

LINCOLN LORE

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Abraham Lincoln Association. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, New Jersey. 2 volumes. Price \$115.

Not since Nicolay and Hay compiled in 1894 the *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* has so important a contribution been made to Lincolniana as the recently published nine volume edition of *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. It is in reality the product of the combined efforts of many organizations, several authors of similar publications, an editorial board, and scores of individual contributors. While it was published by The Abraham Lincoln Association of Illinois, it would not have been possible without the generous financial assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation.

The publication of such a work has been the supreme objective of The Abraham Lincoln Association since 1924 when it centered its efforts on the collecting of Lincoln's unpublished writings and speeches. Its executive secretaries, Paul M. Angle, Benjamin P. Thomas, Harry E. Pratt, William E. Baringer and Roy P. Basler were constantly on the alert for contributions in this field. The first secretary compiled a volume entitled *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln* and the last named secretary became the editor of the present publication with Marion Dolores Pratt and Lloyd A. Dunlap as his assistants. A board of editorial advisers under the direction of George W. Bunn, Jr. including Paul M. Angle, J. G. Randall*, and Benjamin P. Thomas assisted in both planning and executing the work.

As far as the historical value of the contents of the new compilations are considered, the Nicolay and Hay contributions, now supplemented by the Lincoln Papers in the Library of Congress to which the earlier compilers had access, are of chief importance. The extensive compilations by Ida M. Tarbell, Arthur Brooks Lapsley, Gilbert A. Tracy, Brown University, Paul M. Angle, Emanuel Hertz and Rufus Rockwell Wilson should also be recognized as important contributions to the new collected works. Yet we are advised that the sum total of all of these previously published items will not exceed the great mass of new writings and speeches now available for the first time. The scope of the field covered is set forth in this manner.

(1) "Manuscripts in Lincoln's handwriting."

Exceptions (a) "Copies made by Lincoln of the compositions of others for transmitted or preservation in his own file."

(b) "Law cases and documents appertaining thereto (such as receipts for fees, affidavits, declarations, praecipes, etc.)"

(2) "Manuscripts and documents not in Lincoln's handwriting but bearing his signature or signed for him by his authority."

Exceptions (a) "Acts of Congress, treaties, commissions, authorizations, appointments, pardons, land grants, checks, ship's papers, certificates of service, credences, discharge papers, military orders (except those personally drafted or primarily Lincoln's), draft orders, routine letters and endorsements of transmittal, routine pardon and clemency endorsements (such as "Let this man take the oath of December 8, 1863,

and be discharged"), approvals, letters written and signed by his secretaries, form replies to a request for an autograph, and nominations to office submitted to the United States Senate."

(3) "Public utterances not available in manuscript."

Exceptions (a) "Utterances recorded only in memoirs, diaries, and reminiscences."

Among the items which the editors have felt it necessary to omit from the work which will be most keenly missed are the "law cases and documents appertaining thereto." It is apparent that sufficient funds were not available to publish the extra volumes which would be required for these important papers, although it is announced in the foreword that the association proposes to publish them, at a future date. The two volumes by Rufus Rockwell Wilson, *Uncollected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 1947, and also 1948 include a great many of these court documents and possibly the manuscript for the other volumes he contemplated will some day be published, which would supplement *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*.

There will be some compensations for the other items which it has been found necessary to omit by listings in the Appendix II of all the known documents bearing Lincoln's signature except nominations, land grants, discharge papers, ship's papers, routine pardons and clemency endorsements, draft orders, approvals, appointments, authorizations, and commissions. An extremely interesting feature of Appendix II is a list of all the Lincoln forgeries which have come to the attention of the editors. This list however, does not include the forgeries of court documents which would naturally appear in the contemplated volumes featuring Lincoln's law cases.

The caption to each item appears in sizeable type, the manuscripts are given a subject title and the correspondence is prepared by the name of the addressee. The chronological arrangement of both documents and letters is emphasized by the date line being carried at the top of each page. Where it is possible, each item is annotated so that its contents may be more fully appreciated. The source is first mentioned and where known the owner of the original manuscript is named.

One series of illustrations in the book which strikes the Lincoln student immediately upon opening volume one is the facsimile pages of all the known copies of Abraham Lincoln's arithmetic copy book made in Indiana when a boy and containing the earliest examples of his penmanship. There are twenty pages, containing both sides of the ten sheets, which have been preserved. One of the originals sold in the Barrett sale in New York for \$3,600.

One of the chief values which will accrue from this exhaustive compilation is the intensive search which will now be made for documents and correspondence which do not now appear in the collected writings. There is some evidence that a few dealers have purposely withheld letters which they feel will be of more value if they remain unpublished. The first question which will be asked about original documents from now on is: "Is it listed in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*?"

*Just as this bulletin is ready for the press word comes announcing the death of Dr. Randall on Friday night, February 20.