

LINCOLN LORE

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MOST SIGNIFICANT CARTOON—1945

The cartoons which occupied an inconspicuous place in the newspapers a few decades ago have now become major interpreters of current events. One modern publication has elevated these heretofore back page caricature studies to the most favored position on its front page, and with the selected pictures done in color, at that. The daily newspapers may be on the verge of running in competition with the much read weekly illustrated sheets which will place still further emphasis on the art of interpreted press dispatches through illustrations.

The place which the art of caricature has made for itself in present day illustrated news features has caused the creators of these human interest pictures to become recognized as important moulders of public opinion. The familiar strips erroneously called "funnies" have captured the major attention of the average newspaper reader, until the fictitious characters, which the artists have created, have almost obscured the importance of the historical heroes of our Nation's history.

In view of the increasing importance of the art of caricature the Lincoln National Life Foundation has inaugurated a contest which invites its Advisory Group to select each year the most significant Abraham Lincoln cartoon published on February 12th. The cartoon selected this year was by Hungerford, and appeared in *The Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, on February 12, 1945. Through the courtesy of the *Post Gazette*, we are permitted to reproduce the cartoon. Inasmuch as a cartoon is supposed to carry its message without excessive comment, further statements about this particular contribution are not necessary.

This number of *Lincoln Lore* would seem to offer a good atmosphere for listing some of the better known volumes which have emphasized caricature studies of Lincoln.

Harper's Weekly and *Leslie's Weekly* did much toward popularizing the cartoon during the period of the Civil War and, of course, Lincoln was the predominant figure in these crude portraits. His physical appearance, the stories he told, and the trite sayings timely used, combine to make him the most available subject for the cartoonist which America has produced.

In England the *London Punch* outdid its American illustrated contemporaries in lampooning the President, but possibly the sequel to the Tenniel caricatures was Tom Taylor's poem—a gracious apology for the ridicule and disrespect in which Lincoln had been portrayed. In 1909 William S. Walsh brought out a sizable book presenting the most famous of the Lincoln cartoons appearing in *Punch*.

Most of the better known cartoons presented in *Vanity*

Fair were published in a magazine called *The Lantern*, in its February 20th issue, 1913. Six cartoons and the series of drawings, "The New A B C," written for Abraham Lincoln, were used for illustrations. Three years later *Bruno's Weekly*, for February 12 reprinted *The Lantern* story, using some of the illustrations formerly displayed in that publication.

Currier and Ives published at least twenty-five caricatures in which Abraham Lincoln was featured. These were contemporary prints and most of them now are difficult to acquire.

The most famous artistic collection of etchings, which contains several Lincoln caricatures, is the folio of separate plates made by Dr. Volck, a German dentist of Baltimore, who released his work under the pseudonym, V. Blada. The collection in the Foundation Library contains twenty-nine plates, three of them lampooning Lincoln. This complete collection was reprinted in book form by William Abbott, in 1917.

Possibly Albert Shaw was the first outstanding contributor to gather and compile the better known cartoons featuring Abraham Lincoln. He prepared for the February 1931 issue of *Review of Reviews* an impressive collection of thirty-eight prints, and this interesting compilation was separately printed in a booklet edition.

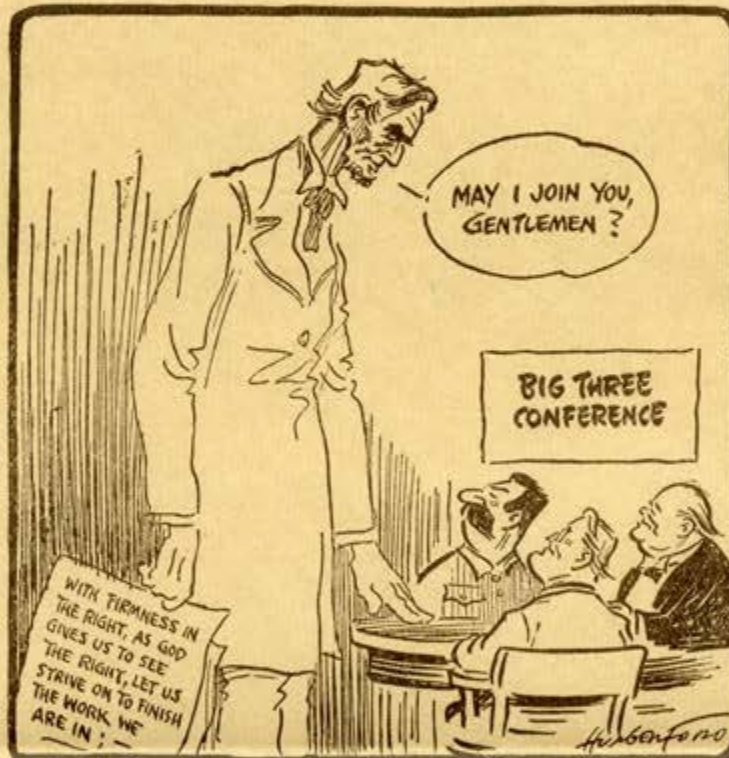
This preliminary study of Mr. Shaw became the nucleus about which he built up his source material for his exhaustive two volume work entitled, *Abraham Lincoln, a Cartoon History*. Volume One presents "His Path to the Presidency," and Volume Two, "The Year of His Election." The first printing appeared in 1929, the second in 1930 with a slightly different format, and the remaining sheets of the two volume work have been bound in a one volume publication.

Printed for private distribution in 1903, Mr. Rufus Rockwell Wilson issued a limited edition of 165 copies of *Lincoln in Caricature*, the first fifteen numbers printed on Japan paper. There are thirty-two full 10" x 12½" page cartoons with an eighteen page descriptive pamphlet laid in with a stiff board cover container. A prospectus with one sample cartoon was also issued. Mr. Wilson has announced that he will have another edition, revised and enlarged, ready for distribution in September of this year.

The Foundation collection of caricatures is very extensive. It contains complete runs of *Harper's* and *Leslie's* for the period of the war, partial files of *Vanity Fair*, and also bound volumes of the *English Illustrated Weeklies, Punch and Fun*. Nearly a complete set of Currier and Ives caricatures are available as well as more than 1500 newspaper cartoons.

Spirit of Lincoln

—By Hungerford



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