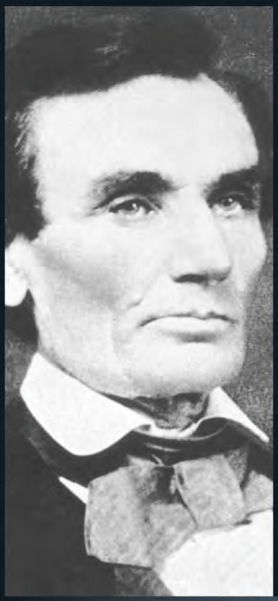
"Lewis Lehrman's brilliant and elegant work dramatizes Lincoln's anti-slavery campaign—forever giving his great Peoria speech of 1854 its honored position in Lincoln literature."

—DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN
author of *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*



LINCOLN AT PEORIA

The Turning Point

LEWIS E. LEHRMAN

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: PEOPLE AND IDEAS

I have much to acknowledge. More than two decades in the making, my book is a work of many hands. It is my first on Abraham Lincoln's place in American history. Happily, the spirit of historians claimed me as a young man. Here I must take the time to thank some of the historians and teachers who have held my attention from school days. Inevitably, I shall not be able to name all, nor can I say how much I owe to each. Space does not allow comprehensive inclusion of all the intellectual debts of a lifetime.

As a student of history, I know there is neither a beginning, nor is there an end to my indebtedness to good teachers. My grandfather Louis, whom I revered, and my devoted parents, were my first dedicated teachers. Having raised me in the shadows of the Depression and World War II, in central Pennsylvania, they made me aware of American hardships and victories, at home and abroad. Elsie B. Diven, my gifted teacher in the fifth and sixth grades, quickened my interest in the beauty of the English language, and in everything patriotic, especially West Point, where she had decided I should go. Hers was a strict pedagogy, and I minded her; but I did not make it to West Point, only to Army boot camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Duncan Campbell, "a great Scot" and military historian—my secondary school coach and history teacher—drove me the twenty miles from home to the Gettysburg battlefield. There, he regaled our class with stories of bold warriors, blue and gray. There, I learned of slavery and emancipation, of Union and Confederate heroes and heroines.

In high school Garrett Greene, peering at me through Edwardian horn-rimmed glasses, exacted a mighty toll of my memory, always insisting upon mastery of American milestones—dates, names, places, and ideas.

Facts and circumstances, I learned from this Hill School master, are the stuff of ideas and decisions. "No big theories, Lehrman." The narrative of past things, he taught in his own idiom, is not only the outcome of impersonal forces and the history of ideas, but it is also the contingent record of individual decisions—of men and women, leaders and partisans, with many motives, caught up in the event.

Neither my mother nor my father had gone to college. Thus, I relied on my headmaster—who sent me to Yale. In my senior year, Professor Charles Garside nominated me to be a Carnegie Teaching Fellow in history. Professor George Wilson Pierson, a formidable de Tocqueville scholar, persuaded my practical and reluctant father that I should accept the Carnegie Teaching Fellowship appointment. As an assistant instructor of history on the Yale faculty, I was paid $3,500 for the year. Professors Howard Lamar, Charles Garside, Martin Duberman, Ralph Turner, William Goetzman, Robin Winks, among many others, pressed me deeper into the field. My teaching experience at Yale made an impact on my intellectual development which I can trace to this very day. Professor Lamar encouraged me to apply for a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship to Harvard, where I was subsidized with the princely sum of $2,500 for the year. There, I was awarded my M.A. in history.

I had entered the university in 1956. At that time it was not only my teachers, but also certain books which left permanent marks on my mind's eye. Undergraduate and graduate studies found me focused on European and American history. At the same time, Professor Ralph Turner turned me toward the history of neolithic and early urban cultures. Professor Robert Sabatino Lopez, the historian of medieval and renaissance Europe, at Yale and at Harvard, never let me forget "the economic basement of history." Professor Myron Gilmore of Harvard caused me to study Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). With Professor Ernest May I studied *The World War and American Isolation, 1914–1917* (1959). These scholars influenced my way of thinking about America as a distinct civilization and its differences from Europe. They turned my thoughts to the role of culture, institutions, and war in the making of America. They caused me to reflect upon what was unique in the American common culture. Professor Robin L. Winks at Yale made American historiography a

part of my intellectual life requiring me to read Carl N. Degler's outstanding 1959 volume on American historical interpretation, *Out of Our Past.* Kenneth M. Stampp in 1956 published his *Peculiar Institution* which swept away the *Gone With the Wind* view of American slavery. Roy P. Basler had edited the *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (1953) in eight volumes. Later came two supplements. They can be read through, from beginning to end, themselves a fascinating "autobiography" in Lincoln's own hand. I cannot describe the profound effect the Basler volumes had on me. Lincoln's 17,000-word Peoria speech of 1854 suffused my consciousness upon the first reading, its lasting imprint finally transferred to the pages of this book. When on the road to Peoria to do research for this book, I did not escape the memory of this first reading. Harry V. Jaffa published his *Crisis of the House Divided* in 1959. In my opinion, this work is the most profound philosophical analysis of the political issues at stake between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Soon, thereafter, came Don E. Fehrenbacher's *Prelude to Greatness,* which reminded American historians that Mr. Lincoln was made ready for the presidency during the 1850s. In *Prelude* one is taught that Lincoln's emergence was not an accident that befell a melancholy railsplitter who somehow became a great president.

These are but a few of the remarkable books I carried with me, even as I ventured into the business world during the 1960s. Wherever my work travels took me, there, too, went new American history books, legacies of the influence of Stampp, Jaffa, Fehrenbacher, and others. Four powerful influences of the 1970s and 1980s were David M. Potter's *Impending Crisis* (1976), Don E. Fehrenbacher's *Dred Scott Case* (1978), Gabor S. Boritt's *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (1978), and James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: the Civil War Era* (1989). In *Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream* (1978), Gabor Boritt emphasized the origin of Lincoln's economic ideas. Lincoln campaigned for government-encouraged free markets internally; but he was opposed to unrestrained free trade externally. In this, like Hamilton and Clay, Lincoln was a nationalist interested in building up a diversified national economy open to the talents, and also in protecting American labor and essential American industries. Lincoln supported a revenue-raising tariff and a central bank to supply a stable, uniform currency. His purpose was to bind together a

vast, diffuse, national economy. Thus, he also endorsed a forward looking program of public works—roads, canals, railroads—to integrate the new U.S. territories and the states into one inclusive, continental market. I remain sympathetic to his purpose and policy. I summarize here Lincoln's program because I am convinced, by my study of nineteenth-century American economic disputes, that these issues are perennial. For integrated studies of the Civil War era, Potter's *Impending Crisis* seemed to me a masterpiece on the lead up to the war. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom,* more focused on the Civil War, wound the whole thing up. The era of American Reconstruction cannot be separated from the Civil War nor from the Civil Rights reforms of the 1960s. On American Reconstruction after the Civil War, Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (1988) is indispensable. So too is Herman Belz's *Reconstructing the Union: Theory and Policy during the Civil War* (1969).

There are many outstanding Lincoln books, major biographies, and histories— acknowledged in the Historians' Record, Notes, and Bibliography—to which I direct the reader's attention. As more has been written of Mr. Lincoln than any American, my mentions are a mere fraction of the library of scholarship on the subject. Legal historians and civil rights leaders have contributed to my work. I would be remiss in not citing my time long ago on the board of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, where I observed the legal scholar Jack Greenberg, so influential in *Brown vs. Board of Education,* still hard at work on research, writing, and civil rights reforms. My intellectual intimacy with the whirlwind of slavery and its consequences was deepened during this period.

Much of my writing, after I left the university, concentrated on the analysis of monetary and economic issues, all viewed from an historical perspective. I summed up my arguments in a book with three university professors in 1976, *Money and the Coming World Order.* The decade of the 1970s witnessed the collapse of the post–World War II Bretton Woods international monetary system. The major economic debates of the 1960s and 1970s reminded me of the national banking, currency, and economic debates of the Lincoln era. I did not fail to make that connection, writing on the contemporary controversies for the *Wall Street Journal, Harper's* magazine, *New Times,* and other publications. Those were avocational efforts,

as my commitment to a demanding business schedule kept me constantly on the road, at home and abroad.

I dwell on this period because I owe so much of my intellectual development in the 1970s to a man forty-two years my senior—the French scholar and statesman, an *eminence grise* of President Charles De Gaulle's Fifth Republic, Jacques Rueff. Rueff played a major part in the 1959 DeGaulle economic reforms of the Fifth Republic, which raised France from the depths of the Algerian crisis and near civil war to one of the fastest growing developed economies in the decade of the 1960s. As an economist, Rueff was a younger contemporary, a friend, and a peer of John Maynard Keynes, with whom Rueff debated. Rueff was older, but a friend and peer of Milton Friedman. At the epicenter of monetary theory and diplomacy in France throughout the period between World War I and World War II, Rueff remained a key figure in the intellectual, economic, and diplomatic debates of the post–World War II era until his death in 1978.

I write of him because, without his interest in my intellectual development, my economic and historical understanding would have been less integrated. He also encouraged my writing style. President De Gaulle had publicly described Rueff as the "Poète de finance" and I took notice. He was recognized by his intellectual peers as the first economist ever elected to the "Academie Francaise." With him I studied the monetary history of the Western world so intimately that I decided, with the French publisher, Plon, to assemble and publish Rueff's collected works in seven French volumes (including his scientific essays, plays and autobiography), subsequently overseeing their translation into English by Roger Glemét, the chief economic translator of the United Nations in Geneva. A polymath who was fluent in English, Professor Rueff caused me to rethink causes and consequences in American history, to try to link international diplomacy, economic and monetary institutions with the national politics, ideas, and institutions of our unique American history. In the Anglo-Saxon–dominated world, Jacques Rueff is now a neglected French scholar. No acknowledgment here could repay him sufficient tribute, nor give his gentle genius adequate praise. The coherent and comprehensive analysis of his magnum opus, *L'Ordre Social* (1945), helped me to plumb the intellectual coherence and integrity of Mr. Lincoln's integrated worldview.

I continued to write on monetary and economic policy throughout the 1980s. During this period, Morgan Stanley, the investment bank, published four of my manuscripts on monetary history and policy. To my friend and long-time intellectual collaborator, Barton Biggs, the global investment strategist at Morgan Stanley, I am deeply indebted for the interest he and Morgan Stanley took in my writings. During this period, Robert L. Bartley, editor of the *Wall Street Journal* began publishing my writings, which appeared there, on and off, for two decades. William F. Buckley Jr. published my writings in the *National Review*. During the 1970s, I came to know Robert Silvers, editor of the *New York Review of Books*, which along with *The Times Literary Supplement* (of England), and later the *Claremont Review of Books*, edited by Charles R. Kesler, enabled me to stay abreast of scholarship. John P. Britton, from my undergraduate days to this very moment, has been an intellectual collaborator—even enriching my historical imagination with early Mesopotamian studies.

My work in American history took on an intensified life when my long-time friendship with Richard Gilder led to the building of the Gilder Lehrman Collection of American historical manuscripts, now on deposit at the New-York Historical Society. I had become a modest collector of American documents, even in graduate school, but my partnership with Dick Gilder led to the rapid expansion of the Collection into a major archive of about 60,000 items, chronicling American history in its original documents and manuscripts—from the "discovery" of America until recent times. The strongest parts of the Collection focus on the Colonial, Revolutionary, Founding, Antebellum, and Civil War eras. The collection is described by Yale Sterling Professor of History David Brion Davis and professor Stephen Mintz in *The Boisterous Sea of Liberty* and briefly in Professor James G. Basker's introduction to *The Soldier's Pen*, by Gilder Lehrman Fellow Robert Bonner. Dick and I went on to establish the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in 1994, the purpose of which was to refocus the study and teaching of American history, in high schools and colleges, based on the original documents of American history. To this task Professor Basker of Barnard College and Lesley Herrmann brought intellectual entrepreneurship and hard work. President Basker and Executive Director Herrmann continue to lead the Gilder Lehrman Institute into

ever more encompassing American history and teaching projects. Dick and I have been fortunate to have their farsighted leadership. Jim Basker, a professor of English literature, proved a leader worthy of every challenge we could put before him. Mary Ross has been tireless in her work with foundations that sponsor our work. Seth Kaller, by study and diligence, became an expert and the agent for the Gilder Lehrman Collection.

There is not space enough here to describe the larger-than-life talent of my friend and partner, Dick Gilder. For almost twenty years, we have labored together in the cause of American history. Without him the landscape of American historical studies would be much the poorer. Professor Gabor Boritt, Lincoln scholar of Gettysburg College, became our partner in 1990 for the purpose of establishing the Lincoln Prize. Later came the Frederick Douglass Prize, inaugurated with Professor David Brion Davis of Yale (1999), and then the Washington Book Prize sponsored with Mount Vernon and Washington College (2005). Professor Davis, a pioneer of global slavery studies, became in 1994 the first Director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition—at Yale University. His research and writing have been an indispensable foundation of this book. To President Gordon A. Haaland, Professor Boritt and also to Professor Michael Birkner of Gettysburg College, I owe the invitation to teach the Lincoln seminar at Gettysburg College. To them I also owe my acquaintance with Sandra Trenholm, the outstanding student of my Lincoln Seminar. She later revealed—to another student of my Lincoln seminar—that I was a pretty good teacher, but a pushover for wily students. Sandy became the assistant curator of the Gilder Lehrman Collection, and then succeeded Paul Romaine as chief curator of the Collection. She also read the manuscript. Her expert eye made a difference. So did the eyes of the accomplished staff of the Gilder Lehrman Collection, including Maribel Diaz, Cindy Muthuveren, Karla Rubio, and Davindra Basdeo.

How do I begin to thank the innumerable teachers—in universities, high schools, think tanks and foundations—who have given their time to the Gilder Lehrman projects, not to mention in certain cases, the research efforts which made this book possible? Among others, there are Professor David Blight, the present director of the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale; Professor Richard Carwardine of Oxford, so helpful in our efforts in

England; Jean H. Baker, David Herbert Donald, John Hope Franklin, Allen Guelzo, William C. Harris, James and Lois Horton, Stephen Mintz, Kenneth Stampp, and Douglas Wilson. They have discussed with me their books, rehearsed their arguments, then patiently endured my questions. Discussions with Professor Basker, an accomplished historian as well as literature scholar, have made me a more careful student. From my studies, I know that the Lincoln field benefits from a new generation of scholars—among them Brian R. Dirck, Joseph R. Fornieri, Lucas E. Morel, Graham Peck, Matthew Pinsker, Michael Vorenberg, Jennifer Weber, Stewart Winger, and David Work.

In the past two decades, several Lincoln scholars have performed an invaluable archival service for all Americans with their editing of the recollections of Lincoln's contemporaries. Professor Michael Burlingame has relentlessly mined the works of key Lincoln intimates, such as Noah Brooks, John Hay, John G. Nicolay, and William Stoddard. Like countless students and scholars of Lincoln I have been spared the labor of deciphering Horace Greeley's handwriting by the pathbreaking efforts of Rodney Davis and Douglas L. Wilson. Not only did they edit and publish the testimony of William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, and the memories of *Herndon's Informants*, but they have also supervised the invaluable transcriptions of the Robert Todd Lincoln Collection at the Library of Congress. Doug Wilson read my manuscript and shared his intimate knowledge of the original sources.

Dr. John R. Sellers at the Library of Congress and Dr. Thomas F. Schwartz of the Abraham Lincoln Association and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum have put Abraham Lincoln online—a place where the technologically-oriented sixteenth president would doubtless want to be. That work continues in Springfield, Illinois, with a new compilation of "The Papers of Abraham Lincoln," directed by Daniel W. Stowell and sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Under the leadership of Richard Norton Smith, Tom Schwartz, and now Rick Beard, the library is an inviting resource for any Lincoln scholar. My own quest at the library was aided by Debbie Hamm, Cheryl Schnirring, Mary Michals, and Roberta Fairburn.

Lincoln for his own reasons, his wife for hers, did not keep a full record of his private and public documents, but he and others were very careful to preserve many important ones. Mr. Lincoln would be amazed at the scale and devotion of the many teams of scholars who have searched, preserved, and published his work. And he would also enjoy, as I did, browsing in Dan Weinberg's peerless Abraham Lincoln Bookstore—a Chicago institution devoted to the study of American history and America's sixteenth president. Lincoln would have appreciated the archives of the Cullom-Davis Library of Bradley University in Peoria. There, Lincoln's notebook, in his own hand, can be found, tabulating the legislative line-up for the 1855 Senate election. It was a gift to Dr. Robert Boal, a Lincoln friend who made his home in Peoria at the end of his life. Charles Frey and Sherri Schneider helped guide me through the Lincoln resources there.

Discussion of Lincoln topics, such as the Peoria speech, has been kept alive by the Abraham Lincoln Association in Springfield, Illinois, the Abraham Lincoln Institute in Washington, D.C., the Civil War Institute in Gettysburg, and the Lincoln Forum, among many other Lincoln and Civil War organizations. For example, each November, hundreds of Lincoln students gather in Gettysburg, to celebrate the words Lincoln said there, and to discuss the sixteenth president—under the auspices of the Lincoln Forum, headed by Frank Williams and Harold Holzer, both distinguished Lincoln authors. Harold is also cochairman of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

In addition to these colleagues in the study of Lincoln, I have been fortunate over the years to have had many associates in other intellectual enterprises. Though their specialized fields did not include Lincoln, many helped to form my worldview.

I have yet to thank Charles Pierce and Parker Gilbert, Director and President respectively of New York's Pierpont Morgan Library, both of whom responded to my calls for help and advice on the Gilder Lehrman Collection, giving it a distinguished home at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York for a decade. Gordon Haaland and Katherine Will, successive presidents of Gettysburg College, and Tina Grim and Diane Brennan, Gettysburg overseers of the Lincoln Prize, are friends and colleagues to whom I am annually indebted. To President Richard Levin of Yale and

Sterling Professor of Law Guido Calabresi, now a Federal judge, I am lastingly grateful—the former indispensable for the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale, the latter a mentor and friend from early Yale days who encouraged my scholarship. James Rees, the director of Mount Vernon, keeper of the seals and scholarship at General Washington's home, now a distinguished history teaching center, and Gay Hart Gaines, the former regent of Mount Vernon, have been crucial allies-in-arms for American history. Working with them has been an inspiration.

Today, the Gilder Lehrman Collection lives at the New-York Historical Society. To Nancy Newcomb, Roger Hertog, Louise Mirrer, and Kenneth Jackson, among many leaders of the New-York Historical Society, I owe so much to their good offices and scholarship. To Josiah Bunting III, scholar and novelist, I am indebted for countless hours rehearsing the events, leaders, and meaning of American history. Ed Feulner, Ken Cribb, and Chris DeMuth have encouraged my work in public policy and American history for decades.

Scholars who have written many books know well the meaning of a production team. Without the indispensable Frank Trotta, Esq., and Susan Tang, both associates of almost thirty years, and Ericka Wright, Deja Lowden, Steve Szymanski, and Patricia Blake, my investment business—during early morning hours at work on this book—would have been on autopilot. "Autopilot" does not bring business results; and I am ever grateful for their loyalty and attention to my intellectual enterprises. They have enabled me, at work and while writing, to navigate, simultaneously, the worlds of history research and investment markets. Kathleen Packard did research for the photos and maps, and in so many ways has helped on my Lincoln projects. Among her staff at Kathode Ray Media, Erin Simmons designed the maps and Ashley Rio helped format the images.

Richard Behn has been my colleague in one project or another for about three decades. Among his many learned interests, he came late to American history—he perhaps thinking, a while back, that my zeal for Mr. Lincoln's unique literary and political achievement was a bit peculiar. During the past ten years, Dick has become not only a recognized Lincoln website manager, but also my research associate at The Lincoln Institute and my research assistant for this book. To his tireless efforts and to his

editorial oversight, I owe enough to say that this book would have been much longer in coming without him. Not least because of publication timetables and my business schedule, he and I worked weekends and evenings to complete this work. He always understood that my full-time vocation, my large family, especially my wife Louise, had to come first. But goad that he is—he never let up. His tenacity with the footnotes and his patient help with my other historical projects do not exhaust the description of our partnership.

David Detweiler, president, and Judith Schnell, publisher, of Stackpole Books, a select publisher of American history works, believed I could make a "drop dead" deadline. They were almost right. I missed by a few weeks, and capital punishment was commuted. I am grateful that they had confidence in the manuscript from the start. Stackpole's Amy Lerner has contributed her invaluable wisdom and discipline to the publication schedule. Ryan Masteller provided similar scrutiny and discipline to copy editing the manuscript itself. Tracy Patterson and Wendy Reynolds created the book design. Paul Shaw, Susan Drexler, and Peter Rossi assured that the book got into readers' hands.

Michael Burlingame's detailed knowledge of all things Lincoln has been invaluable to me. As he has done for many contemporary scholars, he has been generous with his own extraordinary research and editing skills, reading my manuscript even as he was completing his monumental multivolume biography of Lincoln. To the reading of the manuscript, others also brought eyes to see and ears to hear. I regret that the tight publication schedule did not permit the reading of the manuscript by other scholars and friends who have discussed the themes of the book with me and who have indirectly inspired it. I am indebted to James Basker, Josiah Bunting, Michael Burlingame, David Brion Davis, David Detweiler, Samuel Freedman, Mark Gerson, Doris Kearns Goodwin, James O. Horton, James M. McPherson, Judith Schnell, and Douglas L. Wilson, who did read it. No one cross-examines me with questions like Louise, John, Thomas, Eliza, and Peter Lehrman—all of whom read parts of the manuscript and encouraged the author. To Lee, John, Thomas, Eliza, and Peter, it is sufficient to say that I wrote the book for them. My gratitude to them abides with our dedication to the Lincoln legacy.

Doris Kearns Goodwin, despite her demanding schedule of travel and scholarship, commented on the substance, the style, and the structure of the entire book. No one who has not worked with Doris can appreciate the effect of her infectious enthusiasm and literary judgment. Professor Douglas Wilson, a scholar of Lincoln and Jefferson, brought to bear his deep learning on essential aspects of the manuscript, even over dinner in Peoria. Columbia University Professor Samuel Freedman, a columnist for the *New York Times*, influenced many sections which needed clarification for the general reader. Professors James Oliver Horton and Lois Horton have been pioneers in the history of American slavery. Jim's scholarship on the links among Lincoln, slavery, and American history is essential for the period. Professor James M. McPherson, the dean of Civil War historians, has been an inspiration on my Lincoln pilgrimage. His incisive comments enabled me to have confidence in the title and arguments of the book. My intellectual debts to James Basker and Josiah Bunting go well beyond this book. Save for the remaining errors, mine alone, these dedicated readers remedied many defects of the early manuscripts.

To the great man himself, Abraham Lincoln, and to my grandfather, Louis, who reminded me each February 12 of the president's birthday, I owe more than I can unselfconsciously say here. So I shall merely implore my children, every American, to study Lincoln, then to gird their loins and to strive toward realizing the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

For Louise, the dedication page tells too short a tale of her inspiration for my work. Like Lincoln, born of East Anglian roots—devoted, tenacious, and principled—Louise exemplifies the conscience and power of the culture which gave rise to early America in New England. Thus I knew that marriage entailed standards to which I would ever try to measure up. Nothing, I think, excels marriage and children.