

LINCOLN LORE

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THE SIXTEENTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Just when Abraham Lincoln started to grow a beard is not definitely known. It could not have been later than December 27, 1860, when the Evansville Daily Journal called attention to this change in Lincoln's personal appearance. It is also known that he was not wearing a beard at the time of his election, Nov. 6, 1860.



THE PRESIDENT ELECT
LINCOLN

From a photograph made by
C. S. Germon. Taken at Spring-
field, Illinois, not later than
January 26, 1861. *Meserve, No.
24.*

1931, and need not be reviewed here further.

The Century Magazine for February, 1909, publishes an engraving of Lincoln copied from the portrait which is presented in this monograph. On the original photograph from which it was taken, then in the possession of Frank W. Ballard, is this inscription in the handwriting of the president: "A. Lincoln, January 26, 1861, Springfield, Ill." This photograph was a personal presentation of Lincoln to Mr. Ballard. The date does not necessarily establish the day the portrait was taken but may have been the date of presentation. It does make certain that the photograph was not taken later than January 26.

This places the taking of the portrait within three months of Lincoln's election to the presidency and it may well be called "The President-Elect Lincoln."

It was not the first portrait taken after his election, however, as one

other likeness of him is available showing a beard just starting its growth. It must have been taken nearly a month before the one under consideration in this bulletin. The earlier one, however, is a poor exposure and a very unsatisfactory likeness of Lincoln.

The transition period, during the interval when Lincoln's face was changing from that of a beardless to a bearded man, presents one of the most interesting studies of Lincoln portraits. Here under the hand of the artist we see many transformations.

The well-known portrait by Hesler presenting Lincoln as the presidential candidate appeared after the election showing a well-trimmed beard, placed there by an artist. Currier & Ives, through a process of retouching, brought one of their smooth faced Lincolns up to date by putting a beard on him. Many other famous photographs were thus mutilated in order to make the respective prints up to date.

The study of this portrait is interesting from the fact that it was taken at the time Lincoln was selecting his Cabinet, and meeting hundreds of politicians who were presenting claims for respective candidates for positions. It clearly shows the strain under which Lincoln was working at this time and even before the camera the anxiety caused by the unrest in the south and the insistent demands for political favor in the north could not be obscured. The contrast between the portraits of Lincoln, the Candidate, and Lincoln, the President-Elect is striking indeed.

The uncertainty as to who took the portrait featured here has been caused by the changing of ownership of the original negative now in possession of Herbert Wells Fay, custodian of the Lincoln Monument at Springfield, Illinois.

In 1883 the portrait was copyrighted by F. M. McNulty. On October 24, 1894, the assignment of the photograph to H. W. Fay is recorded. The photograph first was called the McNulty-Butler photograph, later on the McNulty-Butler-Germon portrait; but now it is usually known as the Germon portrait.

McClure's Magazine for June, 1895, under a full page cut of the portrait, uses this description:

"There are in existence but few original negatives of portraits of Lincoln. Brady made a number, which he sold to the government; and the por-

traits of Lincoln commonly seen are copies from one or another of these, or of the well-known Hesler picture, wherein Lincoln is shown without a beard. The above is from a photograph by McNulty, taken at Springfield, Illinois, just previous to Lincoln's departure for Washington in January, 1861. It is accounted about the truest portrait of Lincoln ever made. His friends at home esteemed it so highly that they chose it as the model for a painting for the Illinois State House. The original negative, an old-fashioned wet plate, is very well preserved, and is now in the historical collection of H. W. Fay, Esq., DeKalb, Illinois, by whose kind permission the present reproduction is made."

According to the testimony of the late O. H. Oldroyd, C. S. Germon was the artist who took the picture. When the photographer, who knew Mr. Oldroyd very well, presented him with a print from the original negative he told Oldroyd that he had taken the picture himself.

This portrait was so well received when it was given general distribution, that an engraving from it was used on the ten dollar greenback and later on one of the issues of the 5-20 bonds.

Leonard W. Volk, the Lincoln sculptor, wrote the following note on the back of one of these portraits:

"This photograph of Abraham Lincoln, one of the first with a beard, I regard as one of the best, as I remember him after he allowed his beard to grow."

This testimonial was signed in Chicago on March 13, 1893.

Much credit is due to Herbert Wells Fay for preserving the original negative of this photograph, and for the general circulation which he has given it by using it as an exchange medium for the portraits of famous men.

He has also been very generous in allowing its reproduction so that it has become one of the best known of the Lincoln photographs.

The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company is fortunate in having an excellent copy of the original, presented to its Executive Vice-President, Franklin B. Mead, by Van de Grift, a local photographer.