

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 884

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

March 18, 1946

MOST SIGNIFICANT CARTOON—FEBRUARY, 1946

The United Nations Organization has contributed much to an increased interest in caricature, and it is not strange that the Lincoln Foundation advisory group in selecting the most significant Lincoln cartoon for February 12 chose one depicting the U. N. O. representatives in session. It is of special interest to note that Dick Binetsett, the cartoonist of the Illinois State Journal, a paper in Lincoln's home city, Springfield, Ill., has been named as the contributing artist for the outstanding 1946 selection.

The cartoon chosen last year for this honor also utilized a theme of international importance, so it would seem that the universal Lincoln will be found often in the modern artist's interpretation of a new world order. The cartoon by Hungerford was selected by Rufus Rockwell Wilson as the final study in his recent publication featuring 165 best known cartoons of Lincoln.

The Wilson book has received much attention by the reviewers and it is bound to create a new interest in the collecting of caricatures. Those appearing in current newspapers are available at the cost of the paper and properly mounted on plain uniform back-grounds make an attractive exhibit. It is doubtful if a more instructive phase of Lincolniana could be chosen than the gathering of cartoons as they express vividly and pointedly current trends of thought reflecting the main issues of the day.

With the exception of the rare Currier and Ives prints those clipped from many available sources contemporaneous with Lincoln's day can be secured at a minimum expense. Complete volumes of Harpers, Leslie's, Punch, Fun, Vanity Fair, etc., can often be picked up at very reasonable prices and the cartoons excerpted.

Abraham Lincoln was a most adaptable character to any cartoonist's whims. Possibly the most striking characteristic he possessed was his excessive height, as he is always shown head and shoulders above associates. When he was elected for a second time and his term in

office extended, the climax of the play on his great height was reached in a cartoon which printed Abe even "still longer."

Next to his height, his beard was the most distinguishing feature of the post election period of 1860 as he becomes the President of the nation. Any exceedingly tall man with a beard was easily portrayed as "Father Abraham." The mole or wart on his face was not forgotten and the deep lines in his face, Roman nose, deeply sunken eyes, and overhanging underlip contributed tremendously to the profile which was to become so familiar to every citizen both North and South.

His apparel seemed to be made to order for the cartoonist if not for Lincoln himself. The young Lincoln in pioneer garb with trousers reaching but half way down his shins and the picturesque head-gear evolved into the man with the tall hat, unpressed clothes, the proverbial shawl and of course an umbrella which was later discarded for a walking stick.

Possibly as outstanding as his physical appearance and his manner of dress were the symbols indicating his early occupation—the axe, the maul, the wedge, rail

splitting implements—all with possible political inferences. The product of his toil, "the rail" itself, introduced into the early party conventions, was by far the favorite construction material with which so many platforms and strange edifices were erected. His cabin home is the most enduring of all the symbols and there is probably no building more quickly recognized by the people of all nations than the log cabin birthplace of the President.

No American has ever been more often quoted than Lincoln and perhaps the cartoonist will become the most important medium for teaching his philosophy to the great masses of people, the same class with which he was on such intimate terms in his day. Another contribution which forms the basis of most of the current caricatures is his humane and benevolent attitude which inspired the Binetsett cartoon.



Map The Editor and Artist of Lincoln Lore