

LINCOLN LORE

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COLLECTING LINCOLN PICTURES

Collecting pictures of Abraham Lincoln suggests a hobby which has great diversity of selection and also adaptability to the size of one's purse. A scrapbook of pictures cut from current newspapers and periodicals may represent no primary expenditure whatever except a few cents spent for paper and paste. On the other hand, when gathered by a museum interested in acquiring oil paintings of the President from life, a single item may demand a fancy figure.

Every purchaser of literature is indirectly a collector of pictures, especially in this era when all reading matter is so profusely illustrated. The 8,042 volumes of books and pamphlets in the Foundation library, all different and exclusively Lincoln, have been indexed for illustrations with a separate card for each reproduction. This file makes available at once over 7,000 pictures relating to the Lincoln scene, although, of course, there are many duplications. This approach is basic for any exhaustive collection of separate prints, as one may already possess as a plate in a book, a Lincoln picture submitted for approval.

Caricatures

One of the most interesting picture collections of Lincoln clippings can be assembled by keeping on the lookout for cartoons or caricatures featuring Lincoln. This may eventually lead one back to the old *Leslie's* and *Harper's* weeklies and other periodicals current with Lincoln's administration which are rich in this type of illustrative material. The Foundation collection of 1,500 cartoon drawings are arranged alphabetically by name of artist. The "Most Significant Cartoon of the Year" contest sponsored by the Foundation has aroused a new interest in this type of collecting. The outstanding book in this field is *Lincoln in Caricature* by Rufus Rockwell Wilson.

Prints

Those who will wish to differentiate between pictures on clippings and those designated as actual prints will make their first selective art division by setting aside for careful mounting separately printed illustrations. If the collector is able to distinguish between lithographs, engravings, wood-cuts, etchings, etc. they might be so grouped, but he would probably find it more convenient to organize his collection of prints by their sizes rather than by the processes of production.

Postal Cards

Lithographs far exceed any other type of prints and one of the least expensive collections offering a wide diversity of subjects is the picture postal card. The Foundation collection contains over 3,000 different Lincoln subjects and is divided into four general divisions: Photographs of Lincoln, Lincoln Quotations, Lincoln Statues, and Historic Sites associated with the Lincoln story. Photographs follow the Meserve classification, quotations are arranged chronologically, statues are listed by name of sculptor, and historic sites are gathered under states.

Covers, Stamps, Currency

Closely associated with postal cards are illustrative covers or envelopes commemorative of historical episodes and anniversaries. These may be run back chronologically to the Civil War period and are associated with the large number of envelopes featuring Lincoln. Possibly postage stamps presenting a likeness of Lincoln might also be included in this general classification, and to carry the grouping a step further, currency featuring Lincoln could be included but in reality this last division should come under engravings.

Lithography

The name of a publishing house, Currier and Ives, has become almost synonymous with early American lithographs and there are sixty-three different Lincoln subjects noted in the Conningham checklist published in 1949. These prints fall into beardless, bearded, family groups including Lincoln, caricatures, and miscellaneous. There were many other lithographers besides Currier and Ives who published Lincoln subjects. The number of prints is greatly increased if items are desired both colored and plain, and dealers usually make this distinction. One should not attempt to enter this field of collecting unless he is willing to pay an average of \$20.00 for a print. However, there are many different prints from modern processes of lithography which are available at a minimum cost, and calendars offer a fine illustration for the large number of gift items available in this field.

Engravings

Possibly the most desirable prints from the viewpoint of the *bona fide* collector are steel engravings which reached their height of perfection, as far as artistic workmanship is concerned, about the period of the Civil War. Mechanical processes now introduced which largely discount the artists' skill make the later specimens less desirable. The Lincoln subjects in this field of collecting is almost without number. The Foundation is fortunate in possessing the original steel plate from which the famous Marshall engraving was printed.

Etchings

The collectors of modern prints have largely turned to etchings on copper as their production still requires a considerable amount of artistic skill and personal handwork. Some of the most desirable items reach back into the Lincoln era. The limited number of copies which may be pulled from a plate with a sliding scale of excellency determined by the numerical rotation of the copies, adds to the collector's interest.

Photographs

The prints which the average Lincoln student will most likely find satisfactory in building a Lincoln picture collection are the photographs he will take himself, associated with Lincoln historical sites and memorials. Pictures in color and movies will be tabulated under this division. There are many photographs of Lincoln available which were made contemporary with Lincoln's day, but most of them are pictures of engravings and lithographs instead of original photographs from life. There is practically no opportunity of ever finding an original daguerrotype (on copper) an ambrotype (on glass) or a ferrotype (on tin) because not more than a dozen are known to be in existence. There are a considerable number of ferro or tin types of engravings or lithographs of Lincoln to be found on the campaign buttons of 1860 and 1864.

Autographed Photographs

Possibly the most desirable item which one could acquire in the Lincoln picture field is an autographed photograph of the President. Many engraved and lithographed copies have a facsimile of Lincoln's signature inscribed on the plate, but an original autograph of the President on any print except an original photograph is unknown. There has just been issued by Frederick H. Meserve of New York, who years ago published 100 original photographs of the President, supplement number three containing eight recently discovered prints which brings the total number of original photographs, as classified by Mr. Meserve, up to 124.