

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Number 419

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

April 19, 1937

VOSE'S LINCOLN—A RARITY

The book on Abraham Lincoln by Reuben Vose is without doubt the rarest of all the biographies of the President. The recent acquisition of one of these scarce volumes by the Lincoln National Life Foundation has made it possible to reproduce in this issue of *Lincoln Lore* an exact facsimile of the front cover page which bears the title. A general description of the contents of the book is also made available.

As far as we have been able to learn there is but one other copy known among Lincoln students, although the announcement of this fact may possibly bring forth information about others. In 1914, when the Major Lambert collection of *Lincolniana* was sold, the copy of Vose which he possessed was acquired by Judd Stewart. The Stewart collection passed into the hands of the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and along with the other rare Lincoln books, the Vose biography was included.

One Lincoln book authority who has done considerable research work on the publication, contacted the outstanding Lincoln collectors of the country and not one of them remembered ever having seen a copy of the Vose biography. He had about come to the conclusion that there was no such book. A letter of congratulations received on the acquisition of the Vose volume by the Lincoln National Life Foundation states: "Beyond all doubt, you have the rarest of the rarities."

The book is but 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and its small size may have contributed to its rarity. The cover is made of a brown light weight grade of paper. On the outside of the front cover is the book's title. The outside of the back cover has an advertisement by Partridge, Pinchot, & Warren. The inside of the front cover bears the copyright notice in six lines, dated 1860. The inside of the back cover contains an advertisement of Hamilton Ewen.

There are four concluding pages in the book of the same color and material as the cover, and lettered A, B, C, and D. These pages contain advertisements of books by Reuben Vose. One is described as follows: "The Conservative is a political work for the campaign and contains the names of five hundred of the richest men in New York." Another book advertised, title not given, is said to contain "The most eloquent Republican speeches in the whole country." The most interesting information on these pages, however, is the brief statement about the Lincoln biography itself. The following paragraph is the complete statement about the book: "Reuben Vose, No. 45 Maiden Lane is now publishing 10,000 copies of the Lives and Speeches of Lincoln and Hamlin. Price 15 cents."

The format of the book makes an interesting study as

it shows several ingenious methods of overcoming difficulties which confronted the publisher, especially in page arrangement. There is no title page, not even a caption title, but the biographer starts abruptly with the first paragraph of his story. The first page is numbered with the Roman numeral III, assuming that the cover page is number I and the copyright page on the back of the cover is number II. The Roman system of numbering pages is continued through page LI. This section is given over to biographical material and political appeal.

The publisher changed to the Arabic form of numbering on the pages containing the speeches of Lincoln, but for some reason, probably a typographical error, the number, although following page LI, begins with 42 instead of 52. The Arabic method continues regularly until page 71, where there follows page 71 $\frac{1}{2}$ and then a blank page with no printing and no number given or anticipated, as the next page is number 72. The last page number in the text is 118.

The book with its peculiar system of page notations really contains 51 Roman numbered, 77 Arabic numbered, 4 lettered and the 2 back cover pages, a total of 134 pages. The type is six point and very difficult to read.

The first page of the text in referring to Lincoln's father, Thomas, states that "he died prematurely, leaving a widow and several children including Abraham." In reality, Thomas Lincoln lived to be 75 years old. Generally speaking, however, the historical references are correct.

The arrangement of the subject matter is as confusing as the page numbering. There are five pages of biographical data about Lincoln, one on Hamlin, then the author returns to Lincoln. The major part of the section is given over to an appeal for the support of Lincoln on the grounds that he "surpasses all as a personification of the distinctive genius of our

country and its institutions." The first division of the book concludes with the Republican platforms of 1860 and 1856.

That part of the book in which Arabic numerals are used to designate the pages contains four addresses of Abraham Lincoln. The variations in the spelling of Lincoln's name to be found in the captions of these speeches is unusually interesting, referring to Cooper Institute it is ABRAHAM LINCOLN. In the reply to Douglas at Chicago, the caption is HON. AB. LINCOLN. The famous House Divided speech was delivered by HON. ABM. LINCOLN. The climax is found in the caption of the July, 1858, meeting at Springfield which was addressed by HON. ABR'M LINCOLN.

The Lincoln National Life Foundation would be pleased to learn of any other copies of the Vose Biography in existence besides those mentioned in this bulletin.

