

# LINCOLN LORE

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## COLLECTING MEDALLIC LINCOLNIANA

Very little attention has been given in Lincoln Lore to the hobby of the numismatist, who is interested in gathering old coins and various types of tokens made of metal. It is a well recognized fact that Abraham Lincoln has been more often portrayed in medallic art than any other historical character, with the possible exception of Washington.

A recent acquisition by The Lincoln National Life Foundation of a large collection of Lincoln medallions and medals has created at the museum a new interest in this phase of Lincolniana, and there are now on display over 400 individual pieces. This collection does not include the larger pieces such as plaques and busts, or the Lincoln coin collection.

The first man to properly catalogue Lincoln medals was Andrew T. Zabriskie, who in 1873 described 187 medals bearing the likeness of Lincoln which he had acquired up to that time. It was not until February 1924 that an exhaustive list of Lincoln medals appeared and this was supplemented in April 1927 and in August 1933. All three of these lists were by Robert T. King and were published in the *Numismatist Magazine* during the months already mentioned. Altogether, there were 1,047 different items listed.

Mr. King groups this large collection of medals under the following captions: Politicals, First Campaign; Politicals, Second Campaign; Ferrotypes of Both Campaigns; Medals of the Civil War; Civil War Tokens; Emancipation; Mortuary Medals and in Commemoration of His Death; Lincoln Centennial Issues; Medals of the G. A. R. Encampments, Sons of Veterans, Womans Relief Corps, etc.; Masonic; Miscellaneous Conventions and Anniversaries; Medals of Award by Schools, Newspapers, etc.; Medals Struck at Expositions and in Commemoration Thereof; Medals and Coins Issued by the U. S. Mint not Otherwise Attributed; Store Cards, Street Car Checks, Key Chains and Shop Badges; Souvenir Pennies of Cities, Towns, etc.; Encased Lincoln Cents; Medals, Plaques, Shells, Fobs and Pins, Mounted and Otherwise; Miscellaneous.

Possibly the most important consideration in identifying a medal is determining the size, which is specified by the metric measure which consists of a fraction more than 25 m.m. to the inch. In the language of the numismatist, the head of a coin is called the obverse side and the tail, the reverse side. The kind of metal from which the medallion is made is also indicated, the most common substances being gold, silver, aluminum, bronze, copper, brass, zinc, lead, tin, iron, as well as plated metals. A very complete description is given by Mr. King so that one has little difficulty in determining whether or not he may have the coins specified.

No. 1, the first item described by Mr. King, is a blunt five pointed, star-shaped metal badge worn as a hat ornament by the Hartford Wide-Awakes in 1860. Surrounding the bust of Lincoln is the name "Abraham Lincoln" and in a circular design around the bust and name, appearing at the top, is the word "Wide-Awake." This star is 70 m.m. in diameter. It sold at an auction sale 60 years ago for \$42.00.

Possibly the most valuable medallion in the Foundation collection is what is known as the United States Mint Medallion. One copy owned by the Foundation is silver, another of the same design is in white metal. The silver issues are known as the Indian Chief medals and were often presented to the Indian Chiefs as good will tokens. A hole has been drilled in the silver medal owned by the Foundation indicating that it was likely worn by some Indian upon presentation from "the great white father, Lincoln."

One of the most ingenious inscriptions appears on a medallion of 70 m.m. and in a circular space of 62 m.m. in diameter the entire Gettysburg address is inscribed.

There is in the Foundation collection several miniature medals. One, but 10 m.m. in diameter, is a seven sided planchet with beveled edges. There are six of these in the collection, aluminum, bronze, copper, nickel, silver and lead. The bust of Lincoln which appears on this miniature medal is less than 5 m.m. in diameter.

Nearly every boy is familiar with what the numismatist call the encased Lincoln cent. Usually an imitation aluminum horseshoe container with the shining one cent piece encased in it carries the inscription "I bring good luck" or "Don't go broke."

There is also a very large variation of the large copper replica of the penny, 70 m.m. or over in diameter and usually it is inscribed with the words "lucky penny." These souvenir pennies have imprinted on the reverse side the name of the city where the penny is to be distributed. This makes about as many variants as there are cities in the North at least.

The most valuable Lincoln medal from the viewpoint of the book collector is the Lincoln Centennial Medal by Roine made in silver which is mounted artistically on board and bound in a book of 70 pages. The edition is limited to 100 signed and numbered copies. The Foundation is fortunate in having this edition as well as the one in bronze. Also a later and smaller medal by Roine was also encased in a book and widely distributed.

Possibly one of the most valuable medals of Lincoln, as well as one of the most beautiful medallic memorials ever made served as a tribute to Abraham Lincoln from 40,000 French people. The gifts financing the medal were limited to two cents to each person. The gold medal struck in Switzerland was sent to Mrs. Lincoln shortly after Mr. Lincoln's death in honor of the martyred president. The following letter accompanied the medal:

"Paris, October 13, 1866.

"Madam: We have been charged with the duty of presenting to you the medal in honor of the great and honest man whose name you bear, and which forty thousand French citizens have caused to be struck, with a desire to express their sympathy for the American Union, in the person of one of its most illustrious and purest representatives. If France possessed the liberty enjoyed by Republican America, we would number with us not merely thousands but millions of the admirers of Lincoln, and of the partisans of those opinions to which he devoted his life, and which are consecrated by his death. Please accept, Madam, the homage of our profound respect. Signed by the members of the committee."