

# ChicagoHistoryMuseum

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## **REFORMERS. LEADERS. CONTEMPORARIES.**

Two exhibitions, two great presidents revealed: Lincoln and Juárez

CHICAGO (August 18, 2009) – The year 2009 marks the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, and the Chicago History Museum is proud to play a major role in presenting a year-long celebration highlighting his historic contributions to America. The celebratory year will climax with two exhibitions opening on October 10 that explore the lives and impact of two great presidents who led their nation during turbulent times: Abraham Lincoln of the United States and Benito Juárez of Mexico. To celebrate the opening weekend, admission to the Museum on October 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> is only a penny.

The exhibition, *Abraham Lincoln Transformed*, tells the dramatic story of Abraham Lincoln from a new perspective. Featuring more than one hundred and fifty artifacts from the Museum's collection, the exhibition will help visitors discover Lincoln's transformation during the Civil War as he abandoned his moderate views on slavery and took radical steps to end American slavery and extend equal citizenship rights to some African Americans. The exhibition will reveal a man who struggled to reconcile his different views on slavery and race and visitors will appreciate how Lincoln's transformation moved the entire nation closer to its founding democratic ideals.

The Museum will also examine Lincoln's contemporary, President Benito Juárez. *Benito Juárez and the Making of Modern Mexico* is co-curated with the National Museum of Mexican Art and is an introduction to the president of Mexico from 1858-72. Juárez was devoted to making Mexico a modern Republic with just laws, equal citizenship rights, and economic development. Over 25 national treasures from Mexico that have never been exhibited in the United States will be on display. These artifacts are on loan from two of Mexico's governmental institutions, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia and the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público de México. The Museum also recognizes CONACULTA (National Council for Culture and Arts) for this unique opportunity.

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Looking at history from a global perspective, both men played critical, transformative roles that respectively changed the United States and Mexico into modern nations. Lincoln and Juárez dealt with national crises, sparked controversy during their lifetimes, and became larger-than-life national heroes after death.

In celebration of the Lincoln Bicentennial and the exhibition openings, the Museum will host the Lincoln Ball on Friday, October 9. The black tie gala event is chaired by Glenn F. Tilton of United Airlines. The event co-chairs for the evening are Judy Konen and Cynthia Pacholick. A “live” auction will feature a lifetime sponsorship of Abraham Lincoln’s stove top hat, along with dinner and dancing to complete the evening.

The Museum’s programming includes a festive opening day on Saturday, October 10, with music by Mariachi Mexico Vivo, a presentation of *Meet the Lincolns*, performances by the Ballet Folklorico Nacional de Chicago, and a rendition of Aaron Copland’s *A Lincoln Portrait* featuring Bill Kurtis. The festivities begin at 10:00 a.m. and continue until 3:00 p.m. On Sunday, October 11, the film, *Mexico’s White House* will be shown in the Museum’s auditorium. Bus and walking tours along with lectures about Lincoln and Juárez will be presented from September through December. More information on these events can be found at [www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org).

Chicago-based Exelon is the presenting sponsor of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration. Additional support has been provided by the Crown Family and by Gordon and Carole Segal. The Museum gratefully acknowledges the Motorola Foundation and The Nathan Cummings Foundation for their support of *Abraham Lincoln Transformed*. The Joyce Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, and the Motorola Foundation are recognized for their support of *Benito Juárez and the Making of Modern Mexico*. The Museum also thanks JP Morgan Chase, The Guild of the Chicago Historical Society, and Jacob and Rosaline Cohn Foundation for their support of educational programming for the celebration. Adult programming is generously supported by Bank of America. The Museum recognizes Tawani Foundation for their support of penny admission during opening weekend.

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The Chicago History Museum, a major museum and research center for Chicago and American history, is located at 1601 N. Clark Street. The Museum can be reached by CTA buses 11, 22, 36, 72, 151, and 156. Parking is conveniently located one block north of the Museum at Clark and LaSalle Streets (enter on Stockton Drive). Admission to the Museum is \$14 adults with audio tour, \$12 seniors/students with audio tour, free for children 12 years and younger. General Admission is free on Mondays. Please call 312.642.4600 or visit us at [www.chicagohistory.org](http://www.chicagohistory.org). The Chicago History Museum is affiliated with the Chicago Historical Society and acknowledges the Chicago Park District’s generous support of all the Museum’s activities.