

**Title of Session:** Social Studies Forum - Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers

**Moderator:** Michael Hutchison

**Guest Speakers:** Karen Needles, Karen Winnick, and Sharon Snively

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Room: Social Studies Forum Group

**MichaelH:** Welcome to tonight's special Social Studies forum

**MichaelH:** Everyone knows that Abe Lincoln had a beard... but many may not know why...

**MichaelH:** Tonight, we'll not only discuss that, but some other interesting information about a little girl who thought a beard would get Lincoln elected president...

**MichaelH:** but...

**MichaelH:** before we do... let's start our session with some introductions...

**MichaelH:** would everyone let us know who you are, where you are located geographically, and what you teach?

**BJB2:** Welcome, Karen, Karen and Sharon! I teach communication in Pennsylvania.

**ValeriePe:** Houston, Texas. I am a student teacher currently in first grade but will be with third graders in a few weeks

**KennethRM:** Hi, I am Kenny Moore, an instructor at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio and my students are observing this session to see how TappedIn works.

**KarenNee:** Karen Needles, history teacher for 15 years, worked at the LOC with the American Memory collections for 3 years, and started my own company in 2002 called Documents on Wheels. In 2002 I launched a massive digital project called the Lincolnarchives.us project. I am out of College Park, Md.

**MichaelH** is Michael Hutchison, a social studies teacher in southwestern Indiana and the Social Studies forum host (and newly elected president of the Indiana Computer Educators)

**JasonGra:** Hi, I am Jason, At-Risk/ Social Studies Teacher in Milwaukee, WI

**SharonJS:** Sharon Snively- Delphos Library Director from Kansas

**KarenWinnick:** Karen Winnick, author-illustrator of Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers. I'm in Los

Angeles.

**MichaelH:** I mentioned this a few minutes ago, but we had some folks come in late... is there anyone who doesn't know how to detach the chat window?

**MichaelH:** Also, Karen, I don't know if you are planning to show any webpages tonight... if you are, I need to tell everyone how to avoid problems with pop-up blockers

**KarenNee:** I am going to give them the address for the website, but go ahead and give them the scoop on the pop up blockers

**MichaelH:** If Karen types a URL for a website, it will show up as a link.

**MichaelH:** you can simply click on the link and open the site in a new browser window

**MichaelH:** however, a pop-up blocker may cause problems. Simply hold the CTRL key when you click, and you should be fine

**KarenNee:** Okay are we ready to go?

**MichaelH:** Karen, I think we're set

**MichaelH** gives Karen the "go" sign

**KarenNee:** Okay, then I will get started. This is a really exciting time for everyone here tonight. As I stated earlier, I started a massive digital project in 2002 called the Lincoln archives project

**KarenNee:** The goal of the project is to digitize all of the Federal records at the National Archives that deal with the Lincoln administration.

**KarenNee:** They are being scanned in full color and are going online. Each record group is being systematically checked entry by entry, box by box for any documents dated between March 4, 1861 and April 15, 1865

**KarenNee:** In March of last year, as I was going through some Treasury records at the College Park, Md. Archives facility, I located a new letter from Grace Bedell to Abraham Lincoln, written by her in Jan. of 1864

**KarenNee:** In this letter she was requesting the President's assistance in getting a situation in the Treasury dept. cutting notes.

**KarenNee:** In November of 2007, I went out to Delphos, Ks. where Grace and her husband George settled after the Civil War. I walked through her house, walked through the town, met Sharon Snively, the librarian, and both of us walked through her house.

**KarenNee:** Well, to say the least, it was decided to start a Grace Bedell Foundation, and raise the funds necessary to purchase the house and turn it into the Grace Bedell museum. We want to launch this campaign on Feb. 12, with all teachers reading Karen Winnick's book, Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers

**KarenNee:** Karen, why don't you talk a little bit about how you got interested in Grace and about your book

**KarenWinnick:** Absolutely. What attracted me to this story was that a little girl who couldn't vote wrote to Lincoln to help him win more votes This was her empowerment.

**ValeriePe:** I find this interesting and neat

**KarenNee:** We are asking every child to donate \$1 to help save Grace

**KarenWinnick:** And Lincoln listened to the advice of a small girl and so the "face" of history was changed so to speak.

**KarenNee:** Where did you hear about Grace Bedell?

**KarenWinnick:** Most books about Lincoln mention the letters they exchanged. I started to do research.

**SharonJS:** Everyone says Grace was a self-confident, strong person who didn't mince words about what she believed in. Did you talk to any of her family in your research?

**KarenWinnick:** When I found out that on his way to his inauguration, Lincoln stopped his train in Westfield, NY to show Grace he's taken her advice, I knew I had to tell this story.

**KarenNee:** The book is absolutely wonderful, and in a campaign season where we might possibly have our first woman president, gives us another example of how women can make a change, even little girls.

**SharonJS:** Children can have a voice

**ValeriePe:** most definitely

**KarenWinnick:** I went to Westfield after the book came out. I met the town historian, Billie Dibble who gave me information on Grace and her family while I was working on the book.

**KarenNee:** We want to show children how a grassroots effort gets started. To see how a historical landmark is created

**KarenWinnick:** I tell school kids that what they think and feel is important.

**KarenWinnick:** There are two interesting things in the letters.

**ValeriePe:** also what they do makes a difference

**KarenNee:** Yes, too often children don't see a purpose to what they do in the classroom. Here is a project that will keep them involved.

**ValeriePe:** I agree

**SharonJS:** I think children would love to visit a museum they helped create, and see their class mentioned

**KarenWinnick:** In Grace's letter she didn't know how to spell "Abe" so she sounded it out and at the top wrote "Hon(erable) A.B. Lincoln."

**ValeriePe** smiles

**KarenNee:** Yes, her mother chuckled when Grace read the letter to her

**SharonJS:** She said in later years, she didn't know how to spell it!

**KarenWinnick:** Lincoln used the word "affection" when he meant "affectation"

**KarenWinnick:** I tell kids even Presidents make mistakes when they write letters!

**ValeriePe:** we all have our moments

**ValeriePe:** I do it all the time

**SharonJS:** I find it interesting that she didn't even tell her parents she had written and mailed the letter until it was answered

**KarenWinnick:** That shows her boldness and belief in her idea

**ValeriePe:** If it was my daughter I would be proud

**KarenNee:** Her second letter was just as bold.

**KarenNee:** In fact, from what I have learned about Grace, she was an earthshaker her entire life.

**SharonJS:** Kinda like fighting off wolves with a broom!

**KarenWinnick:** I read about it in the NY Times. How great that you found it!

**KarenNee:** It is a wonderful letter and everyone can see it at the official Grace Bedell Foundation website at <http://www.gracebedellfoundation.org>

**KarenWinnick:** What other "earthshaking" things did she do?

**KarenNee:** You can see the first letter, which resides at the Detroit Library, as well as the second letter, which is in the Archives.

**KarenNee:** Grace was the first librarian in Delphos.

**MichaelH** reminds all that they can click the link to open it in a new browser window... however, don't stay away too long... you'll miss the discussion

**SharonJS:** She was 21 when she came to Delphos, Living in a half dugout/half soddy to hide the place from Indians

**KarenWinnick:** So interesting. Was her son born in Delphos?

**KarenNee:** And as Sharon was saying, when she first came out to Delphos, Ks. to meet up with her husband George who had come out earlier and built a sod house 3 miles north of Delphos, she actually did chase off some wolves with a broom.

**SharonJS:** Anna Brewster Morgan had just been rescued by Custer and returned to Delphos after 2 yrs captive,

**SharonJS:** Yes in 1872

**KarenNee:** She and her husband George knew Wild Bill Hickok

**KarenNee:** and just up the road from Delphos, lived Boston Corbett, the man who killed John Wilkes Booth. Six degrees of separation.

**SharonJS:** George met Wild Bill after returning from Wyoming to homestead, disappointed and trying KS

**KarenNee:** Even after Grace moved to Kansas, her notoriety followed her and there were requests for copies of the letter that she has sent to Lincoln.

**KarenNee:** She would type out copies of the letter and sign her name at the bottom.

**KarenNee:** In the 1920s she also autographed ten dollar notes from the Bank of Delphos. You can see a sample of this online.

**KarenWinnick:** They sold copies all over. In fact one was hanging in a restaurant in Long Island, New York and stolen a few years ago. Someone thought it was the original.

**KarenNee:** So we need the help of teachers from around the country to help us raise the funds to purchase Grace's house and turn it into a museum.

**SharonJS:** The pen she wrote the letter with is in the Delphos museum

**KarenWinnick:** I think that, however, was a copy of Lincoln's letter.

**SharonJS:** stolen?

**KarenWinnick:** In my book I said it was a feather quill en. Probably not correct!

**SharonJS:** Ivory handled

**KarenWinnick:** Oh well!

**BJB2 . o O ( time for a new edition? )**

**SharonJS:** Looks like ivory anyway

**BJB2 . o O ( 10th anniversary ;- )**

**SharonJS:** A new book on the second letter

**KarenWinnick:** My book is historical "fiction" Can't be sure what their exact words were.

**KarenWinnick:** How old was she when she wrote the second letter?

**KarenNee:** We are trying to raise initially, \$30,000 to purchase the house. We would like to have the grand opening or the ground breaking ceremony on November 4, 2009 during the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration.

**KarenNee:** She was 14 years old.

**SharonJS:** Grace said when she went to the train to see Lincoln, he let her feel his whiskers and said "I grew these for you Grace" and they felt scratchy

**KarenNee:** Too young to get a job in government. And what is even sadder is the fact that Lincoln probably did not even see the letter.

**ValeriePe** frowns

**SharonJS:** Some relatives say he offered to let her come live with him, but we never found any proof of that

**KarenNee:** John Hay, his secretary, was out of town. He knew about the connection

between Lincoln and Grace. From everything that I have found, the letter was forwarded to the Treasury Department and filed with all of the others looking for jobs.

**KarenWinnick:** Was Grace still in Westfield when Lincoln died? I was told her family lived in another town close by and were only renting that house for a short time.

**KarenNee:** We want to also launch a campaign poster contest on the 12th as well. Students can submit their campaign poster online and we will post it on the website. People will vote the winner of the contest. The winner will win a \$50 savings bond.

**SharonJS:** She was born in Albion NY and move to Westfield NY in Oct of 1859

**KarenNee:** No. In July of 1861, Grace and her family returned to St. Albions, N.Y, where they originally lived. They had just moved to Westfield for a two year period because her father was doing some work as a stove maker

**KarenNee:** So she just happened to be in the right place at the right time, and destiny brought her and Lincoln together.

**SharonJS:** I was thinking they moved back to Albion before she married and came to KS, have to ck on that

**SharonJS:** Right!

**SharonJS:** Her Father's business was hard hit during Black Friday banking disaster, which is why she asked Lincoln for a job

**KarenNee:** While I was in Delphos, one of the residents told me the story of how he went to see Grace's parrot when he was a boy. And we received a donation from a woman in Salina who also related a similar story in her letter to us.

**KarenWinnick:** What about all her brothers and sister? Did they stay in upstate NY or move all over? Any in Kansas beside Grace?

**SharonJS:** There were two parrots in town and the other had a "dirty" mouth, so parents let children see Graces

**SharonJS:** Grace had four sisters, six brothers -one died in infancy but none in KS as far as I know

**KarenNee:** Grace, from all accounts, was always community centered, was always kind to people, even after she went blind in her latter years. She died in 1936 just two days before her birthday.

**KarenNee:** Her story has been passed down decade after decade. "The power of one" is

something that children should be taught. That is why we think this project is well worth the effort.

**KarenNee:** We need you to spread the word. Help us save Grace's house and save her place in history.

**ValeriePe:** What was the name of your book again? I am interested in reading it.

**SharonJS:** Friends say Grace was a gracious lady, always wore an apron, and liked to show her letter and parrot, but was never pretentious

**KarenNee:** Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers

**KarenWinnick:** Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers

**ValeriePe:** Thanks

**KarenNee:** Valerie, if you go to the website, you will see the book cover there.

**ValeriePe:** the one you typed earlier?

**MichaelH:** Karen, is there a preferred distributor for the book that you'd suggest Valerie use to get a copy?

**KarenNee:** There is also a link in the right column to Amazon so that you can purchase the book.

**MichaelH .** o O ( whoops... )

**ValeriePe:** ok. Thanks

**KarenNee:** We will soon have our non profit status so all donations will be tax deductible.

**SharonJS:** I recommend Fred Trump's book Lincoln's Little Girl also

**KarenWinnick:** The publisher is Boyds Mills Press

**KarenWinnick:** They published my book and reissued Fred Trump's book.

**KarenNee:** We are anticipating so many orders for the book, they may have to do another printing.

**ValeriePe:** Great! I am going to look for these books

**SharonJS:** What a great gift for little girls, Karen has done a wonderful job with the

story and illustrations

**KarenWinnick:** The book is in hardcover and softcover.

**SharonJS:** I would love to do this again and hopefully get more teachers online

**KarenNee:** There is also a lesson plan going online which will have letters that other children have sent to other presidents.

**MichaelH:** Sharon, we could probably host a follow-up session sometime in March if that would help?

**BJB2** checks the March calendar

**SharonJS:** This is a story all Children should hear, and that would be great

**ValeriePe:** All this would be found on the website that was mentioned earlier in the conversation?

**KarenWinnick:** I have a website with suggestions on how to use the book for projects.

**KarenNee:** Yes

**KarenNee:** The lesson plan will be up by this weekend.

**KarenWinnick:** My website is [www.karenbwinnick.com](http://www.karenbwinnick.com)

**BJB2:** Let's shoot for Monday, March 10 at 8pm EST

**ValeriePe:** Thank you for letting me join your discussion. I really enjoyed it and found it fascinating

**SharonJS:** I am working on a new Delphos website, should be up in 2 weeks, hope you all check it out, Jason and Valerie, thanks for attending

**ValeriePe:** Thank you!!

**MichaelH:** I like March 10... let's do that... probably not many gone that early in March

**KarenWinnick:** Thanks for inviting me.

**KarenNee:** Karen W. is March 10 good for you?

**MichaelH:** BJ, do you need me to contact Karen (Lemmons)?

**BJB2:** I'll do that, Michael

**MichaelH:** Thanks, BJ

**BJB2** writes the date on her calendar

**BJB2** . o O ( old fashioned kind of gal ;- )

**MichaelH:** I'll mark my calendar, too

**KarenWinnick:** March 10 looks good

**KarenNee:** Sharon. March 10 good for you?

**KarenNee:** Good for me.

**SharonJS:** Thank you so much both Karens, Michael and BJ, March 10 it is

**BJB2:** wonderful!

**BJB2:** Thanks for a terrific discussion

**KarenNee:** Can't thank you enough for taking the time out of your busy schedule to share our dream.

**SharonJS:** Agree

**MichaelH:** Karen and Karen, would you get me some follow up information about a blurb for the new session?

**ValeriePe:** Thanks for sharing with us

**BJB2:** welcome back, Jason.

**SharonJS:** Sure, whatever you need

**KarenNee:** Sure thing Michael. Hope to see you again Valerie.

**JasonGra:** The chat was very informative

**MichaelH:** I'll try and get some announcements out soon

**KarenNee:** Hi Jason

**JasonGra:** I learned so much,

**BJB2:** any comments on the power of one, Jason?

**BJB2** . o O ( always a good topic with at risk kids )

**SharonJS:** Think we have a good idea?

**JasonGra:** The history channel has a save our history grant

**SharonJS:** I am applying for it!

**JasonGra:** very cool

**KarenNee:** Pass the word on to all of the teachers in your district.

**JasonGra:** absolutely,

**SharonJS:** Do you think teachers will help?

**JasonGra:** they should, it is a relevant, wonderful opportunity

**KarenWinnick:** Bye and thanks again. Karen and Sharon, keep be posted via email.

**SharonJS:** Sometimes it seems insurmountable, but so worthwhile for KS and all of the US, Thanks

**BJB2** waves goodnight

**KarenNee:** Bye all. Thanks Karen. Talk to you soon.

**MichaelH** waves goodnight to all

**KarenNee:** Bye Sharon.

**KarenNee:** Good night

**ValeriePe:** Bye