

Digest

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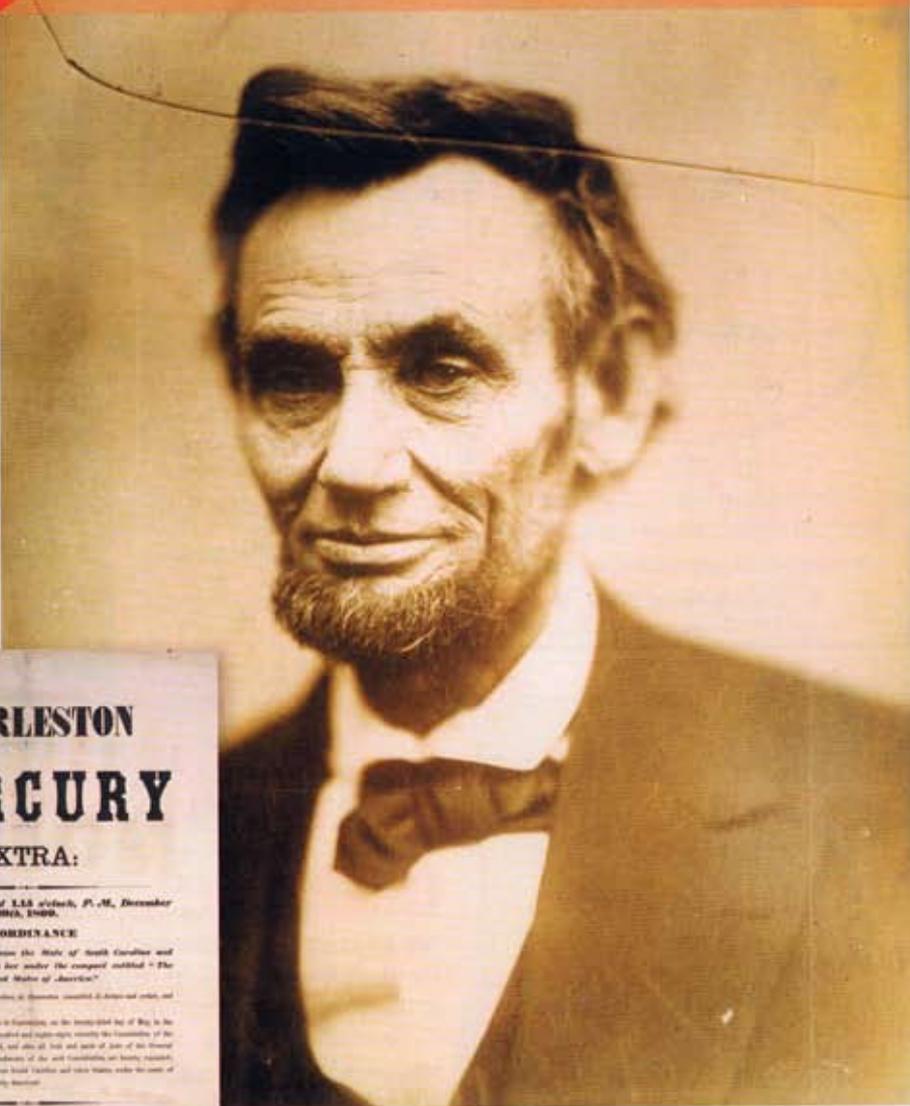
Journey of Hope

PLACES Liberation. When it came to the issue of slavery, President Abraham Lincoln knew abolishing it was the right decision to make. But it wasn't an easy one.

Through April 15, the State Library of Ohio is presenting "Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation." A retrospective featuring facsimiles of original photos, lithographs and documents, "Forever Free" chronicles Lincoln's transformation from a cautious moderate into "The Great Emancipator" history reveres.

Although the 16th president fervently believed in the ideals of freedom for all, he was also a consummate politician who feared that a direct attack on slavery would split the Union and end America's success with self-government. Lincoln wrestled with the right way to proceed and, in the end, his moral judgment prevailed. The Emancipation Proclamation recommitted the nation to the Founding Fathers' vision of equality.

The exhibit explains Lincoln's thoughts about slavery by exploring his boyhood, the Civil War, the role of black soldiers in the conflict, the final months of battle and the president's



LEFT AND ABOVE: A newspaper from 1860; one of the last photographs of Abraham Lincoln, taken by Alexander Gardner.

assassination. David Zeidberg, director of the Huntington Library in San Marino, Calif., an organizer of the display, hopes visitors to "Forever Free" will connect with the celebrated commander in chief in new ways.

"Like so many of our great Americans, Abraham Lincoln has become an icon to the point where it's almost like he wasn't human," reflects Zeidberg. "It's our goal to show that he was a real person struggling over some huge problems and having to make some extraordinarily difficult decisions.

"In some ways," he adds, "that's not unlike us in our own lives." — Linda Feagler

For more information about "Forever Free," visit library.ohio.gov or call 614/644-7061.