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## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade History Writing Contest



### **Directions:**

As a fifth grade student, pretend you are the pioneer Sheldon Peck writing a letter to Abraham Lincoln. Challenge yourself to “step back in time” to 1848 and pretend you live in Babcock’s Grove (now Lombard). What might you, as Sheldon Peck, write to Mr. Abraham Lincoln in a personal letter? Would you talk about being an artist, your family, life on a pioneer farm, or how you help people escape to freedom on the secret Underground Railroad? Pretend you live in 1848 and create a letter to enter this history project.

### **Rules:**

1. Letters should be 250 to 400 words on 1 or 2 pages and must be your original handwritten work.
2. Complete and attach the entry page to your letter. Fill in all of your information on the form. You and your parents should sign the entry. This information will be used to contact winners and invite them to the award ceremony.
3. The contest begins on Feb. 1, 2010, and ends Sunday, February 28, 2010, at 4 p.m. All entries must be received by Lombard Historical Society office, 23 W. Maple Street, Lombard, by the closing date.

### **Prizes:**

Prizes are awarded by the Lombard Historical Society (LHS) Peck Homestead to winning historical letter entries:

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| First Prize:  | \$40.00 and publication of winning entry |
| Second Prize: | \$25.00 and publication of winning entry |
| Third Prize:  | \$10.00 and publication of winning entry |

An Award ceremony will be held at the Peck Homestead Sunday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. Winners, their family, and teachers will be invited by phone to attend the ceremony. Refreshments will be served.

### **Project information:**

This local history project is sponsored by the Lombard Historical Society’s Sheldon Peck Homestead and is open to all students enrolled in fifth grade in any Lombard private or public (such as district 44 and 45) elementary school. Fifth grade home school students, who have a Lombard mailing address, can enter with appropriate fifth grade level student identification.

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## Sheldon Peck Background Information

Sheldon Peck is a famous early American artist who lived in Lombard, then called Babcock's Grove, from 1837 to 1868. Sheldon Peck painted ordinary people's portraits year around in the days before cameras were invented. Peck's paintings hang in art museums and recently a double portrait sold for \$820,000. There are exhibit copies of Sheldon Peck portraits at his pioneer home, now a Lombard local landmark.

Sheldon Peck and his family built their house (now the oldest house in Lombard), raised sheep, and farmed land at Grace and St. Charles Rd. Peck started a school in his house, was a church leader, and helped people travel to freedom using a secret escape route called the Underground Railroad. In 1849, he sold a corner of his land to build the first railroad through town. The Sheldon Peck Homestead is at 355 E. Parkside Street.

### **Peck Homestead Museum Information:**

The Sheldon Peck Homestead Museum is located at 355 Parkside in Lombard (near Grace St. and St. Charles Road) across from the Lombard Commons Park. Entry is free. There is free parking at the museum and at the park. The museum is open from 1 to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons or by appointment. A tour of the Sheldon Peck Homestead is optional and is not required to enter the letter-writing project.

For more information contact the Museum Director, Jeanne S. Angel or LHS Peck Homestead Committee Chair Patricia Poskocil at the Lombard Historical Society office 630-629-1885. For information about the contest, you can also contact Brigitte O'Brien, Contest Chair at 630-627-2892, or email [obrienb@villageoflombard.org](mailto:obrienb@villageoflombard.org). Teachers can also contact Jeanne Angel for a visit to their classrooms or to arrange a field trip.

### **Other Resources:**

Helen Plum Memorial Library for books on Abraham Lincoln, the Underground Railroad, and the Civil War time period.

National Park Service website on Underground Railroad  
<http://www.nps.gov/undergroundrr/ugsum.htm>

Lincoln Log  
<http://www.thelincolnlog.org/view>

Sheldon Peck  
[http://www.lombardhistory.org/who\\_was\\_peck.htm](http://www.lombardhistory.org/who_was_peck.htm)

