

LINCOLN LORE

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BASIC LINCOLNIANA

The works of Abraham Lincoln, consisting of his writings and sayings, always will constitute the most valuable and dependable source of information about his remarkable career. There are already in print many compilations of his papers, yet there continues to appear at frequent intervals unpublished manuscripts which he wrote, and recorded speeches which he made. Also, to become available in 1947, are the official papers of the President, now sealed in the Library of Congress. Supplementing these more personal compilations, there is a voluminous collection of duly authorized public documents in the archives of the nation, states, cities, and counties, which report Lincoln's activities in both professional and governmental capacities. These likewise constitute a primary biographical source. All of these combined accumulations of authentic information can be designated as *Basic Lincolniana*.

There is not much likelihood that the complete text of all these various manuscripts and citations ever will be printed in one publication, under the editorship of one author. It is possible, however, to collate and organize this vast accumulation of factual evidence in one exhaustive compilation, which some day may be available in its entirety, through the medium of the microfilm. This form of reproduction may utilize copies of the originals in facsimile which cost would be prohibitive in any other method of distribution.

It is necessary that some system of enumeration be used which may not only serve as a reference guide and abbreviated index, but which also will be of an accumulative nature. The method of numbering must anticipate the listing of additional discoveries without disturbing the general character of the enumeration, and must also provide for the inclusion of other earlier and contemporary data of importance which some day might be considered eligible for *Basic Lincolniana*.

Although due consideration must be given to the elasticity of the mechanics of the plan, it must be kept as simple and as brief as possible so that errors in copying may be reduced to the minimum. Inasmuch as most manuscript material is kept in chronological order, especially so when data relating to but one character is assembled, it will be most convenient to use several numbers as designating units with one letter appended to indicate the character of the writing. The serial number will contain six digits, all relating to the date of the document and in some cases a superior number after the last digit will be utilized as an identification symbol. The year the manuscript was written can be ascertained by observing the first two digits which carry the year in the century, such as 65 for 1865. The next two digits represent the month of the Lincoln writing, appearing on the document such as 06 for June. The last two digits represent the day of the month. The superior numbers associated with the last digit will be used consecutively for documents bearing identical dates.

A single capital letter is appended to the serial number as a help in more fully identifying the type of writing or saying. It is the purpose of this reference letter neither to specify the subject matter nor identify the various classifications of documents which might, for instance,

appear in the miscellaneous papers of a lawsuit. The use of a letter will not affect the superior number of more than one entry of the same date.

It will in no way disturb the numerical number. An Appended Capital Letter Index is published at the conclusion of this monograph. There may be some increase in the number of citation letters used as writings of various kinds are discovered, but the larger majority of papers will be found in this table of references.

Supplementing the serial number and index letter, there will follow a one-line, abbreviated Place and Person reference, which will give further aid in identification without consulting the major file. The following *Basic Lincolniana* entry, 630126 L, Washington, Hooker, will indicate the famous letter written by Abraham Lincoln at Washington, to General Hooker, on January 26, 1863.

The master file of *Basic Lincolniana* in the Lincoln National Life Foundation archives is composed of 8" x 11½" loose leaf mountings of the photostat or printed copy of the original with its proper serial number. This sheet will eventually be photographed on microfilm. The serial number is also used on a card index file for reference and checking.

Fifteen years ago through several issues of *Lincoln Lore* there appeared a compilation of all letters known to have been written by Lincoln. Since that time the personnel of the Lincoln National Life Foundation has been on a sharp lookout for every scrap of writing and every printed saying originating with Lincoln, until a file has reached such proportions that it seems advisable to make available preliminary listings before the papers are finally arranged for microfilm reproductions. As the series proceeds and as interest in the project increases it is likely that the *Basic Lincolniana* check list may take a more permanent form.

This program is the most ambitious undertaking to which the Foundation has thus far turned its attention. The help of all Lincoln students is solicited in this project which should eventually make available, not only a complete compilation of Lincoln's works, but a system of enumeration which will greatly simplify reference citations for the many Lincoln literary productions based on Lincoln's own works. Any citation referring to *Basic Lincolniana* should have the mark of authority, and give the reader assurance that it bears the stamp of Lincoln's own affirmation.

Appended Capital Letter Index

A. Autobiographies	N. Notes
B. Bills (Congressional)	O. Orders (Executive)
C. Checks, Bank	P. Proceedings, Legislature, Ill.
D. Debates	Q. Quotations
E. Endorsements	R. Records (Family)
F. Fragments	S. Speeches
H. Holograph Signatures	T. Telegrams
I. Inscriptions	V. Verse
J. Judicial (Legal Papers)	Y. Yarns
L. Letters	
M. Messages, Presidential	