

LINCOLN LORE

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THE SOLDIERS' BRONZE MEMORIAL

One of the most far-reaching projects which has found a permanent place in the broad program of the Lincoln National Life Foundation is the sponsoring of an annual Boy Scout Pilgrimage to Lincoln Shrines on Lincoln's birthday. An award is presented to each scout making the trek in the form of a card with an attendance seal and a picture of one of the heroic bronze statues of Lincoln.

These recognition certificates have attempted to present the story of Abraham Lincoln in bronze, starting with *Lincoln, the Hoosier Youth*, by Manship, and continuing on through the different stages of his life, until the series has now reached the Civil War period. This year the famous bronze statue by Bissell, at Edinburgh, Scotland, is utilized for the award, and it seems timely to present this subject just now, because of the many former scouts who are now in Europe.

The statue was erected in memory of Scottish-American soldiers who served in the Civil War, and is located on a plot of ground in the Old Calton Cemetery in Edinburgh, set apart as a burial place for the soldiers. The old burying ground is in the very heart of the city, but a few hundred feet from the general post office, however, a high wall surrounding the cemetery hides it from view. Many famous Scotsmen are buried there. Of special Lincoln interest is the grave of Willie Nicol, Robert Burns' companion and fellow-lodger. Any associate of Burns, whose work Lincoln so greatly admired, would create a congenial atmosphere for the statue.

The monument was conceived by Wallace Bruce, United States Consul at Edinburgh, and it was through his initiative and keen interest that the statue was finally completed and dedicated. It was the first heroic bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln to be erected in Europe. Plans were first made for the monument in 1890 and in 1892 Consul Bruce made his first public announcement of the project. Hon. Levi P. Morton, Civil War governor of Indiana, headed the subscription list which reached the sum of \$6,300.

The statue was unveiled on August 21, 1893. Sir William Arrol was chairman of the day. Henry R. Heath, of

New York, chairman of the monument committee, made a few remarks previous to the unveiling. The presentation address was made by Hon. Wallace Bruce, and it was received on behalf of the Town Council of Edinburgh by The Lord Provost James A. Russell.

Not only is the statue of military significance, but the sculptor, George E. Bissell, was also a soldier in the Civil War, and was in a position to enter into the very spirit of the undertaking. He was born in New Preston, New Jersey, on February 16, 1839, and at twenty-three years of age became a private in the 23rd Connecticut Volunteers. In 1863 he became Asst. P.M. in the United States Navy. After the war he married Marie E. Wilton. He was engaged in the marble business with his father and brother in Poughkeepsie, and later studied art in Paris, Rome, and Florence.

Many of his heroic bronze statues were of officers in the American forces during the Civil War. Col. Chatfield, Gen. Gates, Col. d'Peyster, Adm. Farragut, Gen. Sherman, and Adm. Dahlgren are a few of them. He also did a group, "The Navy," for the Colonnade Navy Arch, New York. He passed away at Mount Vernon, New York, on August 30, 1920.

Bissell's Lincoln monument in reality is an Emancipation group as there are two bronze figures associated with it, Lincoln and the freed slave. Lincoln is presented in a standing posture, holding a scroll in his right hand. The slave is half kneeling, resting partly on a trophy of battle flags placed on the surbase and stretching out an imploring arm to the Emancipator. The inscription to the right of the negro is a quotation from Lincoln:

"To preserve the jewel of Liberty
in the Frame work of Freedom."

The foot of the stone base contains these four words: Emancipation, Education, Union, Suffrage. The names of the soldiers commemorated also appears on one side of the monument. The monument over-all is fifteen feet high and nine feet square at the base.

It is not generally known that a replica of Bissell's Lincoln was presented to Clermont, Iowa, by William

Larrabee, a former governor of the state. While the standing Lincoln is the same as the one at Edinburgh, there is no freed slave associated with the monument. Four panels in bronze, however, are set in the stone base and three of them represent these Civil War episodes: Soldiers Leaving Home, Appomattox, Battle of Mobile.

Among all the many heroic bronze statues of Lincoln it is doubtful if one might be selected more suitable for a recognition award this year than the Bissell statue, and it is hoped that each boy who receives a picture of the statue may learn something of its international significance. An orator at the dedication of the statue remarked:

"We have a happy location for this monument—the first ever erected to Lincoln in Europe—in the most beautiful city of the world. What associations! Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags. Yonder Castle, with its history of one thousand years; the Gothic monument of Sir Walter Scott; the noble Forth, tossed by storm or sleeping in sunlight; the old High Street, with its marvellous associations,—what a realm of history and romance, what a wonderful city! . . .

"Here the monument to David Hume, whose death followed closely upon the Declaration of Independence; and yonder obelisk—the People's Monument—erected to those who struggled for a wider suffrage, to Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarot, and Gerrald, exiled in the cause of liberty. 'It is a good cause. It shall ultimately prevail. It shall finally triumph,' said Muir. 'I know,' says Skirving, 'that what has been done these two days will be rejudged.' We celebrated today—the very centenary of that utterance—by unveiling a monument to the last great martyr in the cause of Saxon freedom—an honest man, who saved us in the hour of our peril. May it stand to all time as a memorial to your heroes who fought for their adopted home beyond the sea—as a resting-place for those who have returned, and have no shelter in the last hour, and as another bond of widening love and friendship between Great Britain and the United States of America."