



# Lincoln Lore

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## Lincoln Patriotics

*Editor's Note:* The following article, prepared by me at the invitation of the editor of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, for a Lincoln Sesquicentennial Number, appeared on pages 123-129 of Vol. LII, No. 1, Spring, 1959.

As the Foundation's folio of Lincoln patriotics now numbers 144 different envelopes (postally used and unused), and because we are eager to reveal to our readers the myriad phases of our never-ending collecting project, I have asked and received permission of the *Journal* editor to reprint my article.

R. G. M.

It was in 1860, during the presidential campaign when sectional feeling between the North and South was aroused by threats of war, that patriotic envelopes made their appearance in appreciable numbers. With the coming of the inevitable war, newspapers told the tragic stories of the battles and the casualties, but the sentiments and passions of the nation, both North and South, were just as often expressed on printed envelopes designed for use in the mails.

This patriotic fervor was first manifested when printers conceived the idea of envelopes bearing the American flag in red, white and blue. Undoubtedly their aim was more commercial than patriotic, but the idea spread. Other printers and publishers bent on "milking the hysteria of patriotism" followed suit. Soon the soldiers' mail and the domestic post were flooded with colorful envelopes, and post offices were made gay with colored portraits, drawings and cartoons. Some were noble in sentiment but others were hysterical in theme. Needless to state, there was nothing official about the envelopes except for the stamp and cancellation, but they gave the appearance of being official.

Publishers ran their presses night and day to supply the demand. Elaborate advertising campaigns were initiated by stationery houses offering their products for sale, and special albums were designed for collectors of envelopes. No home owner was considered patriotic unless his mantlepiece displayed a collection of "patriotics," as they were called.

By the time the Civil War came to an end, something over 15,000 different designs had been distributed by about two hundred printers and publishers. Most of the envelopes were printed in New York City. Many were poorly designed and revealed bad workmanship, though a few were de-

signed to appeal to the artistically inclined as well as to the emotional. A large number of the envelopes were printed from standard designs on varying grades and colors of paper stock. So many envelopes had been printed and circulated by the end of the war that philatelic collectors valued them almost entirely on the basis of their stamps and postal cancellations. Unused patriotic envelopes,

after the war's hysteria passed, were not worth the paper they were printed on.

Later, when collectors discovered that Civil War patriotic envelopes did chronicle, to a certain extent, the chief events of the conflict, they sought out each species of cover, unused as well as postally used. Today collectors classify the unused "patriotic" as an "envelope" and the postal-



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

Anti-Lincoln sentiment was expressed by a Mansfield, Connecticut resident in 1860 by attaching a three-cent Washington postage stamp over the twin portraits of Lincoln and Hamlin. The envelope is addressed to Miss L. H. Taylor, Tishville P. O., R. I.



dominated the field. The name of Charles Magnus of New York City is as important in a survey of this propaganda medium as is that of Currier and Ives in the field of Civil War pictorial art. Magnus published prints, views, photocards and tokens. His volume of production was enormous and the quality of his merchandise was excellent.

F. K. Kimmel was a competitor of Magnus'. His efforts were not as diverse and his production was more curtailed. He often copied Magnus' designs and sometimes improved on the coloring work. Kimmel's Lincoln

envelopes are as eagerly sought today by collectors as those bearing a Magnus imprint. J. M. Whittmore of Boston also excelled in envelope production and perhaps turned out the most artistic designs for Lincoln's second campaign.

The best tool for the collector of Civil War patriotics is a privately printed catalogue, compiled in 1934 by Robert Laurence, titled *The George Wolcott Collection of Used Civil War Patriotic Covers*. This catalogue has a section classified as "Lincoln," which lists eighty different Lincoln covers, with an excellent illustration of each

design; a few other Lincoln covers are catalogued under other headings. Fortunately the auction prices, which run as high as \$65 for a single item, are recorded.

The Wolcott catalogue describes less than a dozen Lincoln caricature envelopes, four of which have a total auction record of \$234. The Lincoln National Life Foundation has thirty-six Lincoln cartoon envelopes. Nevertheless, the number of envelope caricatures is not as great as one would expect in view of the fact that Lincoln was such a popular subject for the caricaturist. A prize collector's item today is the caricature series titled "Champion Prize Envelope — Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds." This series was published by J. H. Tingley, 152½ Fulton Street, New York, with the copyright held by T. S. Peirce in 1861.

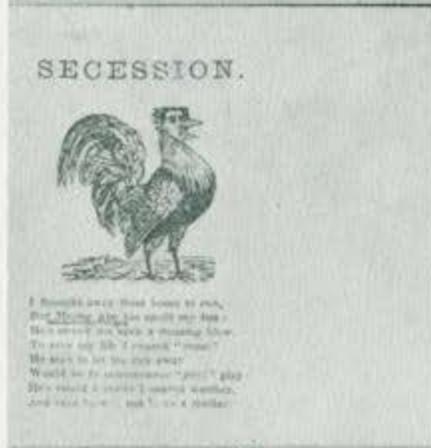
The most valuable Lincoln caricature envelope is of Confederate origin. The Wolcott collection contains one of these envelopes, which is post-marked "Tuskegee, Ala. paid 5." The cover is in black and white with a Confederate flag in colors. The theme is "Our Homes" and "Protection" with an ironical note as to the cost. "Taxation \$500,000,000." Only by a careful examination can the head of Lincoln be discerned. Collectors know of no other envelopes with a Lincoln cartoon which were actually used in the Confederacy, although four unused envelopes bearing the cartoon have been reported.

Lincoln's assassination and death opened up an opportunity for stationery stores to capitalize on the funeral of the Sixteenth President. About a half-dozen envelopes in somber black borders made their appearance and were widely circulated. However, while they appear in considerable numbers unused, very few of those extant are postally used. The national grief which followed the President's death did not prevent one publisher from issuing a John Wilkes Booth envelope, which must have had a limited sale as only two are known to be extant.

With the end of the war the patriotic fervor was spent. The United States mail reverted to letters of a more conventional appearance. People were tired of conflict and perhaps just a little disillusioned about such glamorous trappings of war as "patriotic envelopes."

**Bibliography**

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From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

1. Champion Prize Envelope "Lincoln & Davis in 5 Rounds." This 1st Round is one of a set of five envelopes that command a high price on the philatelic market.
2. The remaining four envelopes are typical of the caricatures of the period.

**Envelopes**

Featuring Stephen A. Douglas  
Twenty envelopes of the Foundation's collection are largely devoted to Stephen A. Douglas and his cam-

paign in 1860 for the presidency. However, a few are of a memorial nature stressing his patriotism with such slogans as "Stand by the flag," "True to the Union and the Constitution to the last," and "Tell them to obey the Laws and support the Constitution." Most of the Douglas envelopes are drab and colorless. Some of the envelopes bear in red printer's ink the word "Patriot;" however, some partisan printers would often stamp the Douglas envelopes with the word "Traitor."

### Envelopes

#### Featuring Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth

Forty-eight patriotic envelopes in the Foundation's collection feature Colonel Elmer E. Ellsworth, the first commissioned Union officer to lose his life at Alexandria, Virginia on May 23, 1861. He was the "Darling of Destiny" and stationers rushed to the presses to print colorful envelopes and writing paper with his picture.

Most of the Ellsworth envelopes are in color. A dramatic theme for many of the artists was the killing of Ellsworth at the Marshall House by James W. Jackson, and the death of the proprietor who was in turn slain by Corporal Brownell.

As Lincoln and Ellsworth enjoyed a father and son relationship, the young hero's funeral was conducted in the White House, and Lincoln wrote a beautifully sympathetic letter to Ellsworth's parents. (See *Lincoln Lore* No. 1435.)

### Envelopes

#### Featuring Jefferson Davis

The collection of 254 envelopes featuring Jefferson Davis in the Foundation's collection may be one of the largest in existence. With the exception of a half-dozen envelopes, the miniature cartoons ridicule the Confederate President. As caricature lends itself to ridicule, we can assume that these envelopes were printed in the North during the Civil War. This fact is, of course, borne out by the many imprints and copyrights of northern presses that appear on the envelopes.

Because of their northern origin, the envelopes are in many instances beautifully colored and skillfully printed on good paper stock of varying sizes. A few of the items were postally used. A favorite topic of many of the artists was a depiction of Davis on the gallows or hanging from a sour apple tree.

### Envelopes

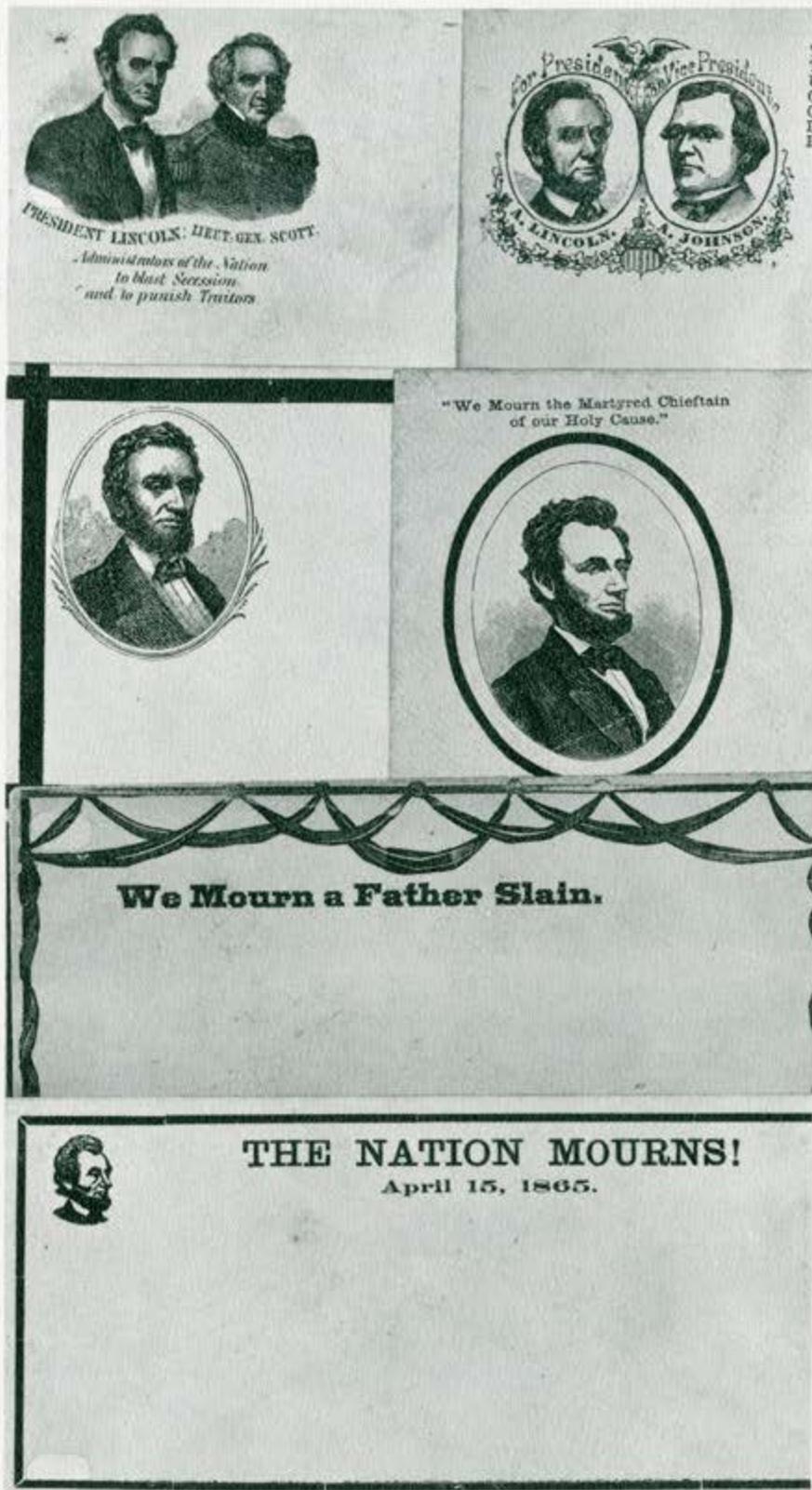
#### Featuring the Civil War

Two hundred and forty-eight Civil War patriotic envelopes (unfortunately many of the designs are cut out) are in the Foundation's collection. These are grouped into the following headings:

Anti-Confederate	Baltimore, Maryland
Battles	Confederate
Constitution	Flags
Forts	Generals (Union)
Liberty	Negroes
Notable People	Shields
States	Union
Washington (George)	Washington, D.C.

Most of the designs are printed in colored ink and a few are artistic and beautiful. Perhaps the finest one of the lot is a Charles Magnus cover in color of the U.S. Capitol at Washington, D.C. A few were postally used.

Lincoln Lore Number 1554, August, 1967 featured the rare publication "Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865" under the title "Monaghan 600." In that article a list of the owners of that rare publication was given. Since the publication of the list we have learned that a copy has long been in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society of Worcester, Massachusetts.



From the Lincoln National Life Foundation

1. Lincoln & Scott who were "to blast Secession and to punish Traitors."
2. Campaign of 1864 envelope. The remaining four envelopes have as their topic the death and funeral of the Sixteenth President.