



President Lincoln (portrayed by renowned Lincoln actor and historian Jim Getty) being interviewed at the California State Fair by Third District Presiding Justice Vance Raye.

PHOTO BY LEZLIE STERLING/SACRAMENTO BEE • STAGE SET BY STEPHANIE CONRAD

A Conversation with Abraham Lincoln

THE THIRD APPELLATE DISTRICT AT THE STATE FAIR

BY GEORGE NICHOLSON & WILLIAM MURRAY JR.*

IT HAS BEEN 150 YEARS since President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. In 1863 he also delivered his timeless speech at Gettysburg. A century later, borrowing from Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address*, Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous *I Have a Dream* speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington. In commemoration of those events, the Third Appellate District planned and presented a day of programming at the California State Fair and Exposition (Cal Expo) in July 2013. The program was partially funded by a generous donation of the California Supreme Court Historical Society.

The State Fair was the perfect venue. Fairs are special. President Lincoln thought so, too. In 1859, he rec-

ognized the civic import of fairs when he said they are "becoming an institution of the country; they are useful in more ways than one; they bring us together, and thereby make us better acquainted, and better friends than we otherwise would be."

THIRD APPELLATE DISTRICT CONNECTION TO LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

The Third District is connected to the Civil War in significant ways. Two of the first three justices to sit on the Third Appellate District, Abraham Jay Buckles and Norton Parker Chipman, were Civil War officers. Buckles was wounded five separate times in some of the war's most famous battles and won the Congressional Medal of Honor, but lost a leg. Chipman, the court's first administrative presiding judge, was almost killed at Fort Donelson, Tennessee, General Grant's first victory, and later accompanied President Lincoln to Gettysburg.

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Chipman's abilities were recognized by Edward Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War. Sent by Stanton to accompany Lincoln to the consecration of the cemetery at Gettysburg, Chipman sat on the platform near Lincoln during that now famous address. Later in the war, Chipman brought information directly from Grant in the field to Stanton and Lincoln in Washington, D.C. Near the end of the war, risking his life and successfully avoiding capture, he conveyed information from Grant to General Sheridan that was vital in Sheridan's campaign in the Shenandoah Valley.

After the war, Chipman successfully prosecuted the commander of the infamous Andersonville prisoner of war camp. He authored the order that created what is now Memorial Day. In the 1872 Republican caucus to select a Delegate to represent the District of Columbia in the United States Congress, he ran against Frederick Douglass. During the first ballot, he received more votes than Douglass, including votes from African Americans. Douglass then threw his support to Chipman, who eventually served two terms as the D.C. Delegate. While in Congress, Chipman jump-started the construction of the Washington Monument, which had been stalled because of the war.

Chipman later moved to California, becoming a businessman in Tehama County. He was one of several people who started the organization that evolved into the California Chamber of Commerce. He was active with the California State Fair. He served as a commissioner for the California Supreme Court from 1897 until he was appointed by Governor George Pardee to serve as the Third Appellate District's first administrative presiding justice, a position he held between 1905 and 1921.

Fast forward to 2013: The current administrative presiding judge of the Third Appellate District — the person who now holds Chipman's old job — is Vance W. Raye, a descendant of Mississippi slaves freed by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Our court is proud of this history and wanted to share it with people attending the 2013 California State Fair.

OUR DAY AT the State Fair began with a *Conversation with Abraham Lincoln* on center stage. Jim Getty, a renowned Lincoln actor and historian, portrayed Lincoln. After shaking hands with the crowd, he was interviewed by Justice Raye about a wide variety of topics related to Lincoln's life and presidency.

"LET FREEDOM RING!"

After the interview, the latter-day Lincoln was accompanied by honor guards from a local sheriff's office, members of the local Buffalo Soldiers regiment, and a local high school drum corps as he walked to the California Building in the center of Cal Expo, where the Third Appellate District's exhibit *Let Freedom Ring!* was displayed. The exhibit depicted a timeline of civil



Norton Parker Chipman, the first administrative presiding judge of the Third District, accompanied President Lincoln to Gettysburg.

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rights historical events in California and the nation with images and explanatory text. From July 12 to July 28, fairgoers visited the 520-square-foot exhibit. Coloring books about the Emancipation Proclamation were made available for children, and on Saturday, July 20, crayons and child-sized tables and chairs were provided.

In words and pictures, *Let Freedom Ring!* commemorated freedom's challenges and promises, including the freedom to play in professional sports. The exhibit is notable for including sports in a civil rights timeline and acknowledging the removal of racial barriers in baseball, football, basketball, and golf. Commissioner of Baseball Bud Selig often says: "I have always thought, and still do, that the most powerful moment in the history of baseball was the day Branch Rickey signed Jackie Robinson."

"HOW FAR HAVE WE COME?"

The Third Appellate District honored students who won the court's essay contest in front of *Let Freedom Ring!* Essayists were given the prompt: "The Journey from the Emancipation Proclamation to the Present — 150 Years: How Far Have We Come and What Remains to be Done?" The grand prize was a scholarship with Sojourn to the Past, a transformative and empowering academic immersion program that takes 11th and

12th grade students from diverse academic, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds on a 10-day educational journey along the path of the Civil Rights Movement through five states in the American South. Cash prizes were also awarded. Making the presentations were Justice Elena Duarte of the Third Appellate District, who coordinated the essay contest, and Jeff Steinberg from Sojourn to the Past.

After the awards program, justices of the court met and greeted fairgoers who lined up to speak to the justices about the court's work and to shake President Lincoln's hand.

LINCOLN MEETS A DESCENDANT OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

The Third Appellate District's opening day at Cal Expo was capped off with the portion of the program funded by the Supreme Court Historical Society, "The Life of Frederick Douglass." Douglass is widely regarded as the father of civil rights. After escaping from slavery, Douglass helped lead the abolitionist movement as an orator, publisher, and author. One of his three autobiographies, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, is among 88 books listed by the Library of Congress as "Books That Shaped America." Copies were given to the essay award winners.

Douglass encouraged Lincoln to emancipate the slaves. Also, as explained during the interview with Justice Raye, Lincoln was persuaded by Douglass to enlist African-American troops in the Union Army. Lincoln had been reluctant, fearing that if the troops were captured they would be executed or sent to a life of slavery

in the South. Douglass explained that the life these men knew was not in Africa, but rather in America, "and if you let them fight, they will show everyone they have the right to citizenship in this country." The plan to enlist African-American troops was included in the Emancipation Proclamation and more than 200,000 served.

In a dramatic moment during the program, Kenneth Morris, the great-great-great-grandson of Frederick Douglass (and great-great grandson of Booker T. Washington) met Lincoln in front of *Let Freedom Ring!* They shook hands and talked about Lincoln's friendship with Douglass. Morris, who heads the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives — an organization that works to raise awareness in youth about the existence of modern day slavery and human trafficking — then treated the crowd to a moving conversation about the extraordinary life of Frederick Douglass.

We at the Third Appellate District are deeply grateful for the very significant assistance by the California Supreme Court Historical Society and others who contributed to our program.

TO LEARN MORE

■ Visit the California Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) website to see "Continuing the Dialogue — A Conversation with Abraham Lincoln: The Third Appellate District at the State Fair." <http://www2.courtinfo.ca.gov/cjer/aocvtv/dialogue/lincoln/index.htm>.

■ Visit the e.Republic website to see the Third Appellate District's two-week exhibit "Let Freedom Ring!" at the 2014 Cal Expo. <https://erepublic.app.box.com/s/g2n5uef47n9lg02bjlge>. ★



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