

THE
COMMONWEALTH MUSEUM

&

THE MASSACHUSETTS
SESQUICENTENNIAL
COMMISSION

PRESENT

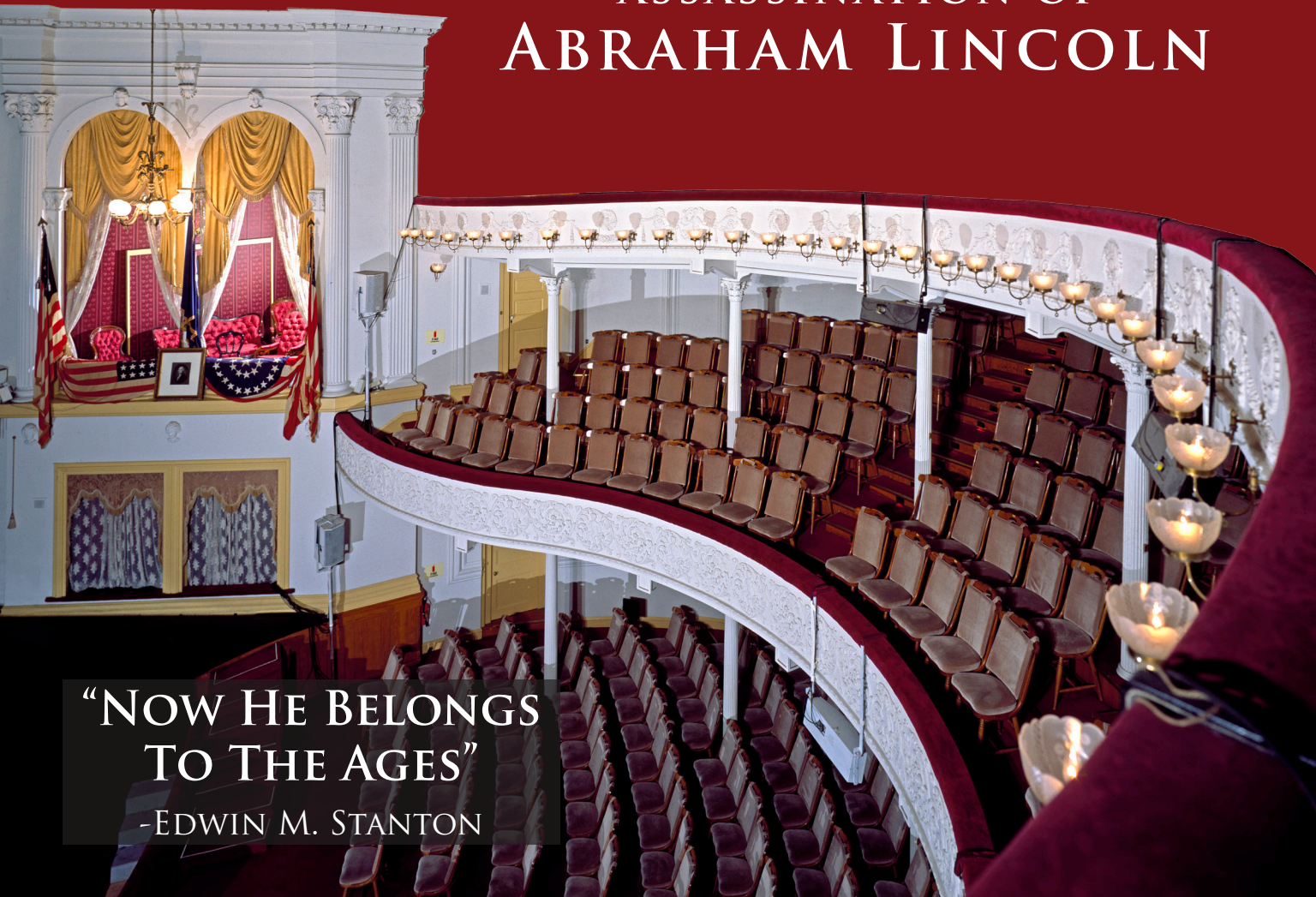
A LECTURE SERIES

IN

COMMEMORATION OF THE
150TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

ASSASSINATION OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN



“NOW HE BELONGS
TO THE AGES”

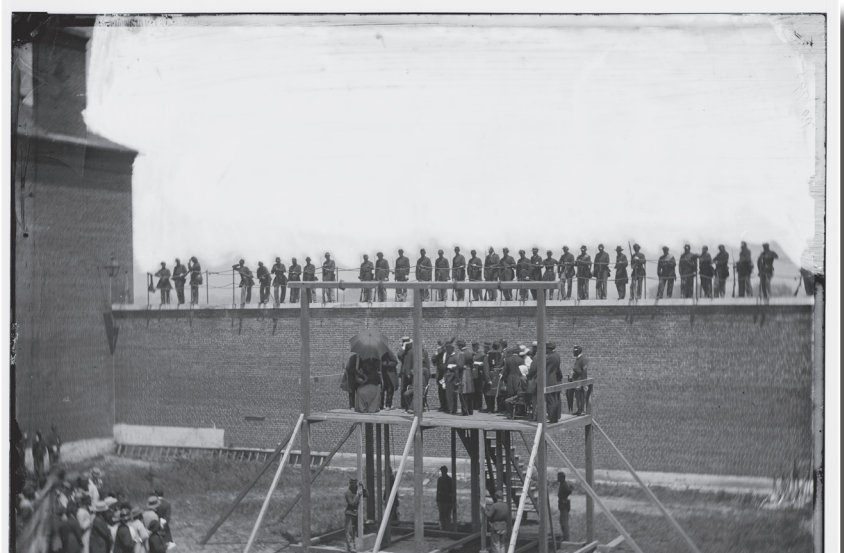
-EDWIN M. STANTON



On the night of April 14th, 1865 – Good Friday – Abraham Lincoln, along with his wife Mary, attended a performance of the comedy *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. Joining the President and his wife were Major Henry J. Rathbone and his fiancée Clara Harris, daughter of Senator Ira Harris of New York. Just five days earlier, General Robert E. Lee of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant in the parlor of Wilmer McLean's farmhouse in the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

Shortly after 10pm, John Wilkes Booth, the famous American stage actor, slipped through the unlocked door in the rear of the President's theatre box and, with a single-shot derringer, shot him in the back of the head. Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, died at 7:22am the next morning in a small bedroom of a boarding house across the street from the theatre.

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of President Lincoln's assassination, the Commonwealth Museum, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Sesquicentennial Commission, is proud to present a series of three lectures in which experts examine and interpret critical and compelling aspects of this important historical event.





Wednesday, April 15, 2015 - 6-7:30pm

The Assassin's Accomplice: Mary Surratt, Guilty as Charged

Less than three months after her arrest in April 1865 at her boarding house in H Street in Washington City, Mary Surratt would be convicted for her role in conspiring with John Wilkes Booth to kill President Abraham Lincoln. On July 7, 1865 Surratt would become the first woman ever executed by the United States government.

Kate Clifford Larson, PhD., noted historian and author, examines Surratt and her involvement in the conspiracy in a thought-provoking lecture that delves into the continuing debate as to her guilt or innocence.

Wednesday, April 29, 2015 – 6-7:30pm

The First Living-Room War: Capturing, Executing, and Remembering Lincoln's Assassins: Photography's Crucial Role

The American Civil War has been called the first "Living-Room War." With the advent of photography, graphic images – from the home front to the battlefield – brought the realities of the war to people on both sides of conflict in a way never before possible.

In a compelling presentation, Harvard Professor and renowned historian **John Stauffer** shows how photography was used to help capture Lincoln's assassins, document Booth's death, and offer closure and healing in the public execution of the conspirators.

Wednesday, May 13, 2012 – 6-7:30pm

Military Trial of the Lincoln Conspirators: Justice or Justice Denied

The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln created many issues including how to treat the alleged conspirators within our justice systems – whether military or civilian.

Frank Williams, retired Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, considers the complex questions that arose in regard to the accused. Should they be tried in civil court or by military tribunal? What due process should be provided them? Does the fact that they were civilians and not military personnel make a difference? These issues and relevance to today's war on terror will be discussed.

KATE CLIFFORD LARSON, PHD., is an historian, consultant, and author, specializing in 19th and 20th century U.S. Women's and African American History. Dr. Larson has been a guest instructor at numerous professional development workshops for teachers, including National Endowment for the Humanities and Teaching American History programs, and has been a consultant and interpretive specialist for numerous museum, community, and public history initiatives related to American Slavery, the Underground Railroad, Abolition, and Harriet Tubman. She is the author of *The Assassin's Accomplice: Mary Surratt and the Plot to Kill Abraham Lincoln* (Basic Books, 2008), *Bound For the Promised Land: Harriet Tubman, Portrait of an American Hero* (Ballantine/One World, 2004), and her latest book, *Rosemary: The Hidden Kennedy Daughter*, a biography of the disabled sister of President John F. Kennedy, is due out in the fall of 2015 from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

JOHN STAUFFER is Professor of English, American Studies, and African American Studies at Harvard University. He is the author or editor of 13 books and over 90 articles, including two books that were briefly national bestsellers: *GIANTS: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln* (2008); and *State of Jones* (2009), co-authored with Washington Post columnist Sally Jenkins). *The Black Hearts of Men* (2002) was the co-winner of the Frederick Douglass Book Prize and the Lincoln Prize 2nd Place winner. *The Battle Hymn of the Republic: A Biography of the Song That Marches On*, co-authored with Benjamin Soskis (2013), was a Lincoln Prize finalist. His most recent book is Sally Mann, *Southern Landscape* (2014).

His essays and reviews have appeared in *Time*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Huffington Post*. He has lectured throughout the U.S. and Europe, and he was an advisor for *Django* (2012), *The Abolitionists* (2013), *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross* (2013), and the exhibition *WAR/PHOTOGRAPHY* (2012-14).

FRANK J. WILLIAMS is the retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island and is one of the country's most renowned experts on Abraham Lincoln. He is the author or editor of over twenty books, he has contributed chapters to several others, and has lectured on the subject throughout the country. At the same time, he and his wife, Virginia, have amassed an unsurpassed private library and archive that ranks among the nation's largest and finest Lincoln collections. In 2000, the Chief Justice was appointed to the United States Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission created by Congress to plan events to commemorate the 200th birthday of Abraham Lincoln in 2009. Since 1996, Chief Justice Williams has served as founding Chairman of The Lincoln Forum, a national assembly of Lincoln and Civil War devotees. For 9 years, he served as President of the Abraham Lincoln Association and, for 14 years, as President of The Lincoln Group of Boston. He is currently at work on an annotated bibliography of all the Lincoln titles published since 1865 for Fordham University Press. His book of essays, *Judging Lincoln*, was published by Southern Illinois University Press in 2002. He, with Harold Holzer and Edna Greene Medford, has written *The Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views, Social, Legal and Pictorial* published by Louisiana State University Press. His *Lincoln Lessons: Reflections on America's Greatest Leader*, with William D. Pederson, was published by Southern Illinois University Press in 2009. His latest book *Lincoln as Hero* was selected as an alternate by the History Book Club. He also serves as Literary Editor of the *Lincoln Herald* where his quarterly "Lincolnia" survey appears.