

With the end of the Indian wars, Fort Laramie's usefulness to the government rapidly faded. The fort was abandoned in 1890 and sold at public auction. Fort Laramie slowly deteriorated over the next 48 years and nearly succumbed to the ravages of time. On July 16, 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a proclamation creating the Fort Laramie National Monument. With the determined efforts of local citizens and Wyoming State legislators, the preservation of the site is secure. The fort was redesignated a National Historic Site by an act of Congress on April 29, 1960. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. In 1978, it was expanded to its present size of 835 acres by an act of Congress.

The Fort Laramie National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service and is open to the public throughout the year. Interpretive programs are offered with living history talks and demonstrations available in the summer months. These programs offer visitors a chance to experience life on the frontier.

The site has an intensive preservation program to ensure the integrity of the historic structures for generations to come. Ten historic buildings have been completely restored and refurnished. These allow visitors a rare glimpse into the daily workings of a 19th century Indian Wars military post. The ruins and foundations of numerous other buildings are also preserved at this nationally significant historic treasure.

In celebration of the 175th anniversary of the founding of Fort Laramie, I invite my colleagues to visit the Fort Laramie National Historic Site. I congratulate the staff and volunteers whose dedication makes this piece of our history available to visitors from all over the world.

PRAGUE CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST ASSETS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I am delighted the Senate is poised to consider and pass S. Con. Res. 23 in support of the goals and objectives of the Prague Conference on Holocaust Era Assets.

The Prague Conference, which will be held June 26 through June 30, will serve as a forum to review the achievements of the 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust Era Assets. That meeting brought together 44 nations, 13 non-governmental organizations, scholars, and Holocaust survivors, and helped channel the political will necessary to address looted art, insurance claims, communal property, and archival issues. The conference also examined the role of historical commissions and Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. While the Washington Conference was enormously useful, more can and should be done in all of these areas. Accordingly, the Prague Conference provides an important opportunity to identify specific addi-

tional steps that countries can still take.

The Holocaust left a scar that will not be removed by the Prague Conference. But this upcoming gathering provides an opportunity for governments to make tangible and meaningful progress in addressing this painful chapter of history. I commend the Czech Republic for taking on the leadership of organizing this meeting and welcome the appointment of Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat, former Treasury Deputy Secretary and former Department of State Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, to head the U.S. delegation to the Prague Conference. Ambassador Eizenstat is uniquely qualified to represent the United States at this historic gathering.

I would like to express my gratitude to Senators KERRY and LUGAR, the chair and ranking member, respectively, of the Foreign Relations Committee, for cosponsoring and reporting this resolution expeditiously.

REMEMBERING ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Mr. BURRIS. Mr. President, born in a log cabin west of the Appalachians, Abraham Lincoln grew up in an average family with modest means. Yet despite only 18 months of education and family hardships, Lincoln's strength of character, persistence, and drive are among the many reasons he remains relevant to Americans today. Lincoln's legacy continues to impact the young and old alike even as our country changes and grows.

In an attempt to celebrate the life of the great Abraham Lincoln, an essay contest was held in Illinois, "The Land of Lincoln." Students across the State answered the question: Why is Abraham Lincoln still important today? The following essays celebrate the life and legacy of Lincoln and at the same time showcase the talent of young people across the great State of Illinois. I congratulate Megan Hendrickson, Ahsan Jiva, and Hannah Binnion for their extraordinary essays, and I encourage all students to continue to explore the history and lessons of our remarkable 16th President.

I ask unanimous consent to have the following three essays printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

WHY IS ABRAHAM LINCOLN STILL IMPORTANT TODAY?

(By Megan Hendrickson, Sixth Grade, Miss Jaskowiak)

At the beginning of creation God created mankind in his own image with the intent that all would be treated equally. On January 1, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln established a document called the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the African American slaves from their slave owner's farms. But still, why is Abraham Lincoln still important today? First, Abe Lincoln abolished slavery. Next he kept the nation as one so we would act as one nation not two, and remain

strong. Last but not least, Abe led the nation through the Civil War as Commander in Chief.

President Abraham Lincoln put slavery to a halt when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation to abolish slavery. Today, this has had a huge impact on us. The slavery halt is one of the reasons we have our 44th President Barack Obama. If we still had slavery, we might be two separate nations, the North and the South, and many of the opportunities for African Americans that we have today, simply would not have been possible. When Abe stopped slavery it still didn't stop people from doing horrible things to people. Slavery had ended, but segregation and racial discrimination started. That was the worst part. Many of these things have taken more than a century to bring about change. We went through a time when African American people couldn't even go to school or ride on the bus with others, or they had to sit in the back. I believe if it weren't for Abraham Lincoln, some of these changes might not have even come about and we might still have segregation in schools and public transportation. I believe that Lincoln's feelings regarding race and equality were summed up when he said, "but there is only one race, the human race."

President Lincoln kept the country together at a time when the southern half of the nation was trying to separate from the Union over the issue of slavery. Lincoln said, "This nation cannot exist half slave and half free" and that "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The quote is relative to Abraham Lincoln holding the nation in one or in other words us being one with each other as a nation. Had Lincoln not taken such a strong stand against slavery, and had the strength and courage to hold this country together, our country might not be what it is today. Lincoln held strong to his faith and beliefs even though he knew it would bring about the Civil War.

Abe led the country through war as Commander in Chief, leading with pride and hope for our country. He had entered his Presidency with a task before him greater than he felt he himself could handle, but felt that with God's help and for the sake of our nation, he could not fail. Had Lincoln not had the courage to lead us into and through the Civil War, for the cause that he believed was right, where would our country be today?

Our nation and the world only have one race, the human race. I believe that President Lincoln believed this, and took a stand on his beliefs that have had more than a hundred years of changes in our nation. We all can see why Abraham Lincoln is important today by looking at history and seeing the changes that have taken place over time regarding race and equality. We should all work together as one nation to continue President Abraham Lincoln's legacy and belief that all men are created equal.

WHY IS ABRAHAM LINCOLN STILL IMPORTANT TODAY?

(By Ahsan Jiva, Grade 5, Mrs. L. Anderson)

Abraham Lincoln lived a great life. I don't think there will ever be a person as special and important as him. He helped stop slavery, he had famous speeches, and served as president. The list goes on and on. And that is why he still means so much to us today.

Abraham Lincoln grew up in Hardin County, Kentucky in 1809. As a child, Abraham Lincoln didn't go to school much, which to me is really hard to believe. When Lincoln grew older, the chopped rails and fences for a living. Even though he didn't go to college, he was still able to be a lawyer. After that he tried for the senate. But he didn't make it. Those are just some of the reasons why Lincoln is honored and respected today.

After working a lot, Abraham Lincoln finally became the sixteenth president of the United States. He married Mary Todd Lincoln and had four children. He went against slavery and tried to prove that to people who didn't believe slavery should be stopped. He has once said, "Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally." He fought for the slaves' freedom in the Civil War and won. He signed the Emancipation Proclamation and set all the slaves free. But during the Civil War, Lincoln gave one of the most brilliant speeches of all time. It wasn't very long but it had tons of meaning. It was called the Gettysburg Address. He gave it after the brutal battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. That speech made him famous back then and what makes him important today.

Even though he is not with us today, he is very hard to forget. He is on the penny and five dollar bill. He also has famous monuments made for him, such as the Lincoln Memorial and Mount Rushmore. He will especially be remembered in Illinois, because he spent a lot of his time here. He's known for his tall hat and the first president with a beard. He was also fond of pets. He is known for his many quotes, such as "I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosom, until there shall no longer be doubt, that all men are created equal". There are many more credentials of Abraham Lincoln, but I think I'll stop right there because I don't think there are enough pieces of paper to list all of Lincoln's accomplishments.

Abraham Lincoln was living a great life but sadly it had to end because while he was enjoying a play at Ford's Theater, he was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in 1865. He lived to be fifty-six years old. Lincoln's death broke the heart of many people. He was buried in Springfield, Illinois.

Abraham Lincoln will be missed a lot. His death was very unfortunate, especially since he was in his second term as president. He was important in so many ways. Although he is not with us today he will be remembered forever.

WHY IS ABRAHAM LINCOLN STILL IMPORTANT TODAY?

(By Hannah Binnion, Grade 3, Miss Alday)

Abraham Lincoln is still important today because he was honest. He had a customer that paid too much so he ran miles to give her extra change back. Abe didn't like slavery so he made a law when he was the president stating "There was to be no more slaves." This law helped free slaves. It seemed that he cared not only for himself but for others as well. He wanted to avoid war at any cost it was difficult.

President Lincoln liked to be funny and kind. He loved books for fun and to learn. Lincoln set an example that if we helped others even if their from different cultures we'll get along better.

I feel this is why Abraham Lincoln is still important today. I feel that it is important for us to be honest and not think of people from different cultures as bad and different then we are because of who they are, we should be treated equal.

Lincoln set an example that if we follow his example, it would make us and our community better. He helped us regain our freedom for our countries rights.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the

memory of Luke Cole, a leading environmental attorney and founder and executive director of the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. Mr. Cole passed away on June 6th as the result of a car accident in Uganda. He was 46 years old.

Luke Cole was born in North Adams, MA, on July 15, 1962. He spent parts of his childhood in New York and Santa Barbara, where his father was an art historian at the University of California at Santa Barbara. During this period, Mr. Cole often accompanied his father on research trips to Nigeria. He graduated from Stanford University and Harvard Law School.

Mr. Cole decided against potentially more lucrative career paths in favor of one that allowed him to follow his heart and enable him to make an impact on issues that he cared about most deeply: social justice and the environment. As a result of Mr. Cole's determination and vision, what began with a desk and a phone at a friend's office became the San Francisco-based nonprofit law center, the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment. Today, the center has a staff of 20 and offices throughout central California.

Mr. Cole's accomplishments as the executive director of the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment were numerous and significant. From the rural communities of California's San Joaquin Valley to a 4,000-year-old Inupiat Eskimo village in Kivalina, AK, his legacy can be seen in the traditionally underserved communities that he worked so hard to save from the effects of harmful pollutants. His unyielding commitment to environmental justice inspired and empowered many people from minority communities to take a more active role in combating environmental racism.

In addition to his leadership of the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, Mr. Cole also served on the United States Environmental Protection Agency's National Justice Advisory Council and taught environmental justice seminars at Stanford Law School and UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law. A man of many interests, he was also a dedicated bird watcher and root beer connoisseur, and possessed an extensive collection of miniature spy cameras and bobblehead dolls. He will be missed.

Mr. Cole is survived by his wife Nancy Shelby; father Herbert; mother Alexandra Cole, and stepmother Shelley Cole; two brothers Peter and Thomas; sister, Sarah; stepbrother Daryn; and son Zane. •

COMMENDING TOM MASTERSON

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Tom Masterson for being selected by the U.S. Small Business Administration as the Kentucky Small Business Person of the Year.

Tom Masterson is president of T.E.M. Electric Company, a minority-owned firm with offices in both Louisville and

Lexington. He was nominated by Bechtel Parsons and subsequently selected as the recipient of the Kentucky Small Business Person of the Year award. Not only was Tom Masterson honored at the Governor's Mansion in Frankfort, but the award was also presented during National Small Business Week in Washington, DC. As stated by President Obama at a White House ceremony, Masterson started the business with his own funds and worked from his own home until he landed his first contract. Today, he now employs 75 people and has more than \$12 million of annual revenue.

I now ask my fellow colleagues to join me in congratulating Tom Masterson, the recipient of the Small Business Person of the Year for Kentucky award. His work ethic and dedication are to be admired and he is an inspiration to us all. •

RECOGNIZING SHAWN P. MOORE

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I would like to recognize Mr. Shawn P. Moore as a recipient of the 2009 James Madison Memorial Fellowship. Mr. Moore is a teacher at Russell High School in Russell, KY, and was given this award as a result of his success at the 18th annual fellowship competition.

Mr. Moore was selected for a James Madison Fellowship in competition with applicants from each of the 50 States and U.S. territories. This award requires its recipient to teach American history or social studies in a secondary school for at least 1 year for each year of fellowship support. This fellowship is directed toward current and prospective teachers of American history and social studies and supports graduate study of the history and principles of the Constitution of the United States.

Again, I congratulate Mr. Moore for his hard work and thank him for his dedication to shaping the minds of young Kentuckians. It is teachers like Mr. Moore who will ensure that there will always be a bright future for the Commonwealth. •

CONGRATULATING BEECHWOOD HIGH SCHOOL IN KENTUCKY

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to take this time to congratulate Beechwood High School in Fort Mitchell, KY.

Newsweek magazine recently published a list of the top 1,500 public schools in the country. The 15 schools that made the list from Kentucky rank among the top 6 percent of public schools in the Nation. What is even more impressive is that Kentucky had three more schools ranked this year than in 2008, showing improvement in our State's schools. Placing as 1 of 15 schools from Kentucky on this list, Beechwood High School has earned national recognition for the fine performance of its students and faculty.

I am proud of the students of Beechwood High School. Their commitment