

# LINCOLN LORE

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## SECRETARY NICOLAY'S LIBRARY

John D. Nicolay became associated with Lincoln immediately after the Republican nominee was named at Chicago and upon Lincoln's election Nicolay became the President's private secretary. This close contact would make the activities of Nicolay between May, 1860, and April, 1865, of vital importance to every student of Abraham Lincoln. The fact that Nicolay's office was in the Executive Mansion allows us to assume that his personal library was housed there. It is not too much to conclude that the President had access to the book shelves. In fact many of the volumes it contained were once in his possession.

The Anderson Auction Company, at New York City, on Friday, January 6, 1905, sold at a public sale "A Rich Collection of Books and Pamphlets mainly of the Civil War Period being a portion of the Private Library of the late Col. John G. Nicolay." There were 367 lots of books and pamphlets listed which contained about 1500 items. Many of the books were sold in lots of from 20 to 40 volumes with but two or three titles mentioned. It is fortunate that a catalogue with the prices which the items brought has been preserved.

Possibly the most interesting section of the catalogue lists the books that were inscribed to Abraham Lincoln and later came into the possession of his secretary. Those which we are reasonably certain belonged to the President are listed as they appear in the catalogue.

### *Presentation Copies to Lincoln*

"Fifteenth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the U. S. Has written on title 'Hon. A. Lincoln.' Washington 1832."

"The Republican Party: its Origin, Necessity and Permanence. Speech of Charles Sumner. Presented by author. New York 1860."

"Proceedings of the N. Y. Electoral College at Albany. Dec. 4, 1860. Presentation copy to Lincoln. Albany 1860."

"Maj. Gen. Geo. B. McClellan 1861-1862. Presentation copy to Abraham Lincoln. New York 1862."

"Poems, by Henry Peterson. Presentation copy to Abraham Lincoln. Philadelphia 1863."

"Speeches delivered in England during the Civil War. By George Francis Train. Presentation copy from the publisher to President Lincoln. Philadelphia 1862."

"Hartley's Map of Arizona. Presentation copy to the President of the United States."

Possibly four other books listed were also in possession of Mr. Lincoln as we have evidence of his having received presentation copies from the authors or publishers of: *Among the Pines* by Kirke (Gilmore); *Dictionary of Congress* by Lanman; *The Pioneer Boy* by Thayer; and *War Powers of the President* by Whiting.

### *Other Books Originally Lincoln's*

Other books about Lincoln, aside from the presentation copies listed, which it is reasonably sure he read appear in the catalogue. Those noted are *Political Textbook for 1860*; *Bartlett's Life of Lincoln*, 1860; *Carpenter's Cause of the War*; Thayer, *Character and Public Life*, 1864.

Two of Lincoln's own productions are among the items sold. The debates with Douglas and the *Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln delivered at Springfield July 17, 1858*. There were twenty copies of the latter and together with a pamphlet entitled: *Louisiana's Tribute to Lincoln* brought the sum of \$19.00, twice as much as any other lot sold, but little more than one copy of Lincoln's speech would bring today.

### *Items Probably Used by Lincoln*

There were many miscellaneous items sold which invite speculation as to contents especially seven lots under the caption, "Civil War Maps, etc." containing about 100 pieces and referring to such places as Gettysburg; Shilo; Forts Sumpter and Wagner; Logan's Cross Roads; Hampton Roads; Harpers Ferry; Chattanooga; Perryville, Ky.; Region below Gettysburg and Appomattox Court House; Atlanta; Petersburg and Five Forks; Antietam; Fredericksburg; Jetersville; Sailor's Creek and 25 miles around Richmond. The maps brought from 2 to 5 cents apiece. A Map of the Seat of War near Fortress Monroe showing the defenses and an original pen and ink drawing brought 15 cents. It is safe to conclude that many of these were the war maps used by the President.

The Congressional Globe and Congressional Record, "1858, onwards. Together 109 volumes." are mentioned. A file of the New York Tribune for May 1859 to June 1864 inclusive (21 volumes) sold for 85 cents a volume.

Space is available for a very few of the titles in the general library sold at the Nicolay sale. Selections have been made of books Lincoln probably looked over, at least they were published during the years Nicolay was associated with him and they are arranged in chronological groups according to publication dates. Names of authors and titles are abbreviated.

1860

Redpath, *Echoes of Harpers Ferry*; (Scott), *The Last Principle of Sectional Equilibrium*; Sherman, *Slavery in the U. S.*; Stephen A. Douglas.

1861

Address on the Death of Stephen A. Douglas; Van Ervie, *Negroes*; White, *National Hymns*.

1862

Brown, Rufus Choate; Brownlow, Parson Brownlow's Book; Cairnes, *The Slave Power*; (Conway), *The Golden Hour*, also *The Rejected Stone*; Cook, *The Siege of Richmond*; Crafts, *Southern Rebellion*; Harris, *Prison Life*; Livermore, *Opinions on Negroes as Slaves, Citizens, and Soldiers*; McMahon, *Cause and Contrast*; Newell, *Orpheus C. Kerr Papers*; Olmstead, *The Cotton Kingdom*; Putman, *Tragedy of Errors*; Reynolds, *The Barons of the South*.

1863

Beecher, *Freedom and War*; Cochin, *The Results of Emancipation*; Estvan, *War Pictures from the South*; Geer, *Beyond the Lines*; Hunnecutt, *The Conspiracy Unveiled*; Mahoney, *The Prisoner of State*; Noyes, *The Bivouac and the Battlefield*; Phillips, *Speeches, Lectures, etc.*; Sumpter Anniversary; Walker, *Jefferson Davis' Repudiation*.

1864

Abbott, *The History of the Civil War*; Boker, *Poems of the War*; Gilmore, *Dawn in Tennessee*; de Coin, *Tobacco and Cotton*; Hosmer, *The Color General*; Jacobs, *Rebel Invasion of Maryland*; Owen, *The Wrong of Slavery*; Moore, *Rebel Rhymes and Rhapsodies*, also *Lyrics of Loyalty*; Piatt, *Nests at Washington*; Ridden, *Idyls of Battle*; Red Tape and Pigeon Hole Generals.

### *Books About Lincoln Nicolay Acquired*

After Lincoln's death Nicolay picked up biographies of his chief by Crosby, Gray, Herndon, Holland and Raymond and several books relating to the assassination and trial of the assassins. Although there were many books sold bearing imprints later than Lincoln's death, the larger number as the auction house announced were "mainly of the Civil War Period."