

LINCOLN LORE

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CHAIRS USED BY THE LINCOLNS

The fairly recent renovations concluded at the Lincoln Home in Springfield has attempted to make the place, as near as possible, similar inside and outside to the residence of 1861. An increased interest in the furniture owned by the family, has resulted and especially the chairs which seem to have more human interest appeal to the casual observer than other household effects. On March 9, 1861 *Leslie's Weekly* printed woodcuts of drawings made at the time the Lincolns occupied the home. The parlor and sitting room are shown as they appeared just before the departure of the family for Washington. There are ten chairs of various types noted in the two sketches. Of course it is the hope of those in charge of re-furnishing the home as it appeared in 1861 that many of the various antiques will find their way back to Springfield.

Furniture used in the White House by the Lincolns has not seemed to appeal to collectors as strongly as the Springfield pieces, but chairs used by Lincoln in his law office have always been desirable items. This bulletin will attempt to list in a chronological order the best known chairs associated with the Lincoln family. The name of the individual first known to have acquired the relic after it was used by the Lincolns serves as the key word for the captions. There is no attempt to list chairs made out of pieces of furniture, lumber, or trees associated with the Lincoln story.

Carman—Two Split Bottom Chairs

Abraham Lincoln seated two split bottom chairs while boarding with Caleb Carman at New Salem in 1834. One of these was acquired by The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Onstot—New Salem Rocker

A rocker used by Lincoln when he boarded at Onstot's in New Salem was acquired by E. T. Van Norman from Onstot's descendants.

Zane — Springfield Office Chair

Hon. Charles S. Zane, law partner of William Herndon, came in possession of one of the original office chairs used by Lincoln. William H. Lambert bought it from a member of the Zane family.

Rineberger — Office Rocking Chair

A large rocking chair, made especially for Mr. Lincoln secured from Herndon by J. A. Rineberger, is now in possession of the Dayton Ohio Public Library.

Fay—High Ladder Back Rocker

This chair at the Lincoln Tomb described by the former custodian, Herbert Wells Fay, was originally in Lincoln's law office.

U. S. — Congressional Chair

A chair which Lincoln is supposed to have used during the Thirtieth Congress is in the Chicago Historical Society.

Francis — Hickory Nomination Chair

When Lincoln received word of his nomination in 1860 he was in the newspaper office of Simeon Francis at Springfield seated in a hickory chair which is now in possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Bateman — Springfield Hall Chair

Newton Bateman purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln a hat tree and hall chair. The hat tree was returned to its former location in the Lincoln Home at Springfield but the tall attractive hall chair apparently did not accompany it.

Chicago — Black Haircloth Rocker

A black haircloth rocker from the Lincoln parlor at Springfield is on display at the Chicago Historical Society.

Miller — One-Half Dozen Haircloth Parlor Chairs

Six chairs purchased by Mr. Allen Miller from Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln in February 1861 later came into the possession of Louis C. Vanuxem and are now in the rooms of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Oldroyd — First Inaugural Chair

Oldroyd's sojourn in Springfield allowed him to pick up many pieces of Lincoln furniture, among them a chair in which Lincoln sat while he prepared his first inaugural address and which is now in possession of the government.

Oldroyd — High Backed Haircloth Rocker

The collector who occupied the Lincoln home for so many years as curator called the high backed rocker Lincoln's favorite chair and it is also in possession of the government.

Oldroyd — Flower Painted Dining Chairs

The number of chairs in the flower set is not certain but they are plain wooden chairs with flowers painted on the back. They were at one time in the Oldroyd collection in the house where Lincoln died.

Chicago — Three Victorian Chairs

Chicago Historical Society states these Victorian chairs are part of "the original furniture from the Lincoln home."

Emmons—Chair With Hand Wrought Casters

This chair with hand wrought casters was purchased at the Lincoln sale in Springfield by the father of A. B. Emmons of Tacoma, Washington and later passed on to his son.

Melvin — One-Half Dozen Chairs

S. H. Melvin purchased a lot of family furniture at the Lincoln sale and the bill lists "six chairs @ \$2.00 —\$12.00."

Kuecher — Two Cane Seated Chairs

These two chairs were presented by Abraham Lincoln in 1861 and as late as 1932 were still in possession of the recipients, the Kuecher family.

Wilton — Miscellaneous Chairs

Henry Ford in 1930 acquired for his Greenfield Village from Ben and Dick Wilton twenty-two pieces of furniture said to have been in the Lincoln home. There were two rocking chairs and 12 straight back chairs in the lot.

Crook — White House Bedroom Chair

Oliver R. Barrett acquired this antique which was in the White House bedroom and it was sold at the famous sale of his collection in February 1952 for \$110.

Lambert — Two White House Dining Room Chairs

This pair of chairs in possession of W. H. Lambert were sold at a sale in January 1914 for \$100 and \$135 respectively. One brought \$250 at the Leland sale in June 1932.

Welles — White House Plaza Rocking Chair

The huge rocking chair was given to Secretary Welles after the Lincoln assassination and is now in possession of the Connecticut State Library.

Kinman — Elkhorn Chair

The most indescribable chair received by Lincoln as a gift was made out of elkhorns and presented to him by a famous old hunter and trapper, Seth Kinman. Robert Lincoln presented it to the Lloyd family.

U. S. — Thirty-Eighth Congress Chair

One of these chairs used in the House of Representatives during the 38th Congress seems to have found its way into Brady's Photograph Gallery at Washington. Lincoln is often shown seated in it. There are several chairs like it in institutions and private collections, one at Lincoln Memorial University.

Ford — Assassination Rocking Chair

The rocking chair in which Abraham Lincoln was seated at the time of his assassination is probably the best known article of furniture associated with the President. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* in its issue of May 15, 1865 presents a likeness of the rocking chair, and it is now in the Lincoln Courthouse at Greenfield Village. Rockers similar to this one with Victorian back, Empire scrolled arm with padded top are now known by the trade as Lincoln type rockers.