



U.S. CAPITOL  
*Visitor Center*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Lincoln-Related Items on Display at Capitol Visitor Center**

WASHINGTON, DC – Terrie S. Rouse, CEO for Visitor Services at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, announced today that a number of special items are now on display in the Visitor Center’s Exhibition Hall in celebration of the bicentennial of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln. The display of Lincoln documents will continue through September 30, 2009.

“From 1847-49 during the 30<sup>th</sup> Congress, Abraham Lincoln was a Member of the House of Representatives from Illinois. We are honored to pay tribute to his legacy both as a Member of Congress and as President, and we are thrilled to be part of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration,” said Rouse.

These items include the telegram that President Lincoln sent to Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant on August 17, 1864, agreeing with his strategy to maintain pressure on the Confederate Army at Petersburg, Virginia, rather than pull the Army north to protect Washington, DC. Known as the “bull-dog grip” telegram, the message urges Grant to “hold on with a bull-dog grip and chew and choke as much as possible.” Another document on display is President Lincoln’s nomination of Ulysses S. Grant to be Lieutenant General of the Army on February 29, 1864, a position previously held by George Washington.

Also included is President Lincoln’s Annual Message to Congress for 1862 (today known as the State of the Union address) referring to the battle of Antietam as a “fiery trial.” In this address, President Lincoln calls upon Congress to abolish slavery by Constitutional amendment. He writes, “In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free – honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best, hope of earth . . . “The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just – a way, which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.”

The Pacific Railway Act of 1862, legislation offering land grants as incentives to private companies to complete a transcontinental railway and telegraph line, is on display, and visitors will be able to see President Lincoln’s signature on the document.

On display in April will be Lincoln’s draft of legislation to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia dated January 10, 1849. The draft is actually Lincoln’s notes for a bill written while he was a House member. The President was unable to garner enough support for the legislation, and it did not move forward.

On permanent display in the Visitor Center is a table used during President Lincoln’s second inauguration and the “catafalque” or platform on which President Lincoln’s casket rested when he lay in state in the Rotunda.

As the largest expansion of the U.S. Capitol, the Visitor Center provides numerous amenities to visitors. Since opening on December 2, 2008, the Capitol Visitor Center has welcomed more than 200,000 people wishing to visit the Capitol. For more information about the Capitol Visitor Center, go to [www.visitthecapitol.gov](http://www.visitthecapitol.gov).

Editors Note: Two attachments

1. Photo of Lincoln's "bull-dog grip" telegram - Records of the Secretary of War, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

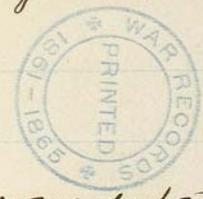
2. Photo of Lincoln table – on loan from The Massachusetts Historical Society, image courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Behring Center

Executive Mansion,

"Cypher"

Washington, August 17, 1864.

Lieut. Gen. Grant  
City Point, Va.



I have seen your despatch expressing your unwillingness to break your hold when you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog grip, and chew & choke, as much as possible.

A. Lincoln

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