

Stephen Foster and the Rise of Popular Music” Part of the Looking for Lincoln Conversations Live Online Events

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SPRINGFIELD - Enjoy the toe-tapping songs of one of America’s most prolific and influential composers, Stephen Foster. From his first hit with “Oh Susannah” in 1848 through his death in 1864, Stephen Foster created music that touched millions and lives and live on to this very day.

This month's Looking for Lincoln Conversations features Foster's music performed by musician and folklorist Chris Vallillo. Viewers can watch and participate in the program on August 4, 2021 at 7:00 pm on the Looking for Lincoln Facebook page and YouTube channel. The program is recorded for viewing after the premier.

In his lifetime, Foster's songs were known and sung around the world, performed by classical musicians and sung by slaves in the fields of Georgia. His most popular songs include "Camptown Races," "Old Folks at Home" ("Swanee River"), "My Old Kentucky Home," "Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair," and "Beautiful Dreamer." Foster's music played a large part in the creation of an emerging popular American culture. One of his songs even topped the charts of the hit parade some 75 years after his death.

Award winning folksinger and multi-instrumentalist Chris Vallillo performs nine of Foster's best loved songs and explores the impact of this legendary American icon and his music on American culture.

"We are proud to host this series of Looking for Lincoln conversations. These live, digital programs cover a range of topics that depict the life and times of Abraham Lincoln in the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. Few individuals have so profoundly influenced American history as did Abraham Lincoln. Millions around the world are inspired by the story of Lincoln's rise from humble beginnings to President of the United States, his qualities of integrity and courage and his decisive leadership traits that carried a fragile nation through one of its most trying periods," said Sarah Watson, executive director.

These programs are free and broadcast live on Looking for Lincoln's Facebook page and YouTube channel, and will end with a question and answer session with the virtual audience.

Looking for Lincoln Conversations is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition is the coordinating entity for the 43-county Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. It is a partnership of organizations and individuals dedicated to enhancing the communities and landscapes of central Illinois through recognition and support of their significant natural, cultural and historical legacies. Few individuals have so profoundly influenced American history as did Abraham Lincoln. Millions around the world are inspired by the story of Lincoln's rise from humble beginnings to President of the United States, his qualities of integrity and courage and his decisive leadership – traits that carried a fragile nation through one of its most trying periods.

For more information about the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, go to www.lookingforlincoln.org.