



Kevin J. Wood
Portrayals of President Abraham Lincoln
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Lincoln and Thanksgiving

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

During the first eighty-seven (“four score and seven”) years of our nation’s history, a national day of thanksgiving was observed only very sporadically. Several of the individual States observed such a day, but these were not coordinated in any way and were held any time from October through January. At this time, only two national holidays were celebrated in the United States: George Washington’s Birthday on February 22 and Independence Day on July 4.

Adults and children alike will enjoy hearing a first-hand account from President Abraham Lincoln himself about how our national, annual observance of the Thanksgiving holiday came to be established in the fall of 1863, in the midst of the Civil War. Mr. Lincoln tells how the influential writer and editor Sarah Josepha Hale, author of the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb”, tirelessly advocated for the establishment of such a day. He reads his 1863 Thanksgiving proclamation – which would be the first of an unending series of such presidential proclamations which has continued to our own day – and explains its words in the context of the Civil War and the nation’s history up to that point. He also shares a little bit about his own personal story. This program serves as a reminder that despite whatever difficulties we might be experiencing as a nation or as individuals, we can still find reasons for which to be thankful.

This program is most appropriate for adults and for children from eight years old on up. 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. And it is also available in Spanish (*Lincoln y el Día de acción de gracias*).

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.