



New Exhibition at The Willamette Heritage Center Opens Friday, June 21 *Lincoln, The Constitution and the Civil War*

For Immediate Release

What: *Lincoln, The Constitution and the Civil War*
When: Friday, June 21 – Friday, July 26, 2013
Where: 1313 Mill Street SE, Salem, OR, 97301, 503-585-7012, www.willametteheritage.org
Cost: FREE with museum admission

The Willamette Heritage Center is pleased to announce the opening of "Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War," a traveling national exhibition opening on Friday, June 21 and running through Friday, July 26. This exhibition examines how President Lincoln used the Constitution to confront three intertwined crises of the Civil War—the secession of Southern states, slavery and wartime civil liberties.

Lincoln is widely acknowledged as one of America's greatest presidents, but his historical reputation is contested. Was he a calculating politician willing to accommodate slavery, or a principled leader justly celebrated as the Great Emancipator? This exhibition provides no easy answers. Rather, it encourages visitors to form a nuanced view of Lincoln by engaging them with Lincoln's struggle to reconcile his policy preferences with basic American ideals of liberty and equality. This exhibition develops a more complete understanding of Abraham Lincoln as president and the Civil War as the nation's gravest constitutional crisis.

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in 1860, at a time when the nation was on the brink of war. Lincoln struggled to resolve the basic questions that divided Americans at the most perilous moment in the nation's history: Was the United States truly one nation, or was it a confederacy of sovereign and separate states? How could a country founded on the belief that "all men are created equal" tolerate slavery? In a national crisis, would civil liberties be secure? President Lincoln used the Constitution to confront these three crises of war, ultimately reinventing the Constitution and the promise of American life.

"We are delighted to have been selected as a site for this exhibition," said Keni Sturgeon, Curator and Museum Director. "As a new president, Abraham Lincoln was faced with enormous challenges. This exhibition shows how Lincoln struggled with issues of secession, slavery and civil liberties—all questions our country's founding charter left unanswered. Each section of the exhibit features information about a different aspect of Lincoln's presidency. For example, the section about slavery examines the various policy options Lincoln once embraced and how his thoughts about slavery evolved over time. Most importantly, the exhibit helps visitors understand why Lincoln's struggle with the Constitution still matters today."

The National Constitution Center and the American Library Association Public Programs Office organized the traveling exhibition, which was made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): great ideas brought to life. The traveling exhibition is based on an exhibition of the same name developed by the National Constitution Center.

The traveling exhibition is composed of informative panels featuring photographic reproductions of original documents, including a draft of Lincoln's first inaugural speech, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment.

This exhibition is also made possible in part with support from a grant of Transient Occupancy Tax from the City of Salem, and Salam Noor, Ph.D.

The WHC is also offering the following events and programs as part of this Exhibition:

The Civil War Reenactment on Saturday June 22, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm. This special one-day event, with the Pacific Northwest Civil War Council, features a Union Army encampment on the WHC site with living history, demonstrations and a fascinating glimpse at life for military and civilians. Free with museum admission.

The WHC History Pub runs on five Thursdays: June 13, June 27, July 11, July 18 and July 25 at 5:30 pm. These presentations explore various aspects of Lincoln's presidency and/or our country's Civil War. Sponsored in part by local breweries. \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members. Beer and food will be available. Beer only for those 21 and over with valid ID.

For more information, visit www.willametteheritage.org or call 503-585-7012.

The Willamette Heritage Center at The Mill, a unification between Mission Mill Museum and Marion County Historical Society, is a stroll through the history of the Willamette Valley. Its 5-acre campus is home to the 1841 Jason Lee house (arguably the oldest wooden framed house in Oregon), 1841 Willamette Mission Parsonage, 1847 John Boon home, 1858 Pleasant Grove Church and the 1896 Thomas Kay Woolen Mill, named an *American Treasure* by the National Park Service. Since its founding in 1964 as a private non-profit association, Mission Mill Museum has established a reputation as a leader in the preservation and interpretation of Oregon's history. The museum's histories are shared with visitors through daily and group tours, speakers, living history, children's programs, hands-on activities, special events, the museum store and rental facilities. For more information call 503-585-7012 or visit <http://www.missionmill.org>.

The Willamette Heritage Center is a private not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. It is not managed by city, county, state or federal agencies.

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