

A-State celebrates contributions to science by Darwin, Lincoln

BY ALDEMARO ROMERO
SPECIAL TO THE SUN

On Feb. 12, 1809, two men were born two continents apart: one, Charles Darwin, would change forever the way we see nature and ourselves; the other, Abraham Lincoln, would change the history of United States.

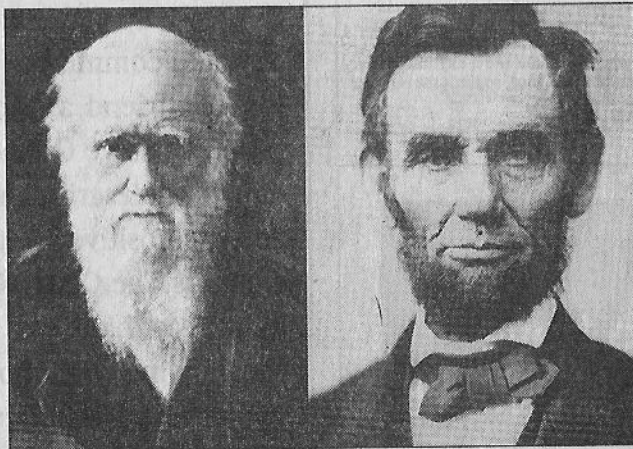
What most people do not know is that Lincoln also impacted the way science is conducted in this country: He founded the National Academy of Sciences.

To celebrate the 200th birthday of these two giants in history, Arkansas State University scheduled a number of events during the month of February. First, on Wednesday the author of this article gave a presen-

tation about Down House, which was Darwin's residence for 40 years until his death in 1882.

Based on visits to that house, which is today a museum of Darwiniana, as well as archival research, particularly of Darwin's correspondence, a number of facts emerge: One is that Darwin moved from London to Down House in Kent because of his health. He chose a residence that was in the countryside but not too far from London — only 20 miles, so he could stay away from the polluted air of the English capital while trying to recover from his many illnesses.

He had a sandwalk built for him in his 18-acre state so he could take long walks as his doctors or-



A picture of both Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln by unknown 19th-century photographers.

dered. During his life he had 10 children, three of whom died in infancy. He also had a staff of eight house servants, which meant that he had to make many additions to the house to accommodate

that many people. He was always concerned about his servants having good accommodations.

In that presentation it was shown how Darwin followed a very disciplined schedule that

started with a walk at 7 a.m. and ended at 10:30 p.m. when he went to bed without dinner. He always avoided eating in the evenings given that he had a number of stomach problems that did not allow him to get a good sleep. He also suffered from a panic disorder and other conditions such as dizziness, vomiting, vertigo, headaches, tachycardia, lactose intolerance, skin issues, etc. He wrote that during his adult life he rarely had a healthy day.

Yet he was able to live until the age of 73 and be extremely productive.

Celebrations

Other celebratory events for these occasions have included a birthday

party that took place in The Hall of Science on the ASU-Jonesboro campus on Thursday for both Darwin and Lincoln.

On Feb. 25 Dr. Jim Bednarz, a professor of Wildlife at the Department of Biological Sciences at ASU, will be giving a presentation titled "Studying Evolution on the Galápagos Islands: Following in the Footsteps of Darwin".

This presentation will take place at 4 p.m. in room 219 of the Lab Sciences Building. Everybody is welcome.

For more information contact the ASU Department of Biological Sciences at biology@astate.edu.

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