



CITY OF PEEKSKILL
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

John G. Testa
Mayor

Life-Sized Statue of Abraham Lincoln to be Unveiled In Dramatic Civil War-Style Celebration.

*Seven-Foot Tall Memorial Donated by Ginsburg Development Companies;
Honor Guard of Reenactors Will Fire 21-Gun Salute.
Historian Howard Holzer Will Speak.*

Event is Scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 28 at 11:00 a.m. At Lincoln Depot Museum at 41 South Water Street, Peekskill, NY.

For Immediate Release

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PEEKSKILL, NY—On Saturday, Oct. 27, at 11:00 a.m. a magnificent life-sized sculpture of Abraham Lincoln will be unveiled in a spectacular ceremony that will include a 21-gun salute by Civil War reenactors and a keynote address by historian Howard Holzer. Former Governor George Pataki will also be attending.

Standing almost seven feet tall, the bronze statue was created by sculptor Richard Masloski and sponsored with a donation of \$100,000 by Ginsburg Development Companies (GDC). It will be located at almost exactly the same place where Lincoln spoke when he stopped at Peekskill on the way to his inauguration in 1861. Lincoln's remains also paused at Peekskill on their way back to Illinois in 1865.

“Museums are more than buildings. They are vivid, living places that bring history to life,” says Mayor John Testa. “Few things will bring to life Peekskill’s importance in the 19th century and the sacrifices it made better than this magnificent statue,” he said.

One sign of the excitement around the creation of the Lincoln Depot Museum and the unveiling of the statue is the number of reenactors planning to attend the event. Civil War reenactors are

excited about this tribute to Lincoln and the creation of a new historic resource in the Hudson Valley. At least two dozen are scheduled to attend in period-exact uniforms, including Civil War-era Enfield muskets, which they will fire in salute of Lincoln.

A key component of the city's Revitalization Plan, the Lincoln Depot was purchased by the City of Peekskill a few years ago and has been undergoing restoration ever since. Lincoln's statue will be located at Lincoln Plaza, and will be part of a museum that will celebrate small-town America's participation in the Civil War.

Lincoln Plaza will eventually be the centerpiece of a new riverfront development planned by GDC that will be home to hundreds of residents and which will turn an area that is mostly blighted space and parking lots into an energetic new neighborhood. "Nothing is more appropriate than to build a new neighborhood on this site," Testa says. "A century ago, this property was filled with foundries and factories. Soon it will be filled with homes, which is a perfect use for land with such spectacular views."

Immense amounts of planning and effort have gone into the Revitalization Plan, Testa says. "We cannot simply hope that our city will become a tourist attraction. We need to tap into its long and exciting history and use the many stories we find to create attractions that will draw in adults and youths alike," Testa says. The unveiling of the Lincoln statue is the latest important historic preservation event to take place in Peekskill in recent weeks. GDC recently donated 40 acres of historic space that played an important role in the Revolutionary War to the city for use as open space and parkland.

Working from a sketch by noted Civil War artist Paul R. Martin III, Masloski created the work using the lost wax casing technique. Lincoln made his only stop in Westchester County at Peekskill, where he stepped off the train and on to a platform specially built for the event to give a brief talk. Martin's sketch was based on local newspaper reports of the event.

A thriving industrial community in the 19th century, Peekskill was home to many politically active residents, which is why Lincoln stopped at the City. Important figures included Congressman William Nelson and future corporate and political leader Chauncy Depew.

Inspired by Lincoln's talk, actions and life, residents of Peekskill founded America's first Lincoln Society. The Society has now met continuously for more than 100 years, and played a key role in the fund raising for the statue.

A nationally-recognized sculptor, Masloski's work is on display all over the country. He specializes in Americana items, and has done many full-sized sculptures. Numerous pieces are on display in Hudson Valley Region, including the Yonkers Gold Star Mothers Monument, the Westchester County Police Memorial, the Orange County Veterans memorial and the Town of Wappinger War Memorial.

Masloski's statue shows Lincoln standing tall and alert in his stovepipe hat hand on his lapel as he speaks to the thousands of Peekskill residents gathered to see the man who had just been elected president.

Lincoln's speech was short, but powerful, a pointed request for unity and patriotic support at a time of national crisis. This is his entire talk:

“Ladies and gentlemen. I have but a moment to stand before you, to listen to, and return your kind greeting. I thank you for this reception, and for the pleasant manner in which it is tendered to me by our mutual friend. [Congressman William Nelson, a Peekskill resident.]

“I will say in a single sentence, in regard to the difficulties which lie before me and our beloved country, that if I can only be as generously and unanimously sustained as the demonstrations I have witnessed indicate I shall be, I shall not fail.

“But without your sustaining hands, I am sure that neither I nor any other man can hope to surmount these difficulties.

“I trust that in the course I shall pursue, I shall be sustained not only by the party that elected me, but by the patriotic people of the whole country.”

For more information, call Mayor John Testa at 914-734-4105.

