

# 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 912

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

September 30, 1946

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF LAMON'S LINCOLN

So much attention has been paid to the question of authorship and the contents of the book known as *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* by Ward H. Lamon, that no particular interest has been shown in the story of the book as a publishing venture. The fact that it has now become one of the most desirable out of print books and rather difficult to acquire makes a study of its changing format and its distribution of some importance.

John Spencer Clark, who as a member of the firm James R. Osgood & Co., when the Lamon work was produced and who had "full charge of the publication," relates this story of its failure. "The publication of the work which was entered upon with a belief in its historic importance, and high anticipation of its commercial success, came with the publication of the first volume, to an untimely end. No more work was done upon it and the undertaking proved a losing venture all around."

Contemporary with the printing of the book a statement was put out by the publishers which appears to be in the form of a report on certain books they had published, among them Lamon's *Lincoln*. The notations on the latter publication are of so much interest that they are copied verbatim:

Lamon's (Ward H.) *Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Being the Private and Public Life of President Lincoln, from his Birth to the 4th of March, 1861, with his most important and Confidential Correspondence. With many illustrations, chiefly Portraits. 1 vol. 8vo. 562 pages. Cloth, \$5.00; Half Calf, \$8.00.

Subject to a copyright of one dollar per copy.

"This book furnishes an admirable picture of backwoods 'society' when Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois were, for the most part, a wilderness, ravaged by Indians, and the resort of white men hardly less savage. It has all the freshness and vigor that an account of such uncultured, restless, and unrestrained people should possess. Throughout, the zest of the incidents as they occurred is fully retained; and at no point in the volume, whether it refers to the social state in its primitive or more advanced conditions, does the smallest approach to dullness appear. This is one of those publications which cannot fail of being read by thousands of people, many of whom will marvel at the native alchemy sufficing to transmute so many untoward influences into such a truly great and powerful character as Abraham Lincoln exhibited for the admiration of the civilized world."—*Boston Transcript*.

Cost of manufacture .....	\$ 1.50
Wholesale trade price .....	3.00
Profit on 1,000 copies .....	\$1,500.00
200 copies in Cloth.	

The original plans for the book called for two volumes which accounts for the citation "1 volume." The 562 pages mentioned includes the 547 pages of text plus the preliminary pages. The notation about the copyright, which in this instance was held by the author, is of interest as apparently it supplemented the royalty usually paid the author by the publisher. Just what the term "200 copies in cloth" implies is difficult to ascertain.

There is a general impression among Lincoln students that the book appeared in but one issue with the two bindings, cloth and ½ calf as indicated on the publisher's advertisement. This conclusion is partially supported by the description of the title as it appears in the *Monaghan*

### Bibliography:

"9½ x 6; 547 p., illus., cl. and ¼ lea."

An exhaustive study of the various printings will show that although the same plates were used for contents as is usually the case, the books appeared in several different formats as will be indicated:

### TITLE PAGE

*The Life/of/Abraham Lincoln;/from/His Birth to his Inauguration as President./by/Ward H. Lamon./with Illustration/Device/Boston:/James R. Osgood and Company./ (Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood & Co)/1872.*

#### 1. First Cloth Edition

Title page same as above. Bound in both green and plum colored cloth with covers heavily beveled. Same inscription in gilt on cover and backstrip: "The Life/of/Abraham Lincoln/Ward H. Lamon/Illustrated." The backstrip has the publisher's device at bottom. 9¼ x 6., I-XIV, (2), 1-547 p., illus.

#### 2. Trade Edition ½ Calf

Same as above in every instance except cover which is bound in ½ calf.

#### 3. English Edition

Title page reset but same inscription with exception of device lacking and imprint which appears as follows: "Boston:/James R. Osgood and Company/London:/Trubner & Co., 8 & 60, Paternoster Row./1872." Contents from same plates. Green cloth with gilt ornamental design on cover and gilt backstrip as follows: "The Life/of/Abraham Lincoln/by/Ward H. Lamon./ (Fern device)/Trubner & Co." 9½ x 6¼.

In the American edition on the back of the title page appears the following inscription: "Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1872/By Ward H. Lamon./ In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington." This is followed by the imprint "Boston:/Stereo-typed and printed by Rand, Avery & Co." In the English edition this copyright notice and the imprint at the bottom of the page does not appear which would imply that no English copyright had been taken out.

#### 4. Reissue Edition

Title page, contents cover designs etc, same as number one except the three lines on backstrip at top and bottom differently spaced indicating another printing. Also the book is more cheaply made with no reinforcements in the binding of the backstrip and slightly smaller than number one. Foundation copy has green cover. 9 x 6.

#### 5. Large Paper Issue (Unbound)

From same plates as number one but unbound with pages uncut possibly intended for extra illustrating. 9½ x 6¼.

#### 6. Large Paper (Bound in Buckram)

Same as above except bound in buckram. 9½ x 6¼.

#### 7. Large Paper (Bound in ¼ Leather)

Apparently the remainder unbound copies later bound in quantity. Backstrip bears title in gilt "(Device)/Abraham/Lincoln/Lamon/(Device)/(Device) / (Device)" gilt top, pages uncut, 9½ x 6¼.

#### 8. Freethought Publishing Co. (Reprint)

Title page and contents from same plates as number one. Bound in red cloth with following inscription on backstrip: *The Life/of/Abraham Lincoln/Ward H. Lamon/Freethought Publishing/Company.* 9¾ x 6¼.