

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

NUMBER 1271

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

AUGUST 17, 1953

## LINCOLNIANA BOOKPLATES

Forty years ago H. Alfred Fowler of Kansas City gathered source material for a book which he intended to entitled "Lincolniana Book-plates." He was editor of both *The Biblio* and the *Ex-Libris*, the latter a magazine devoted to bookplates on which the editor was an authority. In the preface of the book which eventually emerged under a different title he made this comment:

"It was found impossible to adequately describe the book-plates without going into the details of the collections they were used to mark; and these details were found to be of as much if not more interest than the book-plates themselves . . . so it was decided to turn the project into a little volume on *Lincolniana*." The publication contains contributions by Charles W. McLellan, Judd Stewart and J. B. Oakleaf, three of the "Big Five" Lincoln collectors of that day. The brochure is illustrated by one facsimile and four original bookplates pasted in. Because the number of monographs printed was limited to 500 copies it has become a desirable collector's item. It is to be regretted that more emphasis has not been given to appropriate markers by which Lincoln collectors embellish their books.

As early as the tenth century there is evidence of specially decorated symbols in Japan that might qualify as bookplates. Naturally it was not until the invention of printing that we find woodcut productions in Germany that can be positively associated with the modern bookplate. Plain labels showing ownership of a book were used in America as early as 1674 and an engraved plate was made for Thomas Dering by Nathaniel Hurd of Boston in 1840.

Someone has suggested that a standard "ex-libris" plate should consist of the owner's name, his coat of arms, if available, allegorical emblems in appropriate background and a motto or quotation. Although both the Lincoln and Hanks coat of arms are available they have not been featured in any of the Lincoln plates. Library settings, Lincoln pictures and axioms seem to predominate. A slogan on a marker in the foundation collection, although not of Lincoln interest, portrays a nude child seated on two huge volumes reaching up towards a shelf of books with this inscription: "and afterwards some clothes." Possibly the wives of some of the Lincoln collectors might be able to appreciate this sentiment after observing their husband's purchases.

One of the first bookplates to feature Lincoln is a beautiful design by E. D. French created for Henry C. Bernheim. It bears the date of 1904. The corner of a library is portrayed and on the wall of the room hangs a picture of Lincoln. The engraved portrait copied from Brady's most famous photograph of the President is three-eighths of an inch from the top of head to the base of the bust.

Apparently the earliest artist to give special attention to Lincoln bookplates was Arthur N. Macdonald. On Sept. 4, 1916 he replied to an inquiry by Winfred Porter Truesdell in these words: "Besides the Lincoln portrait on the Judd Stewart plate there was a little one made for H. A. Fowler of Kansas City, Mo. It was used as a bookplate for the 'Lincolniana' and another little plate about the size of a postage stamp in the back of the book."

The Judd Stewart plate displayed in the Fowler book was created in 1909. One of the well known Lincoln profiles by Brady dominates the art work. It is to be regretted that the picture appears in the reverse with the mole on the left side of Lincoln's face. Stewart also had a less elaborate plate made which used the same profile. Another Macdonald plate was made in 1918 for Major

Richard Weil. It features a library corner with a Lincoln picture on the wall in an oval, but one-fourth of an inch in length.

Beside the work for Stewart, the two pieces made for Fowler and the Weil design, another excellent plate was created by Macdonald for Charles Woodberry McLellan in 1922. On a highly ornate background it features an open book and on the verso page a small profile of Lincoln. A copy of this original engraving with the added panel "Library of Brown University" now serves as the bookplate of the famous McLellan collection acquired by the university.

With the passing of hand engraving most of the modern bookplates have been lithographed with the exception of the etchings by Bernhardt Wall. He might be said to have succeeded Macdonald as the favorite artist of Lincoln collectors who have had special Lincoln plates made. Possibly his earliest design was made for Stewart W. Jackson in 1923. It features a bust of the Antietam Lincoln wearing a tall hat, also a likeness of the birthplace cabin.

Other artists' names which appear on bookplates of well known Lincoln students are: John Walcott Adams, Ed. O. Beets, Barbara Bell, Ernest Dudley Chase, P. B. Glassford, Sheldon Hine, J. Jackson, Broke Nelson and several initialed studies we have been unable to identify.

A collection of Lincolniana bookplates might be grouped into three divisions. One classification would contain only those plates which are illustrated, another assortment could include those having some Lincoln reference, and a third compilation of plates used bearing the name of a Lincoln student but free from any Lincoln sentiment.

