

# 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 757

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

October 11, 1943

## LINCOLN AWAKENS THE GODDESS CALLIOPE

The theme of a young man's thoughts in the Springtime has become proverbial, but just as impressive to one no longer young should be the poetic appeal of the Fall season, if there is any song left in his soul. It was in October that Lincoln, after an absence of fourteen years, visited the Indiana home of his youth, and was moved to express himself in verse. Sometime later he sent to a friend the lines of his favorite poem, "Immortality," by Knox and stated, "I would give all I am worth and go in debt, to be able to write so fine a piece as I think that is."

It is not likely that the poetry Lincoln composed on that October visit to the old home disturbed the repose of the muse to any extent, but most certainly he did awaken the goddess of poetry by his works and deeds. A whole troupe of Calliope's train were moved to sing about the humble martyr of cabin origin and eternal destiny. Deeds that have inspired the writing of so many tributes by the chief singers in modern poetry are more important than the ability of one pen to write "Immortality."

There seems to have been an unusual amount of attention paid in Indiana to James Whitcomb Riley's birthday this Fall, and for that reason, his best known lines on Abraham Lincoln are selected for this issue of the bulletin.

It is strange that there is nowhere available an exhaustive index to the poems written about Abraham Lincoln. The Lincoln National Life Foundation has such a task under way, but the tremendous volume of verse appearing in so many different sources almost overwhelms one. In the atmosphere of these Fall days, it might be of interest to glance over the un-reaped fields of Lincoln verse, where the harvester has scarcely put forth a single sickle.

**Periodicals.**—There are considerably over 3,000 separately bound magazine articles in the Foundation Library, and, although the title of a poem is often found in the title index, no effort has ever been made to make a complete catalogue of poetry.

**Anthologies.**—There are a few anthologies of Lincoln poetry which have been contributed by those familiar with the life of Lincoln, and whose

works have found a place in the libraries of Lincolniana. This would possibly be the logical place to begin an extensive compilation.

**Separately Printed Poems.**—The subject index of the Foundation reveals that there are 176 separately printed poems in the library which have been accepted as Lincolniana titles. Some of these items are books of three hundred pages or more, which run into seven cantos, while others are but a few lines on a folder.

**Occasional Poems in Lincolniana.**—In the more than 6,000 Lincoln volumes in the Foundation Library, there has never been an attempt to make a catalogue of each separate piece of poetry. It would be difficult to even make a fair estimate of the number of poems that might be gleaned from this source.

**Scattered Poems in Collateral Books.**—There are two shelves in the Collateral Library of the Foundation containing over 100 books which have been acquired because they include one or more Lincoln poems, but this does not approach numerically the great quantity of Lincoln poems which are to be found in the thousands of books classified in other sections of a Lincoln collateral library.

**Music Portfolios.**—Just how closely musical compositions, with words set to music, should be associated in a poetry catalogue is problematical. The Foundation has already published a check book on sheet music with 214, not including variants, of the numbers containing words as well as scores. But this does not take care of the hundreds of pieces of music appearing in the form of broadsides which do not fall in the plan of the above mentioned check list.

**Broadsides.**—Most of the separately printed pieces of Lincoln poetry are to be found in the form of broadsides. They are legion, and almost impossible to assemble with any degree of completeness.

**Programs.**—One of the most fruitful fields investigated by searchers for Lincoln poems, outside the accepted field of exclusive Lincolniana, is the enormous collection of Lincoln programs which can be found in almost any large Lincoln collection. This is another unrecorded mass of source material.

**Manuscript Poetry.**—Possibly the most inaccessible of all the sources of poetry are the original manuscripts signed by authors. Most of these probably are not found in print and for that reason might not be eligible for listing in a major file of all known Lincoln poetry.

**Newspapers.**—Here is one source which will never be exhausted, yet, it is just here that the Foundation has begun its systematic compilation which may eventually assume the proportions of an exhaustive anthology of Lincoln poetry. It may be putting "the cart before the horse" by starting at the place most likely to be incomplete in the end, yet, necessity seems to demand some organization of clippings. To date, the Foundation has filed under the name of the author, over 1,000 different poems with three index cards for each piece of poetry, author, subject and first line. Each poem is mounted on a uniform size paper.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

A peaceful life,—just toil and rest—  
All his desire;—

To read the books he liked the best  
Beside the cabin fire—  
God's work and man's;—to peer sometimes  
Above the page, in smouldering gleams,  
And catch, like far heroic rhymes,  
The monarch of his dreams.

A peaceful life;—to hear the low  
Of pastured herds,  
Or woodman's axe that, blow on blow,  
Fell sweet as rhythmic words.  
And yet there stirred within his breast  
A fateful pulse that, like a roll  
Of drums, made high above his rest  
A tumult in his soul.

A peaceful life! . . . They hailed him even  
As one was hailed  
Whose open palms were nailed toward  
Heaven  
When prayers nor aught availed.  
And, lo, he paid the selfsame price  
To lull a nation's awful strife  
And will us, through the sacrifice  
Of self, his peaceful life.

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