

# LINCOLN LORE

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

Number 1079

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

December 12, 1949

## THE LINCOLN'S EXECUTIVE MANSION LIBRARY

Books may be associated with the more permanent gifts which serve as presentations at the Christmas season. Many of them will increase in both sentimental and intrinsic values as the years follow on. Abraham Lincoln is known to have received many presentation volumes during the Washington days and there is also evidence that there was some exchange of books within the Lincoln family circle.

Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of the President, was brought up in the atmosphere of books. In the home of her father at Lexington, Kentucky there was a fine library and a considerable number of the volumes which occupied the bookcases have been preserved. Here, Lincoln and his family enroute to Washington in 1847, visited for a period of three weeks, and tradition has it that Mr. Lincoln spent much time with his father-in-law's books. While the Lincoln home at Springfield may not have contained many volumes, there is evidence that the Edwards library in Springfield was open to the Lincolns.

Until the Fillmore's entered the Executive Mansion it is said to have been "entirely destitute of books." Inasmuch as Mrs. Fillmore had been a school teacher before her marriage "she was accustomed to be surrounded with books of reference, etc." She found it "difficult to content herself in a house devoid of such attractions." According to one of her friends she found a room on the second floor above the blue room that was not set aside for any specific purpose which she soon converted into a library. She was so successful in her enterprise that her husband was able to persuade Congress to put through a bill authorizing a small appropriation for the purchase of books for the President's House.

It is not likely that Mrs. Franklin Pierce, the successor of Mrs. Fillmore as first lady, did very much in building up the library, as Mrs. Pierce was extremely delicate and her health would not allow any special exertion. Harriet Lane, niece of President James Buchanan who followed Mrs. Pierce as White House hostess, was not especially a book woman as her biographers tell us, so we doubt whether the library in the Executive Mansion established by Mrs. Fillmore had received many additions until the arrival of Mrs. Lincoln.

Quite recently there has been discovered in Washington documents which allow us to learn the titles of some of the books which were added to the Library after Mrs. Lincoln took over the affairs of the Executive Mansion. Apparently an appropriation for the acquisition of books for the library at the President's House was available in 1861 and 1862 as we find Mrs. Lincoln making several purchases charged to the government.

We first observe Mrs. Lincoln buying books from Daniel Appleton & Co., New York, on September 5, 1861. The account was charged to the "Library of the Executive Mansion." Three of the books are marked "Delivered to Mrs. Lincoln" and a further endorsement states, "The books have been sent by Adams Express this day." The inventory which amounted to \$264.00 is presented in detail:

Irving's Works 21 vols. calf	42.50
Jackson 3 vols.	7.00
Willis Mor.	4.50
Favourite Eng. Poems	6.75
World Noted Women	9.00
Republican Court	9.00
Robert's Holy Land 3 vols.	45.00
Jameson's Female Sovereigns & Jameson's Characteristics	14.00
Warren's Works 5 vols.	12.00
Motley's Netherlands 2 v.	4.75
Schroder's Washington 2 v.	15.00
Dana's H. H. Poetry	4.50
Roger's Poems & Italy 2 v.	12.50
Forest Hymn	4.50
Heman's Poems	7.00
Bryant's Poems	6.00
Bibles (2)	5.50
Alice	1.25
Queens of England	6.75
Longfellow 8 vols.	14.00
Bunyan Mor.	7.00
Amer. Eloquence 2 vols.	6.00
Mansions of England 2 vols.	12.00
Bible. Velvet	5.00
Framley Parsonage	.75
Semi Attached Couple	.75

The next book shopping by Mrs. Lincoln of which we have a record was done in Washington, when on July 1, 1862 William F. Richstein's bookstore at 278 Penn Ave. was visited. This account also was charged to the "Library of the Executive Mansion." The purchases amounted to \$75.15 and an endorsement states that "The President pays of the above bill \$16.25." The items listed follow:

Hood's Poems 3 vols. 1/2 calf	1.50
Goldsmith's Poems calf	5.00
Homes of American Authors mor.	6.00
Strickland's England 7 vols.	21.00
Strickland's Scotland 8 v.	20.00

Mrs. Browning's Poems 4 vols.	9.00
Mrs. Sigourney's Poems cloth	1.25
Mrs. Osgood	.90
East Lynne	.50
Castle Wafer	.50
Earls Heirs	.50
Channing's	.50
Heir to Ashley	.50
Life Secret	.50
Pearls of Ord Island	1.25
Agnes of Sorrento	1.25

Back in New York on August 7, 1862 for the largest single day's purchase recorded, Mrs. Lincoln visited the bookstore of T. J. Crowen, 699 Broadway, apparently twice on the same day as there are two separate inventories. The longer one follows:

Spencer's Poems	8.00
American Revolution	15.00
Sigourney's Poems	5.00
Hist. of New York	4.50
Indian Fables	2.25
Hist. of Revolution	6.00
Hist. of Washington	9.00
Hist. of England	5.00
Hist. of Voyages	2.25
Albums, 2	9.00
Portrait Gallery	16.00
Land Book	3.25
Field Book	10.00
Kane's Expedition	10.00
Travels	2.25
Hist. of Creation	2.50
Hist. of Birds	.63
Hist. of Beast	.75
Hist. of Art	.50
Text Book	.37
1 Box	.75

The shorter of the two lists of books purchased from Crowen on August 7 includes:

Set Waverly	16.00
Set Cooper	34.00
Set Shakespeare	12.00

These bills amounted to \$175.00. A notation states that, the President pays of the above bills \$108.00 leaving the government to pay \$67.00. Both of the Crowen bills were receipted by Crowen on August 12.

Just how the amounts to be paid by Mr. Lincoln were established cannot be ascertained from the records available. We are also unable to learn the extent and contents of the library when the Lincolns arrived and how many other books not accounted for were added during the residence of the Lincolns. The acquisitions of Mr. Lincoln included 66 titles comprising 153 volumes with a cost amounting to \$478.15. The important factor in the building of this library is the availability of these books to Abraham Lincoln from the time of their purchases to the day of his death.