

# LINCOLN LORE

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## LINCOLN CURIOSITIES IN ART

This compilation of references to Lincoln curiosities in art was suggested by the wide publicity recently given to the story of a precious stone, valued at \$250,000, cut in the image of Abraham Lincoln. Although it may excel in money value other artistic efforts to produce unique portraits of the President, some of the works have called for just as much artistic skill and labor in their respective fields of creative art.

### *Cement*

An amateur in the sculpturing field, Fritz Henkels of Santa Monica, Calif., has made among other studies an heroic figure of the enduring Lincoln out of cement. Of course, a little sand was mixed in to make the cement behave properly.

### *Currency*

The problem of destroying redeemed currency, badly soiled or mutilated, was at one time achieved at the United States Treasury by the process of maceration. The papier-mache resulting from this process was often made into small plaques or busts of Lincoln. The estimated original value of the currency used in these souvenirs ranged from \$7000 to \$25,000.

### *Flowers*

Lincoln is usually presented as a homely individual and his own remarks about his plainness indicate that he accepted this general characterization. Elias Jacobowitz, a Russian artist from Odessa, created a portrait of Lincoln in 1931 done entirely with the petals of beautiful flowers.

### *Hair*

Lincoln once used the expression, "a hair's breadth," and another term familiar to him, "splitting hairs," is called to mind when we observe that the human hair was long ago used in the making of artistic designs. A large portrait of Lincoln, 30 x 24 inches made by embroidery with floss and human hair is still preserved.

### *Ivory*

Carvings of Lincoln in ivory are not uncommon and of course fall into the classification of miniature curios. They should not be confused with paintings on ivory which represent another field of art expression. One of the finest of this miniature sculpture was done by Eallio.

### *Peach Stone*

One of the most interesting miniatures in the collection of the Lincoln National Life Foundation is a peach stone carved in the form of Lincoln's head. It is an artistic piece of work done over thirty years ago by a prisoner in the Michigan State prison.

### *Plants*

A floriculturist named Frank Olliver, living in San Francisco, made a likeness of the Emancipator out of 22,000 tiny living plants that he had grown and transplanted. The entire portrait was achieved by the use of 60 separate boxes or flats, which made the 10 by 20 foot picture portable. Silvery gray Santolina which looks like a miniature powdered Christmas tree were used for the highlights of the face.

### *Sand*

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the sand mosaics offered an approach to artistic expression. William Smith O'Brien of Idaho Falls, Idaho by the use of colored sands poured into a bottle made a very acceptable portrait of Lincoln.

### *Sapphire*

A sapphire of 1318 carats, the largest stone of this kind known, has been carved in the likeness of Abraham Lincoln. Norman Manness, a die maker, did the carving which took a period of two years. He had the professional advice of a Lincoln sculptor, Dr. Merrill Gage. This miniature Lincoln is owned by James and Harry Kazanjian who were once poor boys of Armenian ancestry.

### *Sawdust*

A portrait of the railsplitter made with sawdust may seem like an anachronism, but James Swetman of Springfield, Ill., produced such a likeness. The different shades required were obtained with sawdust from maple, oak and walnut and required four weeks to complete.

### *Silver*

Lincoln used a line from Gray's Elegy to describe his early years: "The short and simple annals of the poor." However, one of our women sculptors created a statuette eight inches high of "The Young Woodsman" which was cast in silver.

### *Snow*

Although snow is seasonable and only available for limited periods in many parts of the country, it is likely that more Lincolns are made each winter with this substance than any other plastic material. These cold portraits of the warm hearted President may take the form of colossal heads or full length studies. Among the available photographs of many of these, a standing Lincoln made at Bangor, Maine by Valentine Hanneman, former Belgian sculptor, closely resembles a genuine work of art.

### *Stained Glass*

Several artists have portrayed the Emancipator with stained glass, relying on the many colors available to develop their designs. Some of the places where these creations can be observed follow: Calvary Church, Pittsburgh; Catholic Cathedral, Springfield, Ill.; Central Woodward Christian Church, Detroit; Foundry Methodist Church, Washington; Howe Memorial Chapel, Evanston; Plymouth Congregational Church, Brooklyn; St. Stanislaus Polish National Church, Scranton; Sigma Alpha Epsilon Temple, Evanston; Veteran's Administration Library, Wadsworth, Kansas.

### *Wax*

Figures in wax of famous people were once received with great acclaim. A New York sculptor named Irvin G. Culver made a life size portrait of the enduring Lincoln about twenty years ago which was displayed in many of the larger American cities.

As might be expected, no reference is made to sculptors who have confined themselves to the usual metals, stone, wood, plaster, etc. Neither have we encroached upon the field of painters who have used various materials on which to place their studied objects, although specimens in both of these fields, sculptor and painting, have given us some Lincoln curiosities.