FAU Extends ‘Lincoln and the American Civil War’ Exhibition at Wimberly Library

BOCA RATON, Fla. (March 14, 2013) — Florida Atlantic University will alter the exhibition schedule for “Lincoln and the American Civil War,” a 450-piece collection of rare letters, artwork, artifacts, military uniforms, weapons, documents and portraits that recounts the story of a fragmented United States during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, by adding viewing by appointments and extending the date through Friday, April 12, at the Wimberly Library, 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton campus. No appointments are necessary to view the exhibition Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. through March 27.

“One-hundred and fifty years later, we are still trying to make sense of the meaning of the Civil War,” said Stephen Engle, Ph.D., professor, FAU’s Department of History. “Seeing exhibitions like this one helps transport us back in time and causes us to stop, think and reflect on the importance of that time and place, and how the war’s legacy still defines us.”

The exhibition’s materials are on loan from Hollywood resident Bob Matis, whose first trip to Gettysburg with his father 25 years ago ignited a passion for Civil War history; and FAU Libraries’ permanent collections, including the Marvin & Sybil Weiner Spirit of America Collection, the Elliot Cross and James A. Cross Civil War Collection and the Arlyn Austin Katims Civil War Collection.

The exhibition, presented by FAU Libraries and the Department of History, reveals a deeper look into the lives and work of Union and Confederate soldiers and President Lincoln. Among the highlights are a regimental flag carried during the 1864 Battle of Cold Harbor, which has been recorded as one of American’s bloodiest and most lopsided battles; a section on Civil War medicine, including a primitive surgical kit in a drawer next to a modern-day equivalent and a letter from Confederate Surgeon General Samuel P. Moore that includes a recipe for field-ready quinine made from tree barks and whiskey; an assortment of ceremonial and battle swords and sabers; a display of hand-carved board games and drinking flasks; tin-type, ambrotype and daguerreotype pictures in cases that soldiers carried into battle; a display of an officer’s quarters,
complete with a Sibley stove, wooden keg barriers for beer and wine, an artillery sponge and a folding chair with tapestry; manila bracelets that were used as currency and worn by slaves during auctions; a section that showcases a letter in support of the Emancipation Proclamation, an original and signed copy of the 15th Amendment and keepsakes from Lincoln’s memorial services.

Matis, a courier for a shipping company, earned extra money painting houses after work to acquire his collection. His father was a Korean War veteran and a history buff and his brother is a U.S. Navy officer. Collecting historical artifacts provides a tangible way of giving meaning to the Civil War and identifying with the nation’s sacrifice.

“Sharing the collection and talking about it is a way that I express myself,” said Matis. “People get so heated when you discuss politics. Many people have ancestors who fought in the Civil War and we all share this history.”

Metered parking is available at the Wimberly Library. For more information or to make appointments, call 561-297-2693 or email lysca@fau.edu.

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Photo Captions
Lincoln1jpg: Hollywood resident Bob Matis collected this regimental flag that was carried through the Battle of Cold Harbor in June 1864 and is included in the “Lincoln and the Civil War” exhibition at the Wimberly Library through Friday, April 12.
Lincoln2jpg: Slave shackles (leg irons) are on display in the “Lincoln and the Civil War” exhibition through Friday, April 12, at FAU’s Wimberly Library.
Lincoln3jpg: An unidentified soldier’s photo is among those on display in “Lincoln and the Civil War” exhibition at FAU’s Wimberly Library.
Lincoln4jpg: A drum belonging to the 44th NY State Volunteers Regiment, 1862, is displayed in the “Lincoln and the Civil War” exhibition at FAU’s Wimberly Library.

About Florida Atlantic University:
Florida Atlantic University, established in 1961, officially opened its doors in 1964 as the fifth public university in Florida. Today, the University, with an annual economic impact of $6.3 billion, serves more than 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students at sites throughout its six-county service region in southeast Florida. FAU’s world-class teaching and research faculty serves students through 10 colleges: the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters, the College of Business, the College for Design and Social Inquiry, the College of Education, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate College, the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College, the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine, the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing and the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science. FAU is ranked as a High Research Activity institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The University is placing special focus on the rapid development of three signature themes – marine and coastal issues, biotechnology and contemporary societal challenges – which provide opportunities for faculty and students to build upon FAU’s existing strengths in research and scholarship. For more information, visit www.fau.edu.