

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 1182

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

December 3, 1951

JUDGE BOLLINGER'S BENEFICENT BEQUEST

Among the Lincoln fraternity no member has been a more ardent collector or a more delightful host than the late Judge James W. Bollinger of Davenport, Iowa. A beneficent bequest in his will placed his exhaustive library of Lincolniana in possession of the State University of Iowa which should serve as an inspiration for many generations of youth who will attend the institution. It has been accepted generally that this collection gathered at Davenport, Iowa over a period of fifty years, at the time of Judge Bollinger's death was one of the three or four largest personally owned libraries of Lincoln books and pamphlets, if not the largest, in existence.

Appropriate dedication ceremonies were held on November 19 and 20 in the newly built library building of the University at Iowa City where the collection is adequately housed. The exercises were arranged by Clyde C. Walton Jr., the library's curator of rare books, with the assistance of Mr. Harry Lytle of Davenport, president of the Bollinger-Lincoln Foundation. The program opened at 7:00 P.M. on Nov. 19 with a banquet at the Memorial Union Building at which Paul M. Angle, secretary of the Chicago Historical Society, was the guest speaker. He gave a realistic sketch of Judge Bollinger and his Lincoln interests. On the morning of Nov. 20 Harry Pratt, historian of the state of Illinois and Benjamin Thomas, former secretary of the Abraham Lincoln Association spoke on "Judge Bollinger and the Abraham Lincoln Association," and "Judge Bollinger and New Salem," respectively. A special luncheon for visiting Lincoln students was held at noon with about 60 guests present. In the afternoon Charles Lynch, Jr. spoke on "A Lawyer Looks at Lincoln" and the concluding address was by the editor of Lincoln Lore whose subject was "Lincoln Scholarship and the Private Collector."

The tri-cities, consisting of Davenport, Moline, and Rock Island, for more than half a century have been a center of Lincoln influence. At Moline, lived one of the original "Big Five" collectors, Judge J. B. Oakleaf, whose library is now in possession of Indiana University at Bloomington. A son and grandson of Mr. Oakleaf were present at the Bollinger dedication. Also present was John H. Hauberg of Rock Island whose contributions to the history of Lincoln in the Black Hawk War are well known. Judge Bollinger's former business partner, Louis Block, now deceased, was also a Lincoln student. His sons were present at the exercises. C. M. Cochran, a member of the Davenport coterie, although unable to be present, sent a Lincoln manuscript for the collection. Harry M. Lytle, president of the Bollinger-Lincoln Foundation who presided at the ceremonies, and a close friend of the Judge, has built a notable collection of Lincolniana.

For some years the tri-city group was associated with several Lincoln students at Peoria in an organization called The Oakwood Lincoln Club. Some of the most elegant Lincoln brochures have been done at Peoria in the print shop of Edward J. Jacob. M. L. Houser of Peoria assembled a significant collection of books such as Lincoln is known to have read and is an authority in this field. His collection has recently gone to Bradley University and he prepared an elaborate subject index volume as a reference guide. The older students of Lincoln will also remember the excellent libraries gathered by Ralph C. Lowes and P. G. Rennick both of Peoria. One of the finest Lincoln libraries in Peoria is in possession of Lester Schriver. Ernest East, a member of the Lincoln clan, also resided at Peoria for many years.

Representatives from universities housing other outstanding Lincoln collections were present at the dedication. Brown University where the McLellan collection is

impressively displayed was represented by David A. Jonah. Michigan University, the recipient of the Greenly collection located in the Clements Library, sent Colton Storm to witness the proceedings. Possibly the visitor who received the most attention by the newspapers was the youngest collector present, Ronald Rietveld, a 14 year old junior high school pupil from Des Moines. He has been collecting items about Lincoln since he was five years old when his interest was aroused by his grandfather.

Students of the Emancipator throughout the country will observe with much interest this latest effort of a great university to become a worthy custodian of an outstanding collection of Lincolniana. Educational institutions which seem to have been most successful in utilizing a library of Lincolniana have had some medium for publishing their findings. An outlet which demands a certain amount of research and routine attention seems to have been the most valuable stimulus in keeping interest aroused in its Lincoln archives.

Possibly the most successful venture in this field is the publication of the *Lincoln Herald*, a quarterly issued by the Lincoln Memorial University at Harrogate, Tenn. While it may be admitted that there is a promotional value accruing to the University which serves as a partial incentive for the enterprise, a more important factor is the direction given to the use of the library by the well known Lincoln student, R. Gerald McMurtry. He managed to make the most of the university's historical sources and a sympathetic interest on the part of the President and history department of the institution has made the Department of Lincolniana a real asset to the University.

Another good example of the utility to which a great institutional library featuring Abraham Lincoln may be directed may be observed at Brown University. Aside from occasional brochures a pamphlet called *The Lincoln Annex* is published quarterly "by the Friends of the Library of Brown University." This periodical is a much more important publication for the research student than has been acknowledged generally. Its purpose is clearly defined and it is especially interested in discovering and citing little known episodes of Lincoln history to be found in collateral books. These quarterlies constitute an important bibliography of books in this field which are being compiled for the first time by this publication, and the source material still available is inexhaustible.

It would appear as if the State University of Iowa has already sensed the need of a directing personnel for its Lincoln collections in the form of a Bollinger-Lincoln Foundation and it is hoped that there may be issued by this group a mouthpiece for the Bollinger collection which may encourage historical research in some specific Lincoln field. Iowa is especially well situated both by location and the type of its citizens to place more emphasis on the great western migration. No family residing in America for three hundred years presents a more typical movement of the people from the puritan settlements in New England to the prairies of the west than the forbears of Abraham Lincoln. Robert Lincoln, the only son of President Lincoln to reach maturity and a member of the eighth generation of American Lincolns, married a daughter of Senator Harlan of Iowa, thus extending the contacts of the President's immediate family to its farthest geographical extremity westward.

Congratulations to the University of Iowa on the acquisition of so fine a library of Americana as the Bollinger Collection.