential representative of all Yankees.... There is no describing the lengthy awkwardness nor the uncouthness of his movement; and yet it seemed as if I had been in the habit of seeing him daily, and had shaken hands with him a thousand times in some village street.... If put to guess his calling..., I should have taken him for a country schoolmaster as soon as anything else." Hawthorne's draft version of his 1862 *Atlantic Monthly* article. This excerpt is quoted in Henry Steele Commager, ed., *The Blue and The Gray: The Story of the Civil War as Told by*

- Participants* (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), pp. 1079-1081. See also Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Letters, 1857-1864*, ed. Thomas Woodson et al. (Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1987), p. 462 n. 3.
28. Marx, living in London, nonetheless acted as Civil War correspondent for *Die Presse*. An English version of his October 12, 1862 article was published in Belle Becker Sideman & Lillian Friedman, eds., *Europe Looks at the Civil War* (New York, Orion Press, 1960), pp. 189-191. It is also referred to in David Brion Davis, *The Emancipation Moment* (Twenty-second Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture, Gettysburg College, 1983), p. 21. The Washington-Lincoln comparison may be a mere rhetorical formula. Arrestingly speculative, though, is this statement by Marx: "In his day, Hegel remarked that in reality, comedy is above tragedy, the humor of the mind above its pathos. If Lincoln does not possess the gift of the pathos of historic action, he does as an ordinary man, coming from the people, possess the gift of the humor of that action."
 29. James Brewer Stewart, *Wendell Phillips: Liberty's Hero* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1986). Chandler cited in T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1941), p. 374.
 30. Eliot to his mother, Rome, April 27, 1865, Henry James, *Charles W. Eliot* (2 vols., Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1930), I, 139-141.; *Letters of Henry Adams, 1858-1891*, ed. Worthington C. Ford (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1930), pp. 119-120; *Letters of Mrs. Henry Adams*, ed. Ward Thoron (Boston, Little Brown, 1936), pp. 470-471.
 31. Quoted in Dixon Wecter, *Hero in America*, p. 243.
 32. From Arnold's *Civilization in the United States* (1888); excerpt in Ray Ginger, ed., *The Nationalizing of American Life, 1877-1900* (New York, Free Press, 1965), p. 122.
 33. *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 79 (October 1889), pp. 800-802; Arthur F. Beringause, *Brooks Adams: A Biography* (New York, Knopf, 1955), p. 251; on Parkman, Alfred Kazin, *American Procession* (New York, Knopf, 1984), p. 112 and see pp. 112-127 for other comments, mainly by Whitman, on Abraham Lincoln. Atherton's visions of true distinction are brought out in Charlotte S. McClure, *Gertrude Atherton* (Boston, Twayne, 1979), in her high-toned novel *The Aristocrats* (1901), and in her autobiography, *Adventures of a Novelist* (New York, Liveright, 1932), in which she explains her refusal to write a book about Lincoln. Wilson's article appeared in the February 1894 issue of *Forum*. Peter Karsten, *Patriot-Heroes in England and America* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 89, suggests that "as time passed, the veneration of Washington was increasingly an elite phenomenon," with a strongly "WASP" tinge.
 34. Strong, *Diary*, p. 584 (15 April 1865). On Easter Sunday (April 16; p. 587) Strong wrote that Lincoln's death had opened the eyes of the many who despised or at best tolerated him as a "well-meaning, sagacious, kind-hearted, ignorant, old codger." [*The Oxford English Dictionary* defines *codger* as a "fellow" or "chap" and in colloquial use, "a term applied irreverently to an elderly man, with a whimsical application". It offers as an illustration a reference in Washington Irving to "a gouty old codger of an alderman."] A month later, however (May 19; p. 599), Strong reported a story of a Georgetown clergyman anxious to go to a parish further North, "because the ladies of his congregation are carrying about little card photographs representing [John Wilkes] Booth's head crowned with a laurel." On Henry George's piece, contributed anonymously to the *Alta California*, see Henry George, Jr., *Life of Henry George* (1900; reprint New York, Schalkenbach Foundation, 1960), p. 163. Selden Connor is quoted in Reinhard H. Luthin, *The Real Abraham Lincoln* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 668. In leaping down to the stage at Ford's Theater, after he shot Abraham Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth — with a weird symbolism — caught his spur upon a framed portrait of George Washington that had been used to embellish the presidential box. See George S. Bryan, *The Great American Myth* (New York, Carrick and Evans, 1940), illustration opposite p. 212.
 35. Simpson quotation in Carl Sandburg's biography of Lincoln, cited in Paul M. Angle, ed., *The Lincoln Reader* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1947), p. 534. Motley's letter to his friend William Amory is mentioned in *Proceedings, Massachusetts Historical Society* 92 (Boston, 1981), p. 105.
 36. Lloyd Lewis, *Myths After Lincoln* (1929; reprint New York, Grosset & Dunlap, Universal Library, 1957), has fascinating material: for example (p. 59), on the near-lynching of a man in New York City who asked jocularly, "Did you hear Abe Lincoln's last joke?" Ch. 10 "The Dying God" (pp. 92-105) includes some Washington-Lincoln allusions. See also the historiographical essay in G.S. Boritt, *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (Memphis, Memphis State University Press, 1978), pp. 289-311. David H. Donald discusses "Getting Right with Lincoln" in his *Lincoln Reconsidered*, Ch. 1. Theodore Roosevelt, *An Autobiography*, p. 400. Uses of Lincoln imagery are instanced in Lloyd Lewis, *Myths After Lincoln*, pp. 342-343. Sundry recourses to Washington and/or Lincoln are mentioned in John Milton Cooper, Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1983). There are amusing examples of Republicans as well as Democrats "working the Jefferson angle," in Merrill D. Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1960), e.g. pp. 370-371.
 37. Roy P. Basler, *The Lincoln Legend* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1935), pp. 288-293; Marcus Cunliffe, *George Washington: Man and Monument* (1958; second edition, New York, Mentor, 1982), pp. 146-149.
 38. Emanuel Hertz, *Washington and Lincoln: The Two Master Builders of the Union* (New York, 1928); Edward F. Schewe, *Washington and Lincoln: A Comparison and Contrast* (Los Angeles, Lincoln Fellowship of Southern California, 1942); *Life of Henry George*, pp. 164-165.
 39. Joel Chandler Harris, *Life of Henry W. Grady, including his Writings and Speeches* (New York, 1890), pp. 85-86; *America's Great Frontiers and Sections: Frederick Jackson Turner's Unpublished Essays*, ed. Wilbur R. Jacobs (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1969), pp. 109-115.
 40. Strozier, *Quest for Union*, p. 124; Elizabeth McKinsey, *Niagara Falls: Icon of the American Sublime* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. vii, 1-3.
 41. W.C. Brownell, *Democratic Distinction in America* (New York, Scribner's, 1927), pp. 38-44.

Marcus Cunliffe

Marcus Cunliffe is University Professor at The George Washington University. Born in Lancashire, England, he was educated at Oriel College, Oxford, and Yale University, where he was a Commonwealth Fellow. He holds a M.A. and B. Litt. degrees from Oxford and the M.A. from Manchester in the field of history, and has as well been awarded honorary degrees by the University of Pennsylvania and New England College. His academic posts prior to appointment at The George Washington University in 1980 have included service as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, and Professor of American History and Institutions at the University of Manchester and as Professor of American Studies at the University of Sussex.

Professor Cunliffe has distinguished himself as one of the most perceptive of British analysts of American history and thought. Among his publications, those on American subjects include *The Literature of the United States* (1954, revised edition, 1986); *George Washington: Man and Monument* (1958, revised edition, 1982); *The Nation Takes Shape, 1789-1837* (1959); *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865* (1968); *American Presidents and the Presidency* (1969, revised editions, 1972, 1976, 1987); and *Chattel Slavery and Wage Slavery: The Anglo-American Context, 1830-1860* (1979). He has edited a number of volumes, and has contributed to a variety of journals, including *American Heritage*, *American Historical Review*, *New Republic*, and *The New York Times Book Review*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*. He is now writing a book on American exceptionalism, to include American brands of republicanism, and ideas about private property.

Professor Cunliffe has held fellowships at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, California, in 1957-58, and at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., in 1977-78. He was Visiting Professor at Harvard in 1959-60, the City University of New York in 1970, and the University of Michigan in 1973; and he delivered the Jefferson Memorial Lectures at the University of California at Berkeley in 1976. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a member of the Society of American Historians, the American Historical Association, and numerous other scholarly and professional associations.

Professor Cunliffe participated in the "Lincoln 175" Conference at Gettysburg College in the fall of 1984.