

# Lincoln Statue Is Unveiled, And Protesters Come Out

By The New York Times

RICHMOND, Va., April 5 — Two ceremonies were taking place today, with purposes as different as day and night, or North and South. One was the unveiling of a statue of Abraham Lincoln, and the other a vigil in protest at the grave of Jefferson Davis.

The statue of Lincoln, commissioned by the United States Historical Society, is in a park that was the site of the Tredegar Ironworks, where tons of Confederate matériel were forged in the Civil War.

The protest, by about 100 members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, was at Hollywood Cemetery, where many of the Confederacy's politicians and civic leaders are buried, as well as 18,000 Civil War soldiers.

Bragdon Bowling, Virginia division commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, was among the speakers.

"They have no concept of history and how it might be the wrong place to put the statue," said Mr. Bowling, whose great-grandfather John Stephen Cannon fought for the Confederacy. "As a Southerner, I'm offended. You wouldn't put a statue of Winston Churchill in downtown Berlin, would you? What's next, a statue of Sherman in Atlanta?"

Since late last year, when plans for the statue were announced, Confederate sympathizers, including hundreds of re-enactors and scores of Sons of Confederate Veterans members, have denounced the statue of Lincoln and his son Tad overlooking the vanquished city in April 1865 after its citizens burned it rather than give ground to Union troops.

Robert H. Kline, chairman of the historical society, the Richmond-based nonprofit company that commissioned the statue, said the society was donating the statue to the National Park Service as a symbol of reconciliation and unity. The City Council backed the action with a \$45,000 donation to the \$250,000 cost of the statue.

"I'm delighted that it's finally happening, that Lincoln is in Richmond again," Mr. Kline said. "He came on a mission of peace and reconciliation and I think the statue will serve that purpose for a very long time.

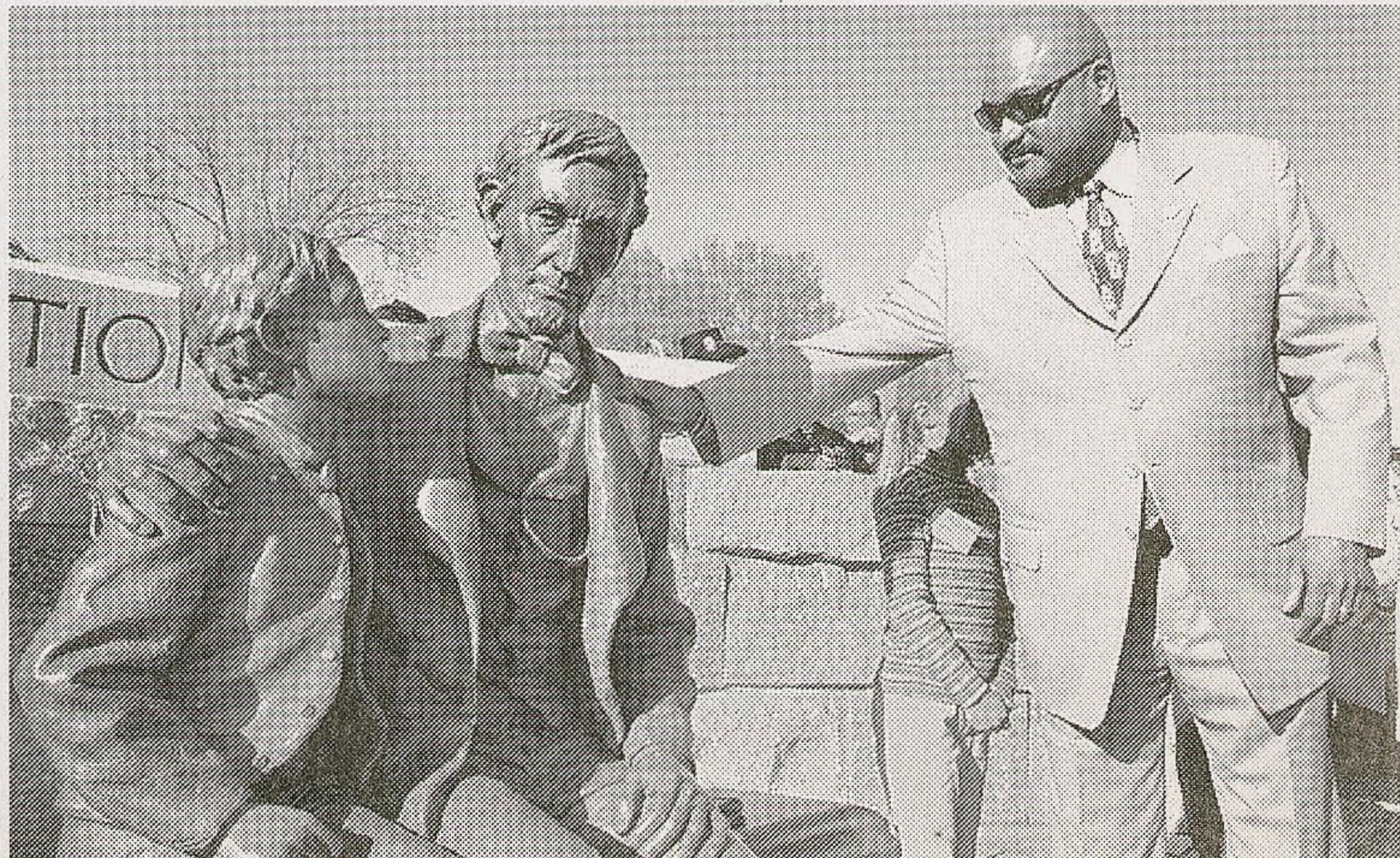
"Lincoln visited here just after the fall of Richmond to see what had happened to it and to try to start the reconciliation. It was a peaceful visit, not a fearful one."

Yet opponents of the statue have a different view of that day. The life-size statue, they say, commemorates the day 138 years ago when Lincoln came as proud victor.

In 1995, many of the same groups protested the addition of a statue of the tennis great Arthur Ashe, who was born in Richmond, on Monument Avenue, a boulevard lined with statues of Confederate War heroes. And in 1999, black civic leaders and politicians protested a mural of Gen. Robert E. Lee on the city's new flood wall.

The image was removed, only to be reinstated.

The Lincoln statue sits on a 2,800-square-foot plaza in front of a granite wall into which words from Lincoln's second inaugural address are carved: "To bind up the nation's wounds."



Associated Press

Mayor Rudolph C. McCollum Jr. of Richmond, Va., yesterday with the statue of Abraham Lincoln and his son, Tab, in the city's war park.