

The Boynton Society

LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

WINTER 2016

The Land of Lincoln

Rob Davis '74

During the summer of 2014 I attended a Björklunden seminar on Abraham Lincoln taught by Lawrence alumnus James Cornelius '81, the illustrious Lincoln curator at the Lincoln Library and Museum in Springfield, Ill. The subject of Lincoln is endlessly fascinating, so when I learned that Mark Breseman '78 would be leading a Springfield tour in July 2015, I jumped at the opportunity to immerse myself again in Lincoln-ology. While Mark is a great traveling companion, the real reason this trip was so appealing was that it was led by Jerry Podair, Robert S. French Professor of American Studies and professor of history at Lawrence University, and also by James Cornelius (aka Corny). They did not disappoint. They were endless founts of knowledge about Lincoln and the Civil War.

About 19 people gathered in Springfield. As we waited for dinner to arrive, Lincoln himself (impersonated by Fritz Kline) entered the room and gave his impressions of the ongoing presidential election of 1864. Lincoln is quite animated when speaking in his high voice. It's fascinating to see a historical figure come alive this way. We would see more of Lincoln/Kline in the days that followed.

On our first full day of exploring, we saw the Lincoln Library and Museum in the morning and then toured the current Illinois State Capital Building. We finished the day on a Lincoln Ghost Tour, which of course we all took quite literally and seriously.

On Wednesday, we toured Lincoln's home, which sits among several blocks of restored historic homes that existed when Lincoln lived there. It is quite easy to imagine oneself strolling along saying hello to members of the Lincoln family and neighbors. Just blocks from Lincoln's home stands the Old State Capital Building at the center of the main square. It was here that I could best imagine Lincoln as a professional lawyer mingling with judges and fellow lawyers preparing cases or discussing the latest news. The building is wonderfully restored with period furnishings. We finished the day with Kline's rendition of Lincoln's farewell address when he left his hometown for Washington, D.C., in 1861. The presentation was so moving it left tears in my eyes.

On Thursday we hopped a bus to visit New Salem, a reconstructed village where Lincoln first lived as an adult. Rain robbed us of precious time to see more of this living museum staffed with tradespeople who explained life in the early 1800s. Back in Springfield, we toured the Executive Mansion, the third oldest in the country. What we saw was beautiful, but the structure is badly in need of repair, which the governor is working hard to rectify by



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raising private money. Our last stop was Frank Lloyd Wright's Dana-Thomas house, constructed in 1904 for a wealthy heiress. The house is an exquisite example of FLW design—one can see his influence in every square inch of the house. I wouldn't want to live in this house, but I can't deny its beauty.

Friday arrived and we wrapped up with a trip to Lincoln's tomb located several miles north of the center of town. I most admired the bronze statues

inside the corridor that circle the base, which depict Lincoln during various periods of his life. Also associated with Lincoln's burial is the rather macabre story of the 17 times his body was moved—and the five times the coffin was opened—before finally resting at this tomb.

Find out more at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funeral_and_burial_of_Abraham_Lincoln



Once again, it started with a phone call. This time I was in Colorado visiting with a number of my Lawrence classmates. My cell phone rang and a woman who was attending that Sunday's seminar dinner was wondering if there was power at the lodge and we would be serving dinner. Not having heard anything different, I told her we have a generator so I'm sure everything was fine and suggested she should head to Björklunden. After we hung up I thought it might be a good idea to get a little more background information, so I gave the lodge a call, trying a bunch of different numbers, until finally reaching Kim on her cell phone. That's when I heard the rest of the story. I

probably was a little optimistic in telling that woman that everything would be fine. A very severe windstorm had roared through Door County, Baileys Harbor in particular. There were trees down all over, the roads were blocked and the power was indeed out.

If there was one silver lining in this whole situation, it was that the storm came through early afternoon on a Sunday at a time when a number of our seminar participants had yet to arrive. The entire staff rallied to try to make the lodge as welcoming as possible. Mark Franke valiantly traveled to Björklunden and began clearing the main road. Chef Steve Martin began making plans to serve dinner without having any of his usual cooking facilities available. Sam and the rest of the staff scrambled to ready the lodge for the guests and to further prepare for the possibility of not having power for the rest of the night.

I kept getting these reports remotely as I was standing on a deck looking at spectacular mountain views. It was hard to comprehend the extent of the damage, even as Kim and Mark kept up reports to me as their busy schedules allowed. They told me it looked like a war zone around the chapel and my old house, the stabbur. The road was completely blocked in both directions to get to the stabbur. The miraculous thing about this whole situation was that even though many large trees fell near the chapel and the stabbur, none made direct contact with the structures. There was even a very large spruce tree that snapped off next to the studio—it also missed the building. It seemed the spirit of Winifred Boynton was quite active in protecting her beloved Björklunden buildings.



Mark was able to clear the main road to accommodate our out-of-town guests who continued to arrive, and Sam got on the phone and alerted our local commuters that they should stay home that night. Of course, most of them were well aware that there were issues, as the entire county experienced the dramatic storm conditions.

We were able to muddle through the first night with a simple dinner and enough emergency lighting to make the lodge livable. However, our guests needed to make do with limited water supply and no light in their rooms. Fortunately for us, our seminar participants are a hardy and easygoing bunch! The next day brought a cold breakfast, some disheveled seminar participants and no power to supply the audio-visual or Internet needs for our seminar leaders. Classes continued, however, and much learning occurred! Mark brought in a front-end loader and an extra chain saw operator, and they completed the heroic task of opening all the roads and clearing the trees away from the chapel. The power was still not on, however, and it was getting to the point where a decision had to be made about whether we could expect our seminar guests to camp out the entire week.



It was decided that if the power did not come back on early Monday evening we would have to cancel the seminars and send people on their way. Within an hour of having to make that fateful decision, power was restored! Again, with the work of the marvelous staff we were able to get back up and running at the lodge for our seminar guests, as if nothing had happened. It was another story outside the lodge when we looked at all the trees that were down. When I got to Björklunden on Tuesday morning and was able to view all the damage firsthand, if I didn't know any better, I would say there had been a mini-tornado that came through in front of the stabbur and the chapel. It was truly amazing how many trees were blown over or snapped off, and how they miraculously missed all the buildings. By that time, Mark had already developed a plan to get all the downed trees away from the buildings. Mark and the sturdy and energetic Lawrence students spent as much time as they could cutting and hauling brush. We had just a few days to prepare the lodge and grounds for our biggest donor event of the year—the Boynton Society Gala. This year it included the dedication of the Richard Warch Memorial Grove, which also had plenty of trees down covering the new benches.

The bottom line was, through lots of hard work, we were able to get the entire facility looking great for the Gala, and over the course of the next few weeks the brush and logs were removed. When you visit Björklunden for a seminar this season make sure you take a peek at the chapel and walk past the Memorial Grove and the stabbur. You will certainly notice much more sunlight getting into these areas. I guess we're just following up on Lawrence University's motto—*Light! More Light!*

P.S. As many of you have heard by now, Samantha Szynskie '09 will be leaving us in March to pursue other interests in Portland, Ore. Sam is a fantastic colleague who has made a tremendous impact not only on the seminar program but on all facets of Björklunden. She will truly be missed. Sam, we wish you the best!

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Greetings from the Boynton Society

As we experience another winter in Wisconsin, I find myself thinking of this as the “off-season” at Björklunden. But while it is certainly quieter at this time of year without week-long seminars and weekend weddings, the academic year is arguably the period when Björklunden is most active in fulfilling its mission as Lawrence’s “Northern Campus.” This year, more than 1,500 students and faculty will settle

in to Björklunden for long weekends of deep bonding, learning and relaxation. As you will read, students greatly appreciate the unique experience you all grant them. Groups like cross country, German Club, Improv, Immunology, Model UN, and many music ensembles will be able to make memories at Björklunden this year. The breadth and depth of learning experiences is what President Rik Warch had in mind when he pushed the trustees and faculty to envision what Björklunden could be if we saw it as an integral part of Lawrence’s educational mission. It’s why we raised the capital to rebuild and then expand the lodge to accommodate enough guests in housing and workspaces. The trick was to do so while preserving the intimacy and solitude we all cherish ... and boy did we pull it off! The lodge is still a place to escape and recharge, but it also hums with learning and innovation, especially when the students are here.

In previous messages Jone and I noted how daunting a challenge we faced in succeeding Bob Schaupp ’51 as co-chairs of the Boynton Society. A full year into the experience, I am more aware of that than ever. At the risk of embarrassing my friend Bob, who has never sought any attention for himself, I cannot any longer resist lifting him up for your recognition and praise. Bob has done countless things to help make Lawrence and Björklunden what it is today. To list his attributes and how they served the college would only scratch the surface of how important Bob has been. For me personally, Bob will always be a role model, an ethical touchstone, a treasured fraternity brother and a source of wisdom. For all Lawrentians, Bob Schaupp should be admired as an example of the best Lawrence can produce. For Boynton Society members especially, he stands as one of Björklunden’s strong backbones. Thanks, Bob!

I know you’ll enjoy this issue and all it offers to us. Thank you for being the most steadfast friends and supporters of Björklunden.

Best wishes,

Jeff Riester

Co-Chair, Boynton Society

“Björklunden has been a very important part of my Lawrence experience. The environment and the atmosphere of the lodge are conducive to focusing on learning, especially when working with a large group. It’s a nice retreat away from the hustle and bustle on campus. I know I am one of so many students who love being able to relax, rejuvenate and re-focus on life in general. Plus, who doesn’t love enjoying some of the best food ever made while in your socks?”

—Nat Detienne ’16



Boldts Receive Björklunden Presidential Award

Pat '48 and O.C. Boldt have been honored with the 2015 Björklunden Presidential Award for the amazing things they have done over many decades to significantly contribute to the betterment of the entire Björklunden community.

They have been long-time Boynton Society members and important advocates for the lodge, attending and hosting events; developing and strengthening relationships with Lawrence alumni, friends and community members; mentoring development staff members; engaging in fundraising; and promoting the spirit of Björklunden for future generations.

O.C. is one of the people chiefly responsible for the amazing facility we have today. After the original lodge burned in August 1993, O.C. was instrumental in securing a fair insurance settlement for the destroyed building, and he went on to oversee the construction of the new lodge. His incredible management skills ensured the building was completed in less than a year to allow it to be ready for the 1996 seminar season.

O.C. is an emeritus trustee of Lawrence University, and served on the steering committee for *Extending the Reach: A Campaign for Björklunden* from 2005–07.



As a result of this successful campaign, more than \$4 million was raised to underwrite the construction of a 20,000 square-foot addition to the lodge.

As we all know, the enhanced lodge has enabled Lawrence to increase the number and variety of its annual adult summer seminars and accommodate more seminar participants. It has allowed 40 additional Lawrence students to visit Door County each weekend during the academic year to partake in a Björklunden experience. More recently, O.C. and Pat championed

the effort to hire a staff person to keep the grounds, facilities and entire Björklunden estate in proper working order, ensuring a proactive approach to maintenance.

Pat and O.C. have been generous and thoughtful supporters of both Björklunden and Lawrence University. Their volunteer efforts have had a transformative impact upon the lodge, creating new opportunities for Lawrence students and the Door County community. They have helped ensure that Björklunden remains a place of sanctuary for all. We applaud Pat and O.C. for their dedicated service to Björklunden and offer them our sincere appreciation!

“I don’t know if I can easily put into words what a wonderfully rejuvenating experience this week has been. Everything from the seminar, to the beautiful setting and lodge, the meal preparation and delivery, the opportunity to engage in conversation with each of the guests and the quietness of the whole environment has been a balm for the soul that quiets the spirit. It has been a totally satisfying, uplifting, relaxing and restful experience.” —Janet Voeks





Memorial Grove Honors Memory of President Warch

The Memorial Grove honors the memory of Richard Warch, Lawrence University's 14th President, whose vision and leadership helped make Björklunden the treasure that it is today.

As many of you know, in August of 1993, an electrical fire essentially leveled the lodge. Once Lawrence overcame the pain of the loss, it became apparent that the college, through its Board of Trustees, would need to make some tough decisions with long-reaching implications. Rik is remembered for countless things, but one of them is the implementation of his vision for Björklunden at that time. He said, "Björklunden has rich potential to serve as a distinguishing feature and asset of Lawrence. In a world that threatens at once to be characterized by atomization and mass culture, it offers the kind of setting and sanctuary that can afford members of the Lawrence community special opportunities for reflection, renewal and refreshment, to engage themselves and each other in meaningful and purposeful ways, and to be touched and uplifted by what Donald and Winifred Boynton accomplished and intended there."

Rik's call to action to rebuild Björklunden not only created a new, important part of the academic fabric of Lawrence, but also allowed for the continuation of the Björklunden Summer Seminar program, a program that started in 1980 and has provided—and continues to provide—Lawrence alumni, parents, Door County community members and other friends of Björklunden the opportunity to engage in meaningful, intellectually-stimulating and rewarding educational experiences.

Björklunden is "a sanctuary for all," as Winifred Boynton put it, and the Memorial Grove allows that sanctuary to be a final place of rest and remembrance for those whom we wish to honor. Rik's love for this special place was shared by many others, who are also remembered in the grove. Ashes of loved ones may be spread, or their urns may be buried, in the grove, allowing them to forever rest on the peaceful, beautiful Björklunden shore of Lake Michigan. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to Mark Breseman, 920-832-6519 or mark.d.breseman@lawrence.edu





Welcome New Staff

We are excited to welcome Andy Plank '14 to the Björklunden team! Andy is our new full-time staff assistant, responsible for directing all on-site aspects of the Björklunden student program during the weekends.

Andy is no stranger to Björklunden, as he frequented the lodge during his time as a Lawrence student. Andy studied music performance and music education, so he would visit Björklunden on weekends with many different clubs, classes and ensembles. Andy also worked as an intern at the Tritone Fantasy Jazz Camp seminar. He was always struck by the importance and uniqueness of Björklunden. He was inspired to stay and work as a student-weekend assistant while student teaching during his fifth and final year at Lawrence.

In his time off, Andy enjoys working as a percussion instructor with the West De Pere High School Band, as well as teaching private lessons to students in Appleton, Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay. Andy shares, "I am so happy to be here and be a part of making the Björklunden experience unique and special to all who visit."

Please be sure to say hello and welcome Andy the next time you see him at the lodge!



2016 Björklunden Seminars

As a member of the Boynton Society, you have the opportunity to pre-register for Björklunden seminars before the general public. We hope you received your letter earlier this month which listed the 2016 seminars and will take advantage of the opportunity to pre-register soon!

For more information about the 2016 seminars and to pre-register, please contact Samantha at Björklunden.

Phone: 920-839-2216

Email: szynskis@lawrence.edu



Björklunden is a special part of Door County and you are a special part of Björklunden.

Please consider a legacy gift to the college and join the Lawrence-Downer Legacy Circle, our recognition society for those who remember Lawrence in their estate plans.

For more information, call 920-832-6557
or visit legacygiving.lawrence.edu.



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