

LINCOLN LORE

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AN EARLY EXHIBIT OF LINCOLN RELICS

The increasing number of people who are gathering items relating to Abraham Lincoln makes it of some interest to note one of the earliest attempts to collect memorials of the Emancipator.

Early in the year 1886 James W. Keyes began acquiring items associated with the life of Abraham Lincoln for the purpose of preparing a public exhibition. This display was incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois and opened to the public at 94 Market Street, Chicago. Mr. S. B. Munson served as secretary although Mr. Keyes seemed to be the moving spirit in the enterprise. The collection was also placed on display at Milwaukee in the Exposition Building. It became known as the Lincoln Memorial Collection.

Two rare Lincoln pamphlets serve as source material for learning the contents of the collection, one, containing 16 pages, bears the title *Catalogue of Articles Owned and Used by Abraham Lincoln*, the other, of 28 pages, is entitled *The Sketch of the Life of Abraham Lincoln and a Catalogue of Articles Once Owned and Used by Him*. The former catalogue was apparently issued for distribution during the display at Chicago while the latter seems to have been distributed while the collection was at Milwaukee. The extended sketch of Lincoln and several advertisements which appear in the latter copy have apparently crowded out some descriptive matter relating to curios which appears in the first issue, one noting 206 items and the other but 161.

Possibly the nucleus of the collection was acquired as early as April 14, 1886, as on that date William Herndon wrote to Mr. Keyes, "You now own the desk and table that Lincoln once owned, he gave me the desk and table and what you have is genuine and true."

On the first day of December that year William Herndon wrote from Chicago to his friend Jesse Weik at Greencastle, Indiana, "I am here to assist them (Keyes and Munson) in starting their valuable collection of Lincoln relics to the public view." In a letter written to Weik about two weeks later Herndon commented: "I have to explain to visitors the nature, history, etc., of the Lincoln Memorial Collection; it keeps me babbling all the time." Herndon remained with the collection about six weeks returning to Springfield on January 15, 1887.

Just one year and one day after the letter Keyes wrote to Herndon, Lincoln's former law partner signed an

affidavit testifying to the authenticity of the exhibits and in some instances telling of their origin. The last two paragraphs in the affidavit cover the genuineness of the entire exhibit in these words:

"The Subscriber testifies that in his opinion every article is correctly and honestly represented in the Catalogue of the Lincoln Memorial Collection.

"This affidavit is given to show a perfect chain of title from their former owner, Abraham Lincoln to the Lincoln Memorial Collection of Chicago."

Wm. H. Herndon (seal)

It will be impossible in the limited space available to do more than enumerate the items displayed utilizing the same numbers as appear in the catalogues:

- 1, 2, 3—Leaves from School Exercise Book 1826.
- 4 to 23—Legal papers written by Lincoln 1836-1858.
- 24—Photo of letter to A. Campbell 1858.
- 25—Memorandum, "When you can't find it anywhere else, look in this."
- 26—Letter to Herndon 1862.
- 27—Facsimile of autobiography 1859.
- 28—Facsimile of Emancipation Proclamation 1862.
- 29 to 99—No items listed.
- 100 to 108—Marble top table, mirror, six hair-cloth chairs and hearth rug from Lincoln's home.
- 109—Old mahogany sofa.
- 110 to 113—Table, bookcases and inkstand from law office.
- 114, 115, 116—Chity's Pleadings.
- 117 to 120—Stephen's Commentaries.
- 121—Greenleaf on Evidence.
- 122—Revised Statutes of Illinois 1845.
- 123 to 126—Kent's Commentaries.
- 127—Smith's Landlord and Tenant.
- 128, 129—Story's Equity Jurisprudence.
- 130, 131—Parsons on Contracts.
- 132—Horton, American Criminal Law.
- 133—Redfield on Railways.
- 134—Stephens on Principle of Pleading.
- 135—Lincoln, Herndon Fee Book 1847.
- 136—Statutes of Indiana, 1823-24.
- 137 to 140—No items listed.
- 141—Hickory chair from Journal office.

- 142—Carriage cushion.
- 143 to 145—Bureau, stand and cupboard from Lincoln home.
- 146—Cog of wheel from Gordon's Mill.
- 147 to 154—Photographs: Lincoln in 1857, Herndon, Monument, Residence, Capitol Buildings, Lincoln Monument, Curios.
- 155—Bust of Lincoln.
- 156—Rosettes worn at funeral.
- 157—Photo of Spencer County Cabin.
- 158—Duplicate of Lincoln-Todd marriage license.
- 159—Lincoln medals 1860-1863.
- 160—Bust of Lincoln.
- 161—Letter of Governor Duncan 1835.
- 162—Portrait of Lincoln by Darling.
- 163—Photograph of Lincoln in 1856.
- 164—Letter to Mason Brayman.
- 165—Check received as retainer in Illinois Central Railroad Case.
- 166—Lease of Home in 1857.
- 167—Endorsement 1862.
- 168—Letter by Mrs. Lincoln.
- 169—Photograph of Bedell Letter.
- 170 to 175—Photographs, medals, election tickets, campaign envelopes, currency of Civil War.
- 176—Letter by Herndon.
- 177—Curios of Funeral
- 178, 179—Table and stand from residence.
- 180—Bills (13) Lincoln and Stewart 1836-1838.
- 181—Memorandum for law case.
- 182—Legal document.
- 183, 184—Dispatches to Herndon and DuBois.
- 185—Medals of 1860-1864.
- 186—Photograph of Sarah Bush Lincoln.
- 187—Leaf from family Bible.
- 188—Letter by Mrs. Lincoln.
- 189 to 194—Piece of casket, day book, bronze medal, confederate notes, Chicago Tribune, London papers.
- 195—Ford's Theater playbill for April 14, 1865.
- 196—Card written to the Secretary of the Treasury.
- 197—Mourning Badge.
- 198—Facsimiles of Declaration and Proclamation.
- 199—Gloves presented to Lincoln.
- 200—Quilt with autographs.
- 201—Photograph of Wigwam.
- 202—Hesler photograph of Lincoln.
- 203—Photograph of Lincoln and secretaries.
- 204—Split bottom chair.
- 205—Cane made from New Salem store remains.