

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN'S LAST PICTURE

The picture presented in this issue of *Lincoln Lore* is the final study in the series of twelve famous Lincoln portraits which have been discussed in recent issues of the publication.

The expression on Lincoln's face in this picture, as in so many of



THE TRIUMPHANT LINCOLN
From a photograph made by
Alexander Gardner. Taken at
Washington on April 9, 1865. Me-
serve No. 100.

the others, seems to interpret the very atmosphere in which the photograph was taken. At 9 a. m. on March 24, 1865, he arrived at City Point to observe at first hand some action by the troops. He became so intensely interested in the maneuvers that he remained there until April 7. Just two days later, after he had arrived in Washington, the news of Lee's surrender reached him. It seems to have been accepted, generally, that the photograph said to be the last one Lincoln ever had taken was made on April 9. There was usually some specific occasion or urgent demand that brought him to the photographer, and the winning of the war would be a sufficient incentive to suggest the taking of his photograph.

There are many admirers of Abraham Lincoln who find much satisfaction in drawing parallels between his experiences and the life of Christ. They find in Lincoln's humble origin and his tragic death coincidents which offer interesting comparisons with similar occurrences in the life of the lowly Nazarene.

His return to Washington and the tidings of victory reaching him on Palm Sunday, April 9, seem to have suggested the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem celebrated on that day. Abraham Lincoln was the most humble conqueror the world has ever known since the Jerusalem scene. The portrait taken of Lincoln on this day might well be called the "Triumphant Lincoln."

The expression on Lincoln's face in this picture, while it seems to convey the news of a great victory, is tempered by the compassion which he had for the vanquished.

This portrait is one of eight sittings taken by Gardner at this time and as it was the only close up view of the president, undoubtedly it was the last one taken.

It is sometimes mentioned as the cracked plate negative of Lincoln, as the original negative shows a crack extending across the negative and passing through Lincoln's forehead. Inasmuch as no early print is available without this defect it is evident that the negative was cracked before a print was made. In most of the prints now available this defect has been retouched so that it is not discernible.

If one will observe the photograph of Lincoln made by Hesler at the time he became the presidential nominee and compare it with this one taken just five days before his death, he will be unwillingly to believe that only five years had intervened between the sittings for these two photographs.

Lincoln is said to have lost at least twenty-five pounds in weight during this period and if the reconstruction period into which he was about to enter would have caused him as much anxiety as the first administration, it is very doubtful if an assassin's bullet would have been necessary to remove him from the high office he filled.

Some one has said after looking upon this profile, that the whole story of the Civil War is visualized in the picture.

The other bust portraits in this group of eight sittings all show the same expression on Lincoln's face with the possible exception of one which has the slight suggestion of a smile. This view portrays Mr. Lincoln with a pencil in his hand which he has been sharpening for "Tad." This last print is known as the smiling Lincoln, as it is the only one of the many pictures of the president which shows a smile passing over his countenance.

A negative of this smiling Lincoln said to be the original is in possession of Creighton H. Williams, of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The Lincoln Historical Research Foundation has an early print made from the negative by Alex Gardner mounted on one of the original carte de visite cards bearing the photographer's name.

The photograph on this page is probably the most valuable of all the original photographs of Lincoln. The fact that it was taken just five days before his assassination has given us the best likeness of the president at the close of the war.

The foundation is also fortunate in having one of the original prints from

another negative made at this time showing Lincoln and his son "Tad." On the back of this photograph is printed "Gardner, Photographer, 511 Seventeenth Street, 322 Penna. Avenue."

It is this photograph which furnishes the evidence which makes it very likely that this entire series of eight sittings was taken in the White House. The furnishings which are used and especially the carpet on the floor of the room give positive proof that it was not taken in the Gardner gallery.

Robert Lincoln is said to have remembered one occasion when a photograph of his father and Tad was taken at the White House, and this is undoubtedly the picture he remembered as the tradition coming down from him mentioned a book that was used in the picture.

The original portrait has nothing but a plain background and none of the ornaments which Gardner would have used in a gallery—the chair and table are also different from the gallery pictures taken by him. Further evidence of a home picture is the condition of the print which shows it must have been taken by a portable camera.

Alexander Gardner, the photographer, had been brought over from England by Brady and was associated with him until 1863 when he established a gallery of his own. He took a great many photographs of the president, but none which will live longer than the Triumphant Lincoln taken on Palm Sunday April 9, 1865.

ONE DOZEN LINCOLN PHOTOGRAPHS

The Lincoln picture series just concluded has presented one-half dozen photographs showing Lincoln without a beard and one-half dozen pictures of the president with a beard. The presidential election of 1860 marks the point of division between these two groups.

The selection of these portraits has been influenced by events in the life of Lincoln which might be closely associated with the taking of the pictures. This allows one to visualize the Lincoln of the different epochs of his life.

The Beardless Lincoln

- 1846—The Congressional Lincoln.
- 1853—The Professional Lincoln.
- 1857—The Awakened Lincoln.
- 1858—The Controversial Lincoln.
- 1860—The Eloquent Lincoln.
- 1860—The Candidate Lincoln.

The Bearded Lincoln

- 1861—The President-Elect Lincoln.
- 1861—The Neighborly Lincoln.
- 1861—The Reminiscent Lincoln.
- 1863—The Gettysburg Lincoln.
- 1864—The Universal Lincoln.
- 1865—The Triumphant Lincoln.