

LINCOLN LORE

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TELEVISION AND THE LINCOLN OBSERVER

The far-seeing television was extended on January 11 in a historic program when the east coast and the mid-west facilities were joined with a connecting link between Philadelphia and Cleveland. The eastern division cable extends down the coast from Boston to Richmond, while the midwest channel touches Buffalo, Cleveland, Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. The junction line from Philadelphia to Cleveland passes through Pittsburgh.

Thirteen years ago in the studio of KDKA at Pittsburgh the editor of Lincoln Lore experienced his first thrill as a participant in an experimental television program. Although there was no broadcasting of the visual part of his interview in the studio with Dr. Clausen, the participants in the program were advised that the studio was all set for a television performance and to act accordingly. The absence of a visible microphone, and the supposition that one was being observed, contributed to an unusual experience.

The possibilities of television in many widely diversified fields of interest are now being explored with the result that athletic contests and dramatic presentations will not monopolize entirely, this most remarkable of all our visual vehicles. On the last Sunday night of the past year Abraham Lincoln was introduced to the television audience in the form of a bust. While the incident itself was of little importance, it does suggest that our historical museums and libraries will not be overlooked when cultural and educational programs begin to share time with the more glamorous presentations.

Now for the first time the midwest can observe events taking place in the east and vice versa, and the accomplishment points to a coast to coast network within the next few years. The line which runs from Chicago to St. Louis bends over into the central Indiana country and then swings back into southern Illinois. The availability of television in Indiana and Illinois on a national hookup offers some interesting speculations as to how the Lincoln country may eventually be visualized on the new network.

The Library of Congress might take the lead in this cultural phase of television by installing a broadcasting set of her own. One may visit the library and by the use of microfilm view most of the rare documents, but instead of an audience of one, the whole nation might have an opportunity to view the rarities housed there—a sort of a Freedom Train, with an established schedule, running right through your living room, so to speak. The Smithsonian Institute, with its inexhaustible collection of human interest exhibits, through television, might become a familiar spot for those who have never visited the master museum of them all.

Washington offers many other interesting spots for the Lincoln television observer. He would want to see the Lincoln Memorial and its enshrined Lincoln statue by French especially on Lincoln's birthday when the President's wreath is placed at the feet of Lincoln. A visit to the White House would be possible with the rooms occupied by the Lincoln family identified. Lincoln's "summer white house," the Anderson cottage, would be of interest, as well as the site of Fort Stevens when Lincoln as Commander-in-Chief was once under enemy fire. The museum at Ford's Theatre would offer the most interesting collection of Lincoln's relics in the capital city and just across the street from the theatre, is the Peterson House where Lincoln died.

The museum and library of the Lincoln National Life Foundation at Fort Wayne is located but forty miles from

one of the main television trunk lines and it will not be long before we may be able to show by the means of television's observing eye, some of the Lincoln rarities which have been gathered by the Foundation. In anticipation of such a visit we might arrange the following exhibits for display. If the broadcast could be made on the anniversary day of Lincoln's birth one might observe several hundred boy scouts from the northeastern Indiana area gathered about the spacious plaza in front of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company building where Paul Manship's heroic bronze statue of *Abraham Lincoln the Hoosier Youth* is the center of attraction. The scouts have made this annual pilgrimage of long standing, in order to pay a tribute to this immortal man who spent fourteen of his formative years in Indiana. One might observe them in their impressive ceremonies.

On entering the building one would be shown the famous heroic Pickett plaque, the original bronze study now in possession of the Foundation, which was used by the government for the design of its first Lincoln postal card. Next, a bronze replica, greatly reduced in size, of the Charles Keck statue of Lincoln standing at Hingham, Massachusetts where the Lincolns first settled in America, would attract one's attention. Once within the main room of the Foundation's library and museum one would be greatly impressed by the collection of 7800 books and pamphlets about Abraham Lincoln exclusively. One would then be looking upon the largest collection of literature ever gathered about one man, biblical characters excepted. One would be shown a miniature book but $\frac{7}{8}$ inches by $\frac{5}{8}$ inches which contains four Lincoln addresses, and another 19 inches by 15 inches, presenting facsimiles of the tributes paid to Lincoln by all the nations of the world at the time of Lincoln's assassination. Besides the largest and smallest of Lincoln books, one would ask for the rarest book, and Volk's *Life of Lincoln* would be brought to the vault. The book is so rare that for many years there was a question whether or not there ever was such a book. There is one other known copy, and that is in the Huntington Library on the Pacific coast.

One would be shown a whole shelf of volumes in Braille prepared for the blind, and over 250 volumes on Lincoln in foreign languages, with the frontispieces revealing pictures of Lincoln with various racial characteristics. The books similar to those Lincoln used as a boy in Indiana would have great attraction. The same edition of the *Bible* from which Lincoln's mother read, Murray's *English Reader*, Weems' *Washington*, and Scott's *Lessons in Elocution*, as well as Pike's *Arithmetic* would be representative of 300 other volumes which are known to have influenced Lincoln.

A greater revelation would be the opening of the batteries of filing cabinets until one saw fifty-three of them, all brimming full of mounted newspaper clippings featuring articles about Abraham Lincoln and organized under 3000 different title approaches to Lincoln's life. Everywhere television's eye turns Lincoln would greet one—in oil paintings, rare Currier and Ives prints, original photographs, or the small campaign ferrotypes of the 1860 campaign. One would also see what the Foundation calls the finest photograph of Abraham Lincoln ever taken, an original print made in Springfield just before he left for the Inauguration.

When television comes to Fort Wayne we hope you will be able to look in on us.