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## ***The “Lost Speech”: Lincoln’s Greatest Ever?***

### **Program for General Audiences (Libraries, Senior Residences, Community Groups, Etc.)**

May 1856 was a critical time in our nation’s history and in the political career of Abraham Lincoln. The slavery question had brought about a complete restructuring of the political landscape, an important election loomed, and tensions were escalating. Hanging in the balance was the question of whether the Territory of Kansas would eventually come into the Union as a free or a slave state. It was at this time that Lincoln gave a rousing speech in Bloomington, Illinois at the first state Republican convention. The speech would come to be known as the “Lost Speech” because it was not written down, supposedly because the newspapermen were so enthralled with his words that they laid down their pens.

In this program, Mr. Lincoln discusses the dramatic events leading up to his speech and then re-creates his address in abridged form (the original was an hour and a half long!). Despite later successes such as his “House-Divided” Speech, his Cooper Union Address, his First and Second Inaugural Addresses, and his Gettysburg Address, some historians consider his “Lost Speech” to be his greatest ever.

This program is most appropriate for adults and for older youth/teenagers (recommended for 12 years old on up); younger children are still welcome, but may not find the material particularly interesting. It runs one hour and is followed by an additional time of Q&A, photos, and informal interaction. It is also available virtually, whether live via video conferencing (Zoom) or live-streaming (Facebook Live or YouTube Live) or as a pre-recorded video. Unlike many of Mr. Lincoln’s programs, this one is not currently available in Spanish.

Mr. Lincoln is portrayed by Kevin Wood, a professional Lincoln presenter who bears a remarkable resemblance to “the Great Emancipator” and who is extremely knowledgeable about his life and times. Mr. Wood has been portraying Mr. Lincoln since the year 2000, and on a professional basis since 2015. He has made over 2,300 appearances in 33 states plus Washington DC and two foreign countries: Canada and Spain. Mr. Wood also writes an occasional blog – “*Loath to Close... Still!*” – which encourages others to reflect upon and learn from President Lincoln’s life and legacy. For more information, visit [www.mrlincoln.com](http://www.mrlincoln.com).