

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN SCULPTURE IN THE NEWS

Lincoln sculptural art and individuals interested in the subject have attracted the attention of the press in recent weeks bringing the subject before the people on many occasions. The additional fact that this month of September marks the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the first book devoted exclusively to the compiling of information about heroic bronze statues of Lincoln, also suggests that some notes on Lincoln sculpture would be timely.

The book entitled *Heroic Statues in Bronze* by Franklin B. Meade was prepared for distribution at the dedication of the Paul Manship bronze "Abraham Lincoln the Hoosier Youth" dedicated on September 16, 1932. The statue stands in front of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company building at Fort Wayne, Indiana. The attractive brochure, printed by R. R. Donnelly and Sons of Chicago, listed, illustrated and described forty heroic bronze statues of Lincoln by some of America's best known artists.

The appearance of two current books on Lincoln in sculptural art, one, *He Belongs to the Ages* by Donald Charles Durman and the recently released, *Lincoln in Marble and Bronze* by F. Lauriston Bullard have made all students of Lincoln more conscious of the many contributions to art in this field of effort. The death of Mr. Bullard at 86 years of age occurred on August 3rd, less than four months after his book came from the press. His demise has caused a keen interest in the last of his many valuable contributions to Lincolniana. The Rutgers University Press is the publisher of the volume.

While but 40 bronze statues were noted in the initial work in this field twenty years ago by Franklin Mead, Mr. Bullard has been successful in identifying and providing illustrations for 68 heroic statues of Lincoln. Attention is also called to 19 replicas of these statues, making a grand total of 87 heroic studies of the martyred President. A feature of the book which follows Mr. Mead's arrangement places all of the illustrations consecutively in the mid-section of the book making in reality a book within a book.

Having spent many years of his life as chief editorial writer for the *Boston Herald* Mr. Bullard has had a peculiar training in writing brief pithy monographs and his descriptive data and facts gathered about the statues give evidence of this valuable training. The fact that he has visited most of the places where the statues are located has also given a touch of authority to what he writes.

Not only has the passing of Mr. Bullard again called attention to Lincoln sculptural art which had challenged his interest for years but the demise of one of the most famous of all the Lincoln creative artists, Adolph Alexander Weinman, who passed away on August 8, five days after Mr. Bullard's decease, has accentuated the interest in sculpture. He too was an octogenarian having reached the age of eighty-one.

The most famous of the Weinman Lincolns is a seated figure placed on the court house square at Hodgenville,

Kentucky, the town closest to the place where Lincoln was born. The dedication took place during the centennial year of Lincoln's birth. The state of Kentucky which sponsored the erection of the statue granted the sculptor the permission to make a replica of the statue to be placed in front of Bascom Hall at the University of Wisconsin. The original plaster model for these two works of art was presented by the sculptor to the City Art Museum at St. Louis. Weinman also created an heroic standing Lincoln in bronze for the state capitol building at Frankfort, Kentucky. Weinman was recognized as one of the foremost sculptors in America and many of his works are to be observed in the nation's capitol, as well as his bust of Horace Mann in the Hall of Fame. Space does not permit the listing of the busts and minor contributions Weinman made to Lincoln sculptural art.

Weinman was a student of the famous St. Gaudens, creator of two heroic bronze statues in Chicago. On August 2 the *Tribune* released a feature article on an obscure St. Gaudens bust recently acquired by the Chicago Historical Society. The bust is a replica of the standing Lincoln in Lincoln Park and only seventeen inches in height it is somewhat shorter but similar in design to the one presented to the Hall of Fame by the Union League Club of Chicago in 1923.

The article featuring the St. Gaudens bust which is valued at \$1,500 mentions another Lincoln bust discovered two weeks before at Meriden, Connecticut which "art experts believe may be worth \$100,000." Of course this is a ridiculous estimate, unwarranted by any standard of appraisal. The fact that the owner purchased it at a junk yard for \$2.00 made it a live story for the national press agencies.

A barber, John E. Cantanari, acquired the fourteen inch bronze bust in 1937 and the twenty-two pound piece of metal was used in his home as a doorstop. Last April, when planning to move to California, Cantanari sold some household effects to a junk dealer named Chester Orsini, receiving, as the news release reports, \$2.00 for the bust. Antique dealers hearing about the bust are reported to have made some fabulous offers for it reaching as high as \$15,000. Meanwhile, Cantanari in California, reading newspaper accounts about the value of his old doorstop, obtained an injunction restraining the junkman from disposing of the bust. Cantanari claims Orsini came in possession of the bust by mistake.

The bust was the work of Franklin Simmons, born in Webster, Maine in 1839. He resided in Washington in 1864 and 1865 and executed a number of busts and statues while he resided there. Among his studies were equestrian statues and busts of both Grant and Sherman. The Lincoln bust was cast by William Miller & Co., Providence, R. I. and it bears their inscription and local records imply it was cast in 1865.

The Foundation has received several communications from people in possession of Lincoln busts desiring to have their works of art identified, hoping that they too may be in possession of a copy of the Simmons work.