

LINCOLN LORE

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TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL ITINERARY

Lincoln Lore over a long period of time has presented at this season the speaking itinerary of its editor, arranged for the first three months of the new year. Inasmuch as 1953 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of these annual trips, it seems quite appropriate to make a few comments regarding them. Of course, the primary object has been to tell the story of Abraham Lincoln and I find that this has been done before 2717 audiences containing 891,270 persons with an average of 335 people to the group—radio audiences of course, excluded in the total number of people addressed.

The cities to be visited have through the years been grouped into eastern, central and western sections. With this arrangement it takes three years to reach most of the states in the union and then the same succession again is followed. Speeches on Lincoln have been made in all but five states, and in all but four of the 58 cities of over 150,000 population. However, for fear that this may appear to be boastful about the extent of my travels, I hasten to comment that my son-in-law's father, Fred C. Zieg of Fort Wayne, has within the last month completed a series of purely recreational trips that have taken him into every single county of every single state in the country.

Lincoln once said: "The better part of one's life consists of his friendships" and the opportunity to meet former Lincoln friends and make new ones on these annual itineraries has been of the greatest personal satisfaction. Most of the letters coming to the director of the Foundation might be designated a "correspondence in person" as a large majority of the writers are personally known to the recipient. These annual journeys have made it possible not only to meet the leading Lincoln collectors in their homes, but to examine the rarities in their libraries, as well as browse through the great institutional Lincoln collections throughout the country.

The tremendous collection of literature and miscellaneous data relating

to Lincoln which has been assembled in Fort Wayne would never have been possible without the opportunity of searching periodically in most of America's prominent bookstores and many of the obscure ones, as well, for desirable items of Lincolniana. This is especially true when considering the field of Lincoln books and pamphlets where it is almost a necessity to examine a publication before mak-

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During this coming 25th annual itinerary it would be a pleasure to meet students of Lincoln, not already known, and also renew acquaintances with old friends. The offices of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company in the cities visited will be able to furnish the local schedule.

Louisville, Ky., Jan. 12
Memphis, Tenn., Jan. 13, 14
Jackson, Miss., Jan. 15, 16
New Orleans, La., Jan. 19
Houston, Tex., Jan. 20, 21
San Antonio, Tex., Jan. 22, 23
Fort Worth, Tex., Jan. 26, 27
Dallas, Tex., Jan. 28, 29
Shreveport, La., Jan. 30
Little Rock, Ark., Feb. 2
St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 3, 4
Kansas City, Mo., Feb. 5, 6
Chicago, Ill., Feb. 9, 10, 11
Milwaukee, Wis., Feb. 12, 13
Appleton, Wis., Feb. 16
Minneapolis, Minn., Feb. 17, 18
Madison, Wis., Feb. 19, 20
Kalamazoo, Mich., Feb. 23, 24
Detroit, Mich., Feb. 25, 26, 27
Pontiac, Mich., March 2, 3
Grand Rapids, Mich., March 4, 5

ing a satisfactory purchase. This approach has made possible the acquisition of a very large number of unique volumes and little known variants, which has brought the Foundation collection of books and pamphlets, exclusively Lincoln and with no two identical, to the grand total of 8,359 catalogued volumes.

The same opportunity for extensive searching is responsible for the gath-

ering of illustrative Lincolniana. It is difficult to visualize the collecting of over 7,000 different separate printed pictures of the Lincoln theme without having access to the salesrooms of numerous galleries and private collections, scattered over the nation from coast to coast.

One of the inspirational features of these annual trips has been the following of Lincoln's footsteps. By the time he was forty years of age he had been in more than half the states of the Union and by the time he was inaugurated President he had spoken in more than half of the then 34 states. Many of the places Lincoln visited have been marked by impressive bronze tablets. Following the route which Lincoln took, holding his boy Tad by the hand, through the streets of Richmond at the close of the war brings a thrill that can never be forgotten. On other historical spots it has been possible to more clearly visualize important episodes in the life of Lincoln. These trips to historical sites associated with Lincoln have been supplemented by visiting the many shrines dedicated to him. Nearly every one of the 76 heroic statues of Abraham Lincoln, located in communities from coast to coast, have been observed at least once and some of them many times.

Although a full program of speaking engagements is usually arranged, often calling for several addresses each day, there has been some time available for historical research, especially in the states where the forebears of Lincoln resided and in Washington, D. C. However, the most important discovery of a significant Lincoln source was made in Dallas, Texas and other finds as far west as San Diego have brought rich treasures to the Foundation archives.

It would have been impossible to build such a collection of Lincolniana as has been assembled by the Lincoln National Life Foundation without the opportunity offered for the acquisition of items and information made available by these twenty-four annual speaking itineraries.