

LINCOLN LORE

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RIDING HOBBIES IN BY-WAYS

The tremendous strides which the philatelic hobby has taken can be accounted for, to some degree, at least, by the groups of specialists who have grown up within the parent body. Colonials, commemoratives, precancels, etc. have led enthusiastic stamp collectors into fields of specialization, so that they have become something more than nominal stamp collectors.

The invitation to specialize in the hobby of gathering Lincolniana may not be quite so attractive as the urge to follow other paths in the field of philately. There are intensely interesting subjects relating to Lincolniana, however, which should offer almost virgin territory for cultivating the collective instinct. While the various types of Lincoln memorabilia have emphasized books, pamphlets, magazines, clippings, pictures, medals, manuscripts, etc., yet only a few of the interesting phases of Lincoln literature have been approached with the idea of exhausting the subject matter. Nearly everyone of the more important collections of Lincolniana, extant today, have aimed at a general, rather than a specialized compilation.

There have been some attempts to gather data in the more human interest fields of Lincoln biography, such as the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, the Political Campaign of 1860, the President-Elect Period, Assassination, etc., but there are many inviting by-ways down which a Lincoln hobbyist might ride, never followed to any extent by former collectors of Lincoln literature.

One person in Boston has limited his efforts to such books and pamphlets as were written by those having a personal acquaintance with Lincoln. We are quite familiar with several works which are confined exclusively to Lincoln's travels, and those more recent local geographical studies limited to state boundaries which have presented much of Lincoln interest. Other books are now going to the press with emphasis on the places Lincoln visited and where he spoke.

Would not a young collector, with limited means for the acquisitions of items, find much more satisfaction in gathering such books, pamphlets, magazine articles and clippings, related to some specific subject, rather than to scatter his interest over Lincoln's whole life span. One might hope that during his lifetime he could accumulate an important collection of data which would contribute something worth-while to the sum-total of our knowledge about one of the world's great figures. In many instances, one or two books would serve as a basic study for the beginning of a purposeful quest.

There will be no attempt here to name the many subjects of interest which might appeal to people of various vocations, or temperaments, but the brief notations made may encourage some of the younger Lincoln students to mark out a course of endeavor.

Juveniles

It was not until a very fragmentary list of juvenile books was published in *Lincoln Lore* that the lack of general interest in this field was pressed home to the editor. The first Lincoln book to have any wide circulation was a juvenile. Although hundreds of Lincoln stories have appeared in children's and young people's papers, it is not known that any exhaustive attempt to collect them has been made.

Music

Music inspired by and dedicated to Abraham Lincoln, as well as the political song sheets and war songs referring to him, present an interesting study. The Lincoln National Life Foundation has published the only bibliography of sheet music in pamphlet form, but it has touched only the surface of the broader field of musical numbers which are to be located in the contemporary "songsters" of Lincoln's day.

Lincoln Stories

There are many volumes which have attempted to compile stories which Lincoln is said to have told, but no adequate listing of them has thus far been made with authority given for the dependability of the story. Associated with this compilation, there might be gathered stories told about Lincoln as one of the principles.

Gettysburg Address

Lord Curzon has called the address made by Lincoln at Gettysburg the outstanding piece of modern eloquence. One interested in public speaking or in literature might find a lifetime's ride on a Gettysburg hobby. A sizable library could be gathered on the most famous of Lincoln's speeches.

Drama

One of the most fascinating by-ways one might follow in Lincolniana would lead to a selection of the various plays in which Lincoln appears as one of the characters. This could be extended to take in the moving picture productions.

Fiction

Some of the most interesting books of fiction usually have Abraham Lincoln as one of the characters, and historical novels have tried to tell the story of the Emancipator in the pageantry of America. There is not known to be any collection of Lincolniana which is confined to this type of a collection.

Poetry

The number of poems mentioning Abraham Lincoln are beyond all calculation. While there are several published anthologies of Lincoln poetry, limited in scope, there is not available any printed check list that aspires to cover even a comparatively small number of them. Neither is there in print any bibliography of Lincoln books and pamphlets which are confined to poetry.

Government Documents

Much has been done to tabulate what might be designated Lincoln items found in the archives of the United States government documents, yet messages, proclamations, orders, speeches, etc., of Abraham Lincoln are still coming to light. We are not yet through sifting out of the separately published government documents which might properly be called Lincolniana.

Broadsides

There are many Lincoln broadsides in the archives of men of wealth who have been interested in this type of literature, but as far as we have been advised, no one has ever tried to make a check list of Lincoln items printed on one side, or for that matter, on both sides of a sheet of paper. Here again the task of listing government orders, distinctively Lincoln, would make a fine contribution to our understanding of the President.

Sermons

One of the earliest attempts to prepare a Lincoln bibliography was the listing of some 500 funeral sermons preached at the time of Lincoln's death. Any attempt to supplement this early list, or sermons preached since, on Lincoln's birthday has apparently been neglected.

Beginnings

There have been students who have traveled some of the Lincoln by-ways with a remarkable degree of success, and have marked out plain paths for future efforts. They have prepared lists of books Lincoln read, collected and enumerated Lincoln pictures, compiled and published Lincoln writings and speeches, tabulated day-by-day activities of Lincoln over a long period of time, numbered and identified Lincoln medals, yet, any and all of these contributions can be expanded and made more exhaustive as time goes on.