Sumter County Museum is Proud to Present
A Traveling Exhibition

“Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War”

This Special Exhibition Tells the Story of Abraham Lincoln’s Struggle to Meet the Constitutional Challenges of the Civil War.

The exhibit will open at the Museum on February 21st
And
be at the Museum through April 5th

This exhibition examines how President Lincoln used the Constitution to confront three intertwined crises of the Civil War—the secession of Southern states, slavery and wartime civil liberties.

Lincoln is widely acknowledged as one of America’s greatest presidents, but his historical reputation is contested. Was he a calculating politician willing to accommodate slavery, or a principled leader justly celebrated as the Great Emancipator? This exhibition provides no easy
Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in 1860, at a time when the nation was on the brink of war. Lincoln struggled to resolve the basic questions that divided Americans at the most perilous moment in the nation’s history: Was the United States truly one nation, or was it a confederacy of sovereign and separate states? How could a country founded on the belief that “all men are created equal” tolerate slavery? In a national crisis, would civil liberties be
secure? President Lincoln used the Constitution to confront these three crises of war, ultimately reinventing the Constitution and the promise of American life.

As a new president, Abraham Lincoln was faced with enormous challenges. This exhibition shows how Lincoln struggled with issues of secession, slavery and civil liberties—all questions our country’s founding charter left unanswered. Each section of the exhibit features information about a different aspect of Lincoln’s presidency. For example, the section about slavery examines the various policy options Lincoln once embraced and how his thoughts about slavery evolved over time. Most importantly, the exhibit helps visitors understand why Lincoln’s struggle with the Constitution still matters today.

The National Constitution Center and the American Library Association Public Programs Office organized the traveling exhibition, which was made possible by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): great ideas brought to life. The traveling exhibition is based on an exhibition of the same name developed by the National Constitution Center.

The traveling exhibition is composed of informative panels featuring photographic reproductions of original documents, including a draft of Lincoln’s first inaugural speech, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment.

The Exhibition will be available during normal Museum operating hours Thursday through Saturday 10:00 am until 5 pm. Docent led tours will be conducted during these hours. If you have a group that would like to schedule a tour at times other than normal operating hours, please contact the museum by calling at 803-775-0908 and leaving a message.