

“... measuring him by the sentiment of his country,
a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult,
[Lincoln] was swift, zealous, radical, and determined.”

— FREDERICK DOUGLASS, APRIL 14, 1876

The great black abolitionist

LINCOLN AT PEORIA

The Turning Point

Written by Lewis E. Lehrman

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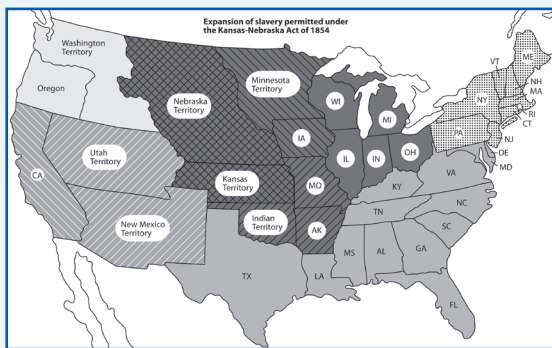
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Lincoln at Peoria: The Turning Point explains how Lincoln's speech at Peoria on October 16, 1854 was the turning point in the development of his antislavery campaign and his political career and thought. Here, Lincoln detailed his opposition to slavery's extension and his determination to defend America's Founding document from those who denied that the Declaration of Independence applied to black Americans.

Students of Abraham Lincoln know the canon of his major speeches — from his Lyceum Speech of 1838 to his “Final Remarks” delivered from a White House window, days before he was murdered in 1865. Less well-known are the two extraordinary speeches given at Springfield and Peoria two weeks apart in 1854. They marked Mr. Lincoln's reentry into the politics of Illinois and, as he could not know, his preparation for the Presidency in 1861. These Lincoln addresses catapulted him into the debates over slavery which dominated Illinois and national politics for the rest of the decade. Lincoln delivered the substance of these arguments several times — certainly in Springfield on October 4, 1854, for which there are only press reports. A longer version came twelve days later in Peoria. To understand President Abraham Lincoln, one must understand the Peoria speech of October 16, 1854. It forms the foundation of his politics and principles, in the 1850s and in his Presidency.



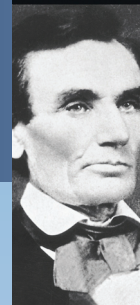
The Kansas-Nebraska Act, one of the most explosive congressional statutes of American history, repealed the prohibition on slavery in that section of the Louisiana Territory north of the 36° 30' parallel — a restriction on the spread of slavery agreed upon by North and South in the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, sponsored by the famous Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas, inaugurated an incendiary chapter in the slavery debates

of the early American Republic. In response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Lincoln launched his antislavery campaign. All of his moral and historical arguments opposed any further extension of slavery in the American republic, founded, as he argued, upon the Declaration of Independence. That “all men are created equal,” with the “inalienable right to liberty,” was, for Lincoln, a universal principle that Americans must not ignore.

**Celebrate the Bicentennial
of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009**

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“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

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

“Lewis E. Lehrman does a brilliant job of dramatizing a critical moment in Lincoln's life that has never before been given the careful attention it deserves. In his book, *Lincoln at Peoria*, he has forever given the Peoria speech of 1854 its rightful place in Lincoln's story. As a result this elegant study provides fresh insight into both the growth of Abraham Lincoln as a masterful leader and the tumultuous decade of the 1850s. It is a book that deserves an honored place in the literature of our 16th President.”

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“A master of the vast historiography of the subject, Lewis E. Lehrman has authored an indispensable analysis of Abraham Lincoln's approach to the central issue of slavery.”

LINCOLN AT PEORIA

The Turning Point

About the Author

Lewis Lehrman is dedicated to reviving the teaching of American history in its schools and colleges. Mr. Lehrman has written and lectured widely on American history and economics and has written for publications such as *the Washington Post*, *the New York Times*, *the Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, *the New York Sun* and *Policy Review*. He also writes for the Lincoln Institute (www.abrahamlincoln.org) which has created award-winning websites on the 16th President. With Richard Gilder, Mr. Lehrman built the Gilder Lehrman Collection of original historical manuscripts and documents to teach American history from primary sources (www.gilderlehrman.org), now on deposit for public access at the New-York Historical Society. He was presented the National Humanities Medal at the White House in 2005 for his work in American history and is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Lincoln Forum.

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