



# Lincoln Lore

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January, 1989

## THE LILLY LIBRARY'S COLLECTION OF LINCOLNIANA

by Sarah McNair Vosmeier

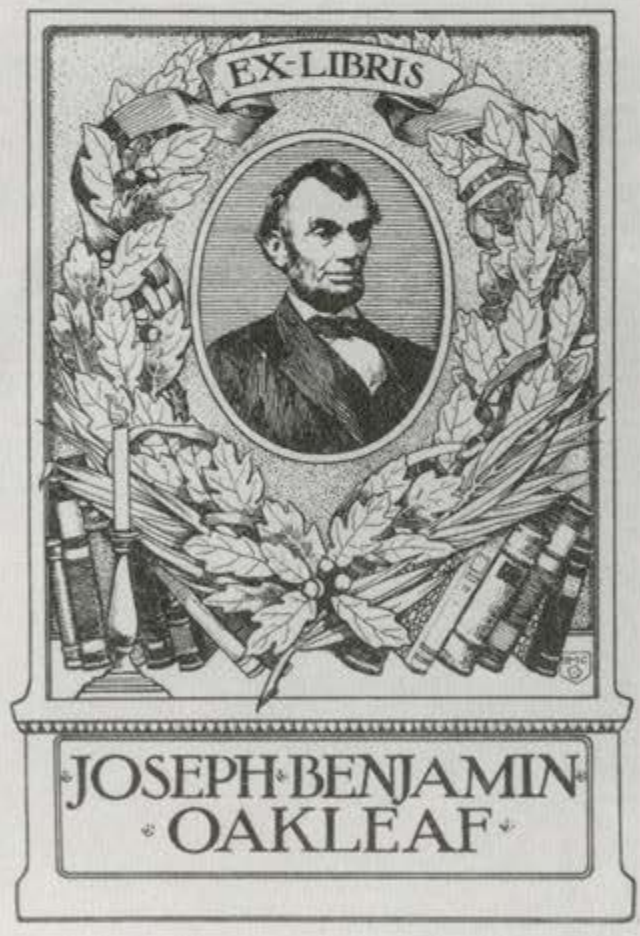
Like many libraries, the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum was originally based on the collections of private individuals. When the Lincoln Life Insurance Company's president, Arthur Hall, hired Louis A. Warren to help him create a foundation in Lincoln's honor, Warren convinced the company's officers to purchase Judge Daniel Fish's Lincolniana collection as the core of the company's own Lincoln library. Buying Fish's collection guaranteed the new library a prominent place in Lincolniana because Fish was one of the "Big Five" Lincoln collectors — five men who dominated Lincolniana collecting in the early twentieth century. One of the "Big Five" collections was divided and sold at auction (that of William H. Lambert), but the other four became the basis for large Lincolniana collections in institutional libraries. Judd

Stuart's collection was acquired by Huntington Library in San Marino, California; and the Charles McClellan collection was acquired by Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island. Finally, J. B. Oakleaf's collection, the last of the "Big Five" was acquired by Indiana University's Lilly Library (Bloomington, Indiana) in 1942, thus bringing the second of the four extant "Big Five" collections to Indiana.



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 1. J. B. Oakleaf. One of the "Big Five" Lincolniana collectors, his library was the basis of Lilly Library's Lincoln collection. He also published *Lincoln Bibliography* (1925), an update of Daniel's Fish's *Lincoln Bibliography* (1906).



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FIGURE 2. Oakleaf bookplate. Oakleaf collected mostly books and pamphlets, rather than memorabilia or manuscripts. He especially liked finding sources of free material. For example, he hinted to H. E. Barker, a prominent dealer of Lincolniana, that "If you have one to spare for my private library, 'free, gratis for nothing' as the Irishman would say, I wouldn't turn it down," (May 3, 1928).

In fact, Louis Warren had had an opportunity to acquire both Fish's and Oakleaf's collections in 1929-30. Warren later described Oakleaf's collection as "a larger and more valuable collection than that owned by Judge Fish," (undated letter, "To Whom it may concern"). Warren might have liked Oakleaf's collection better, but Fish's collection was priced \$20,000 less. With the money saved by choosing Fish's collection, Warren was able to purchase another smaller collection (that of Albert H. Griffith), and then, by selling those books of Griffith's that were duplicates of Fish's books, Warren was able to realize enough money to purchase another collection: L. E. Dicke's collection of about 1500 Lincoln prints.

Oakleaf had begun looking for a buyer in 1928 (the year he turned 70) so that his collection would remain intact and well-protected after his death and so that it would continue to be available to Lincoln scholars. His asking price was \$60,000, which was to include his services in organizing the collection in its new home. Also, he promised to assist toward building the collection by passing on those items he could get for free. (He seemed to enjoy the game of searching out free publications and gifts more than the relatively simple process of purchasing them.)

His offer seems to have attracted a good deal of interest. He came very close to selling the collection to the University of Illinois, but they were unable to raise the money. Similarly, Warren told him that he was interested in purchasing the collection, but in the end Warren and Hall decided that the two smaller collections were a better buy. Also, Henry Ford, who was building Greenfield Village at about this time, inquired about the collection, but did not purchase it.

Thus, when Oakleaf died in 1930, the collection was passed on to his son, J. L. Oakleaf. In fact, the disposition of his

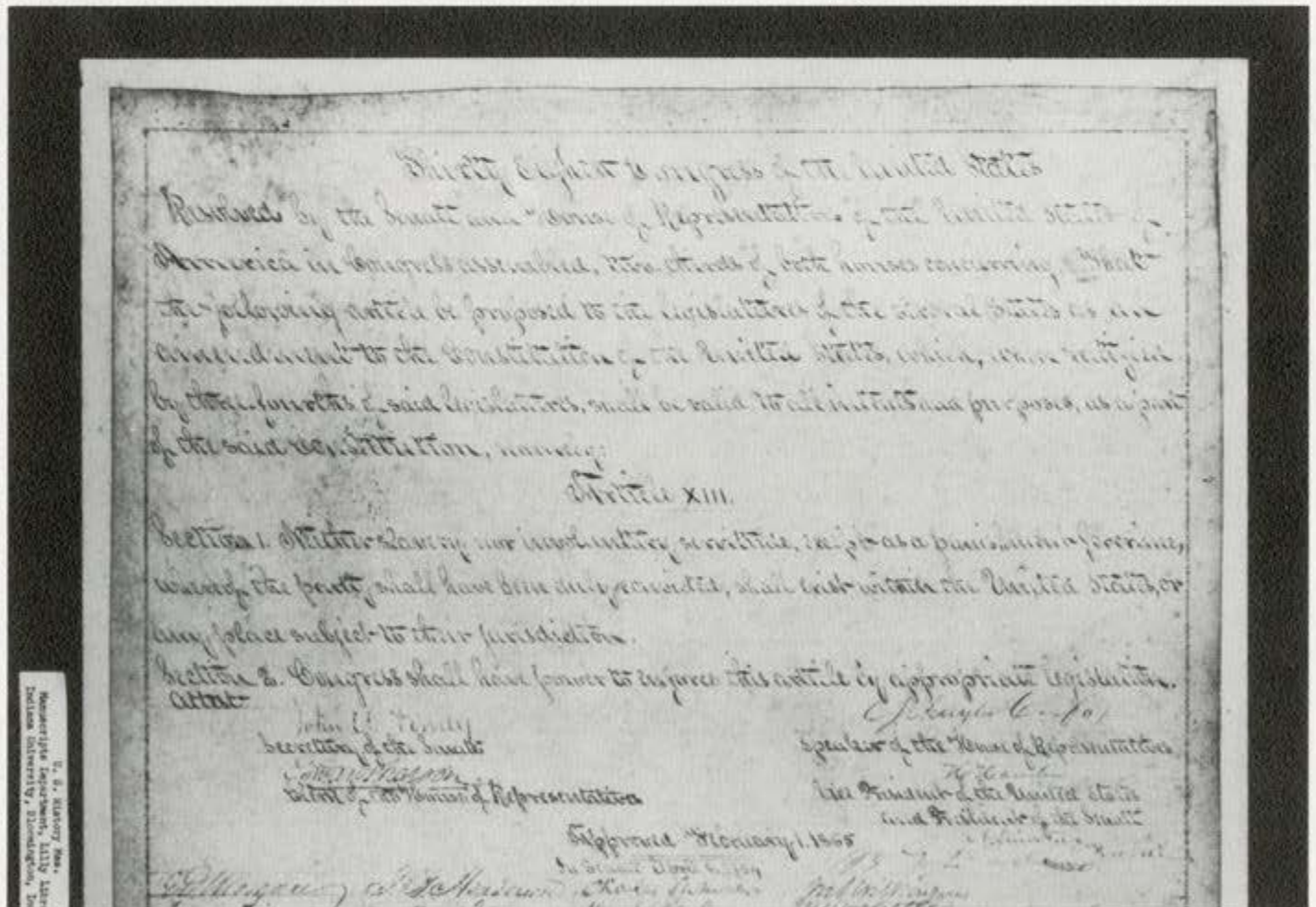
collection was in the elder Oakleaf's thoughts in the last minutes of his life. The father and son shared a business office, and J. B. Oakleaf had stopped in for a chat with his son just before he died suddenly of a stroke. J. L. Oakleaf recalled that his father had specifically said,

If I do not dispose of my collection of Lincolniana prior to my death, I want you to promise that you will never let it be placed on the auction block but that you will keep it intact until it finds a suitable home in a public institution. . . . It is my wish that my life work, the collection, shall find a home either at the University of Illinois or at Indiana University, in the two states that can both claim Abraham Lincoln as their own (*The History of the Oakleaf Collection of Lincolniana*, p. 13).

Following his father's wishes, J. L. Oakleaf refused several offers from dealers who would have broken up the collection, and waited until 1942 when Indiana University could buy it.

In 1956 Indiana University acquired another private collection when Josiah K. Lilly donated his extensive rare book collection to the university. At the same time, David A. Randall, a rare book dealer, became Librarian of the newly created Lilly Library. Among the items Lilly donated was a copy of the Thirteenth Amendment which Randall had earlier located for him. Because this copy includes Lincoln's signature, it was an especially valuable addition to the university's Lincoln collection. Most signed copies do not include Lincoln's signature because a president's approval is unnecessary for a constitutional amendment.

In Randall's autobiography, *Dukedom Large Enough*, he describes how he found the manuscript. As a famous rare book dealer, he received thousands of letters from people who were sure that they had inherited priceless historical documents; but



From the Lilly Library  
Indiana University

FIGURE 3. Detail of Thirteenth Amendment, originally owned by Charles Sumner. This engrossed copy (written out in large letters) was made as a souvenir with spaces left for Congressmen to sign. Because the president's signature is not necessary for an amendment, there is no space for the president's signature. However, Sumner arranged for Lincoln to sign it anyway, and his name is in the lower right-hand corner under "President of the Senate."



From the Lilly Library  
Indiana University

**FIGURE 4. Broadside of the 1861 Inaugural Address.** Lincoln began his address about 1:00, and by 5:00 the text was already available to newspaper readers in Chicago. This copy is apparently the only one extant.

on further investigation, Randall always discovered that the "priceless documents" were actually facsimiles or fakes. Thus, when he received a letter from Imogene Wormley about an original signed copy of the Thirteenth Amendment, he sent her a polite form letter suggesting that it was probably a facsimile.

Still, Wormley insisted that it was genuine, and when Randall was in Washington about a year later, he decided, on a whim, to look up her address and see the document. The fact that the address was in a bad neighborhood did not make him less dubious. However, after agreeing to go upstairs and drag the framed document out from under a bed, and after peeling back the adhesive tape covering the glass, he was astounded to discover that it really was a signed copy of the amendment. Drinking coffee with his "gracious, entertaining and intelligent hostess," he learned that her grandfather, James Wormley, was listed in the *Dictionary of American Biography* as a well-known free black steward and hotel owner. Earlier in his life James Wormley had worked in Charles Sumner's household, and he continued to maintain a friendship with him. When the Thirteenth Amendment was passed, Sumner obtained a souvenir copy and circulated it among his colleagues for their signatures. When he had 151 signatures, including Lincoln's, he presented the souvenir to his friend James Wormley, to commemorate the end of slavery.

This document, like all the material in the Lilly Library, is stored in "closed stacks;" researchers must request books and manuscripts from the card catalogue. However, a large part of the Lincoln collection is displayed in the library's "Lincoln Room." The room is decorated to resemble the decor of the White House, and one of the items on display is the desk Lincoln used while Stephen Logan was his law partner (from 1841-1844).

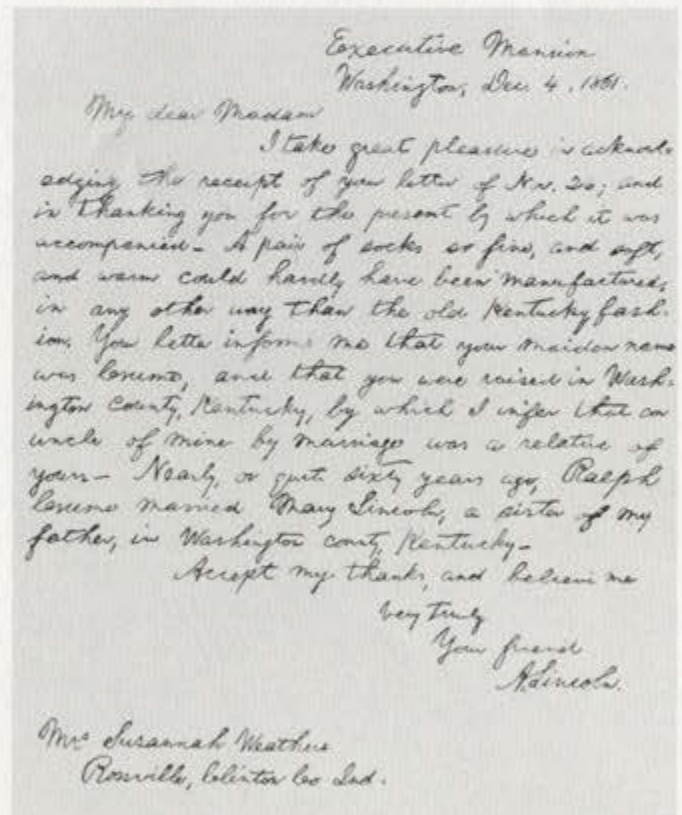
Like most libraries, the Lilly has its own idiosyncrasies. For example, many of the books about Lincoln are filed in the card catalogue under "Lincoln, Abraham," but some are not. (The best way to find a particular book is to look for it under the author's name.) Also, researchers looking for recent books may

want to check a separate file of books which have been acquired recently but have not yet been catalogued. Researchers who are interested in photographs or prints will want to consult the "Lincoln Short Titles List." This list is divided into subject areas and includes Currier & Ives prints, Lincoln photos, photos of contemporaries, medallions, and memorabilia. Although the Lincoln photos are not organized by Ostendorf number, they are described either by Ostendorf number or by a page reference from Charles Hamilton and Lloyd Ostendorf's *Lincoln in Photographs*.

Manuscripts are catalogued in a separate card catalog and researchers must consult a manuscripts librarian to use them. Some of the Lincoln "manuscripts" are actually reprints (and are labeled as such) and were probably part of Oakleaf's original collection. Letters written by Lincoln and legal documents about his cases are filed under his name. To find the list of correspondents writing to Lincoln, researchers should look under "Lincoln, Abraham — For letters to Abraham Lincoln."

Because the library has abbreviated hours when Indiana University is not in session, the library staff recommends that researchers call ahead before coming to Bloomington (812-335-2452). If necessary, the staff can provide maps and information about lodging. Also, researchers interested in Lincoln manuscripts will need to plan their time carefully because the manuscripts department has shorter hours than the rest of the library. The manuscripts department is open from 9 to 5 Monday through Friday and from 9 to 1 on Saturday. The general reading room is open from 9 to 8 Monday through Thursday, from 9 to 5 on Friday, and from 9 to 1 on Saturday. For further information researchers may write:

Lilly Library  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana 47405



From the Lilly Library  
Indiana University

**FIGURE 5. Letter to Susannah Weathers.** Weathers, a 78-year-old widow, apparently living with her widowed daughter and two grandchildren, was described in the 1860 census as illiterate. Although her exact relationship with Lincoln is not clear, his inference that she was related to his uncle-by-marriage is probably accurate: Susannah was a Crume family name in Lincoln's uncle's branch of the family, and that branch was intermarried with the Weathers.

# 1989 CIVIL WAR INSTITUTE AT GETTYSBURG COLLEGE PROGRAM

## Sunday, June 25

Reception

## Monday, June 26

- Morning James M. McPherson, "The Role of the Battle of Chancellorsville in the Civil War"
- Afternoon Robert K. Krick, "Fumbling in the Midst of Victory at Chancellorsville"
- Extra Robert L. Bloom, "Chancellorsville, Then and Now" (Slide Presentation)
- Evening Caroline Moseley, "Songs of the War: Lecture, Performance, and Sing-a-long"

## Tuesday, June 27

- Morning Tour of Chancellorsville Battlefield led by Jay Luvaas, Col. Harold Nelson, Mike Andrus, Wil Greene
- Evening Wil Greene, "Jackson's Last Days"

## Wednesday, June 28

- Morning John W. Schildt, "From Chancellorsville to Gettysburg"
- Afternoon Tours of Gettysburg Battlefield led by Ed Bearss, William Hanna, Roy Frampton, Scott Hartwig, Marshall Krollick, William Ridinger
- Evening Jacob Sheads, "Confederate Brass at Gettysburg"

## Thursday, June 29

- Morning Grady McWhiney, "Attack and Die: Chancellorsville and Gettysburg"
- Afternoon Free time or tour of U.S. Army War College
- Evening Jay Luvaas, "'Fighting Joe' Hooker"

## Friday, June 30

- Morning William Tidwell, "Come Retribution: The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Lincoln"
- Afternoon Frank E. Vandiver, "Stonewall Jackson"
- Extra William Gladstone, "United States Colored Troops"
- Evening Banquet and Closing Ceremonies

## Saturday, July 1

- Morning Students depart after breakfast

For more information, contact G. S. Boritt, Director, Civil War Institute, Box 435, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Telephone: (717) 337-6555.

## FACULTY

- MICHAEL ANDRUS** (Battlefield Guide): Park Ranger, Richmond National Battlefield Park
- ED BEARSS** (Battlefield Guide): Chief Historian of the National Park Service, author of *Vicksburg Campaign*, vols. I-III (1986)
- ROBERT L. BLOOM** (Extras): CWI alumni, taught history at Gettysburg College for over three decades
- ROY E. FRAMPTON** (Battlefield Guide): author of *The Gettysburg National Cemetery: A History and Guide* (1988), GNMP guide
- WILLIAM GLADSTONE** (Extras): CWI alumni, author of *United States Colored Troops* (forthcoming)
- A. WILSON GREENE** (Battlefield Guide): author of *Jay Horace Lacy: The Most Dangerous Rebel of the County* (1988)
- SCOTT HARTWIG** (Battlefield Guide): author of *Gettysburg: The Complete Pictorial of Battle Monuments* (1988)
- ROBERT K. KRICK** (Lecture): Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park, author of *Lee's Colonels* (1984)
- MARSHALL KROLICK** (Battlefield Guide): noted lecturer and guide
- JAY LUYAAS** (Lecture, Battlefield Guide): co-author of *Guide to the Battles of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg* (1988)
- JAMES M. McPHERSON** (Lecture): winner of the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988)
- GRADY McWHINEY** (Lecture): co-author of *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (1982)
- CAROLINE MOSELEY** (Lecture): Princeton University, Communications Office, scholar and performer of nineteenth-century popular music
- COL. HAROLD NELSON** (Battlefield Guide): co-author of *U.S. Army War College Guide to the Battle of Chancellorsville* (1988)
- WILLIAM RIDINGER** (Battlefield Guide): Professor Emeritus, Southern Connecticut State University, GNMP guide
- JOHN W. SCHILDT** (Lecture): author *The Road to Gettysburg* (1988)
- COL. JACOB SHEADS** (Lecture): Gettysburg's most famous guide
- B. G. WILLIAM A. TIDWELL** (Lecture): U.S. Army Reserves, principal author of *Come Retribution* (1988)
- FRANK E. VANDIVER** (Lecture): former president of Texas A & M, author of *Mighty Stonewall* (1957)
- GABOR S. BORITT** (Director of Civil War Institute): editor of *The Historian's Lincoln* (1988)
- ROBERT V. BRUCE** (Scholar in Residence): Professor Emeritus, Boston University, 1988 Pulitzer Prize winner in history, author of *Lincoln and the Tools of War* (new edition, 1989)

