

LINCOLN LORE

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FIRST MEDALLIC MEMORIAL TO LINCOLN FROM UNKNOWN PORTRAIT

It is not often at this late date that one discovers a comparatively unknown, original photograph of Abraham Lincoln, especially a picture that has not been included in any of the exhaustive compilations of Lincoln prints by such authors as Meserve, Miller, Oldroyd, Wilson and Lorant. The editor of *Lincoln Lore* sometime ago came across the reproduction of a picture featured in the *New York World* for Sunday, February 10, 1901 which appeared to be a new study of Lincoln, and he finally traced what is said to be the original print to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington presented by Col. William L. Bramhall.

The portrait, of which a poor reproduction appears on this page, was made in Springfield shortly after Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency, but the exact date and the name of the photographer is unknown. There are some very good profiles made of Lincoln during this period which might be called three-quarter views, but this new discovery is the only full profile photograph made of Abraham Lincoln thus far discovered, taken before he began to grow a beard. It is one of the finest contributions to the 1860 campaign series of Lincoln photographs now extant.

The Cooper Union Dinner

Any incident which relates to the visit of Abraham Lincoln to New York at the time of the Cooper Union speech is important. Students have traced his activities on the Saturday afternoon when he arrived. They have revealed his presence at Beecher's church Sunday morning, and at Five Points Mission in the afternoon. They have also recorded his visit at the office of a newspaper and to Brady's photography gallery on Monday, and also the little gathering at the Atheneum Club after the speech was over.

However, little is known about who his companions were at the various meals of which he partook while in New York. Arriving there on Saturday afternoon and remaining until the following Tuesday morning, at least eight meals were served to him. He may have eaten alone on most occasions, but there was a special dinner prepared on the day of the Cooper Union speech referred to by Col. Bramhall who states:

"I sat at dinner with Abraham Lincoln at the house of Hon. George B. Lincoln in Brooklyn, February 27, 1860, and that night listened to his speech at the Cooper Institute."



Early 1860 Campaign Picture

The New Portrait

The dinner acquaintance with Lincoln was indirectly responsible for a request which Col. Bramhall made of him for a profile picture, shortly after the nomination at Chicago. Col. Bramhall states, "I wrote to Mr. Lincoln asking him to sit for such a photograph. This letter I sent through my friend, George B. Lincoln. The photograph came even sooner than I expected." The colonel then concludes the story of the picture with this information:

"I have kept it among my treasures, until, in October last, [1900] I presented it to the National Museum in Washington.

"There are evidences that the photograph was retouched with India ink. I cannot, of course, say whether any other prints were taken from the negative, but I do know that the picture was taken for my particular purpose. The original had never been out of my possession until I deposited it in the National Museum."

Col. Bramhall is correct about the retouching which is so clearly evident, that one wonders whether or not the original print did not receive a special treatment at the hands of the artist which did not stop with the features of the subject, but also included the background.

The First Lincoln Medal

Possibly the incentive which urged Col. Bramhall to write for the picture and the use made of it will be considered the most important fact relat-

ing to the portrait, especially from the viewpoint of the collector of coins and medals, and here we invite Col. Bramhall to state why he was interested in acquiring a profile portrait of Lincoln. He says in the newspaper article, "Upon Mr. Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency I determined to have struck at my own expense a campaign medal bearing the likeness of the party choice and I claimed it necessary to have a profile photograph...."

He furthermore states when it arrived, "I placed it in the hands of Mr. George H. Lovett of New York who engraved the die."

Andrew C. Zabriskie published in 1873 *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Political and Memorial Medals Struck in Honor of Abraham Lincoln, Sixteenth President of the United States*. Seventy copies of the catalogue were printed and it identified but 187 medals. The Lovett medal is listed as No. 34 silver, No. 35 copper, No. 36 brass and No. 37 white medal.

In 1901 in the *Proceedings of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society of New York City*, Mr. Zabriskie, then president of the society, presented a paper entitled, "The Medallion History of Abraham Lincoln," while he gives special emphasis to the Lovett medal which he numbers No. 11 and No. 12 for obverse and reverse illustrations respectfully. In neither his original list nor in the above mentioned article does he make any mention of this being the first memorial in medallion art to appear.

Robert P. King's invaluable listing of medals, plaques, tokens and coins issued in honor of Lincoln, identifies the Lovett medal as follows:

"20. Obv., clothed, beardless bust of Lincoln facing left within a circle of 32 stars. Inscription: 'ABRAHAM LINCOLN REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT 1860'

"Rev. an octagonal inclosure of fence rails on which are roosters, small birds and a squirrel enclosing a seven line inscription: 'THE GREAT RAIL-SPLITTER/OF THE WEST/MUST/AND SHALL/BE/OUR NEXT/PRESIDENT.'

"Dies cut by George H. Lovett, New York, size 35mm."

A much finer piece of workmanship and a more exact copy of the Bramhall portrait is to be found on a medal struck by Henning and Eymann of New York, during the campaign of 1860. It is hoped that somewhere there may be found an unretouched copy of the original print and the name of the photographer and the exact date on which it was made.