

200th Anniversary of Lincoln's Birth

Posted At : February 23, 2009 11:28 AM | Posted By : Melanie McWhorter
Related Categories: Melanie McWhorter, Abraham Lincoln, Historical Photography

During the campaign for the office of 44th President of the United States, the name and qualities of Abraham Lincoln were invoked and associated with Obama on numerous occasions. All this media attention and, coincidentally, the 200th Anniversary of the birth of Lincoln on February 12 of this year, has sparked new interest in the man and his mystique. This has resulted in a recent plethora of photographs, documentaries and books on the man.



Shepherd, Nicholas H., photographer. Abraham Lincoln, Congressman-elect from Illinois. Springfield, Ill., 1846 or 1847, daguerreotype.

“ Lincoln lived in the era when photography was introduced to the world and then became a mass communication tool. Lincoln was the first U.S. presidential candidate to tap the new technology frequently and has been called the most photographed man of his day.

--from Library of Congress [News from Prints & Photographs Division](#)

Many images can be found of Lincoln on the internet including newly uploaded images from the archive of The Library of Congress [set of 22 photographs](#) relating to the life of Abraham Lincoln on [Flickr](#). [A Photography Blog](#), [Thinkin' about Lincoln](#), which shows possibly the first photo of Abraham Lincoln sans beard.

The [History Channel](#) broadcast a show based off the book of the same title [Stealing Lincoln's Body](#) about the 1876 attempt by counterfeiters to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln for ransom. According to the [New York Times review](#) of the show, the documentary includes digital recreations

of Lincoln based on photographs taken during his life.

The New York Times Book Review lists and critiques many of the recently published books on Lincoln in [Lincoln's Monuments](#), an article by William Safire, the author of [Freedom](#) a novel of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The books reviewed are [A. Lincoln: A Biography](#), [In Lincoln's Hand: His Original Manuscripts](#), [The Lincoln Anthology: Great Writers on His Life and Legacy From 1860 to Now](#).

Charles Darwin and Lincoln share this same date of birth and also the cover of the new [Smithsonian Magazine](#) and an article titled [Lincoln's Contested Legacy](#). In this issue Philip B. Kunhardt III, co-author of the 2008 book [Looking for Lincoln](#), explores the often conflicting myths associated with this man:

“ Lincoln's legacy has shifted again and again as different groups have interpreted him. Northerners and Southerners, blacks and whites, East Coast elites and prairie Westerners, liberals and conservatives, the religious and secular, scholars and popularizers--all have recalled a sometimes startlingly different Lincoln. He has been lifted up by both sides of the Temperance Movement; invoked for and against federal intervention in the economy; heralded by anti-communists, such as Senator Joseph McCarthy, and by American communists, such as those who joined the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the fight against the fascist Spanish government in the 1930s....

Though our understanding of him is more nuanced than it once was, and we are more able to recognize his limitations as well as his strengths, Abraham Lincoln remains the great example of democratic leadership--by most criteria, truly our greatest president.

Other books about Lincoln of interest: [Lincoln's Assassins: Their Trial and Execution](#) and [Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln](#).