



# Lincoln Lore

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## A Case of Mistaken Identity

On November 30, 1859 Abraham Lincoln left Springfield, Illinois en route to Saint Joseph, Missouri and points west. He traveled by rail to Quincy. After crossing the Mississippi River at that city, he continued his journey by train.

Arriving in Saint Joseph on December 1st, Lincoln was met at the railway station by Mark W. Delahay and D. W. Wilder. After crossing the Missouri River they journeyed to Elwood, K.T. where Lincoln spoke in the Great Western Hotel dining room. After spending the night in Elwood Lincoln gave a series of political speeches in Troy, Doniphan, Atchinson and Leavenworth. He remained in Kansas Territory until December 6th, to observe the territorial election.

On December 7th Lincoln began his homeward journey, and there is every reason to believe that he stopped at Hannibal, Missouri and visited with Judge John B. Helm who had once resided in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Upon meeting the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Lincoln is said to have made some interesting remarks concerning Helm to the group that was traveling with him:

"Gentlemen, here is the first man I ever knew that wore store clothes all week, and this is the same man who fed me on sugar as I sat upon a nail keg."

In spite of Lincoln's cordial remarks, there is ample evidence that these two men had never seen each other until their meeting in Hannibal, Missouri.

Samuel Haycraft, Jr. who, in 1869, wrote "A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and Its Surroundings," devoted several pages of his book to his brother-in-law, John B. Helm. His colorful sketch follows:

"Hon. John B. Helm was born in Washington County, Kentucky, on the 28th day of October, 1797; while in Washington county his father, the late Hon. John Helm, was assistant Judge of the Washington Circuit Court. He lived about eight miles from the seat of justice and at term times he would take little John up behind him on a dashing mare. After reaching Springfield and eating dinner, little John was strapped on the back of the mare, she would take him safely home, being then about seven years old, and his father would remain in court until Saturday night.

"Blue grass was then (1804) being introduced into Kentucky. On one of those courts John had gathered a little sack of blue grass seed and carried it behind his father to Springfield where he sold it for a cut half dollar. John thought himself rich and was about the happiest boy in all those parts. A short time after John's mother and several neighbor ladies who were all great spinners and weavers, concluded to go to Bardstons with their cloth for sale. A separate horse was packed with the cloth and little John was set upon it, like a toad upon a tussock, having his cut half with him, and it was agreed that he should lay it out himself, and was particularly instructed how to address the merchant. After the grown folks had concluded their trading, John's time came, he forgot all his instructions but stepped forward and laid his half dollar on the counter and said: 'Sally wants a fan.' Sally was his sister, two years younger than himself, and he was much attached to her—and by way of digression I might as well say right here, that this same Sally has been my wife for upwards of fifty-one years, and I hope may be for twen-

ty-five years to come. A polite clerk said, 'Sally shall have a nice fan,' and so John bestowed the first money he ever earned upon his sister, in the purchase of a fan about a half yard long, which opened resembled a peacock's tail. About the year 1809 or 1810 the family removed to Breckinridge county, near Sugartreetown and the Ohio river. When between 8 and 10 years of age he was sent to the Hardin Academy in Elizabethtown, under the tuition of Samuel Stevenson. At this age of the world, the rod was a potent aid to the school teacher and John was whipped to his lessons for about one year, and finally whipped into typhoid fever, which came very near closing his earthly career; when recovered he was taken home and sent to a country school.

"Some few years after the Elizabethtown Academy fell into the hands of Duff Green. John was sent to Green's school, and although he was a considerable whipper, he adopted a different course with his pupils—gained his confidence and took great pains in fitting him for an active useful life, and when Green commenced merchandising he selected John as his first clerk in the house of Helm & Green which did a large business. When in this position the author formed a close and intimate friendship with John B. Helm which has continued without interruption up to this time, nearly sixty years. In a few years Green finding that merchandising was too narrow a sphere for his vaulting ambition, went to Washington City, as I have before named.

"Major Ben Helm, the senior partner of Helm and Green, purchased the Bush farm. Sally Lincoln, formerly Sally Bush, but now the step-mother of the future (sic) President, was entitled to a part of the purchase money—and a portion was to be taken out in the store, and she always brought little Abe to carry her bundles home. Abe would always take his seat upon a nail keg, and John always treated him with a lump of home made sugar, of which barrels were usually on hand in the store. Lincoln never forgot that kindness.

"After the store was closed John concluded to study law—went to Frankfort and read law in the office of the Honorable John Pope. After concluding his studies he went to Alabama and went into practice. Afterwards he returned to Elizabethtown and married, and commenced merchandising, and continued in that trade for several years, during which time he built himself a residence, now the property of Rev. Samuel Williams, also built a three story house on the corner of the Public Square, which he called the center of attraction.

"There is something remarkable about the Judgeship held by this family. Four generations without a broken link were judges. The great grandfather was a Judge of the Quarter Session Court of Fairfax county, Virginia, his grandfather, Thomas Helm, was a Judge of the Hardin Court of Quarter Sessions, his father was a Judge in Washington Circuit Court, and to wind up he was Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Hannibal, Missouri."

When Haycraft was compiling information for his history, he corresponded with Helm who provided him with a great many reminiscences for his book. Some of Haycraft's original correspondence is to be found in the Louis A. Warren collection in the Foundation's Lincoln Library-Museum. One such fragment contains Helm's reminiscen-

ces about Lincoln's Hannibal visit:

"I was introduced to Abraham Lincoln the year before he was elected President—He made some inquiry of me and my identity when he exclaimed that he knew me—that I was the first man he ever knew that wore store clothes all the week. Spoke of my keeping store for my uncle Ben Helm when he bought the Bush farm—Of his mother who had an interest in same dealing out part of the purchase money and my selling her goods—That he would go with her to pack goods home when I would set him on a keg of nails and give him a lump of country sugar to eat—This kind treatment to him a little boy he never forgot and even after he was elected President many a pleasant message I received from him in memory of our early acquaintance."

Judge Helm often repeated the story about how he met Lincoln in December of 1859, and even before he related the incident to Haycraft he wrote William H. Herndon (June 20, 1865) about the same thing. Herndon treated the information as follows:

"One man (John B. Helm), who was a clerk in the principal store in the village where the Lincolns purchased their family supplies remembers him as 'a small boy who came sometimes to the store with his mother. He would take his seat on a keg of nails, and I would give him a lump of sugar. He would sit there and eat it like any other boy; but these little acts of kindness so impressed his mind that I made a steadfast friend in a man whose power and influence have since been felt throughout the world.'"

Dr. Louis A. Warren, in his book "Lincoln's Parentage and Childhood," The Century Company, 1926, did not question Lincoln's visit with Judge Helm in Hannibal, Missouri, in December 1859; however, he did successfully clear up this matter of mistaken identity. Warren's statements are as follows:

"We have proof that Abraham Lincoln moved with his parents to Indiana in the autumn of 1816. At this time according to the Helm biography by Haycraft, Helm was still in school under the tutorage of Duff Green. We have evidence that Duff was teaching as late as 1816. Samuel Haycraft in his history of Elizabethtown affirms that Duff did not purchase an interest in the business house until after he stopped teaching school. Granted that Helm was his first clerk, John B. Helm would not have begun his work as clerk in the store of Helm & Green until after the Lincolns had left Kentucky.

"When one reviews the traditions about this Helm-Lincoln relationship it is very easy to clear up the discrepancy about the boy who ate sugar on a nail keg in an Elizabethtown store. It is much more difficult to understand the alleged conversation between Lincoln and Helm about the events that never happened. The solution of the 'lump sugar boy' . . . (is) John D. Johnston. Mr. Haycraft makes this plain when he states that Sally Lincoln rather than Nancy Lincoln was the mother with whom little Abe came to the store. As long as Abraham Lincoln was living in Kentucky he carried bundles for Nancy Hanks Lincoln and not for Sally Bush Johnston, who was not a Lincoln at that time and had a boy of her own to carry bundles.

"In answering the other problem we would say that forty years is a long time for a seven-year-old boy to remember the features of a man. If Abraham Lincoln went to Elizabethtown, as he might have done, and saw a man in the store with his best clothes on, he may have remembered it, but he must have seen some other well dressed clerk instead of John B. Helm."

How can we account for the statement made or attributed to have been made by Lincoln when he first met Judge Helm in Hannibal? Despite the fact that Helm was a staunch Democrat the two men had an affinity for each other as both were former Kentuckians. In trying to recall some incident that would tie them more closely together, Helm remembered the rag-tag boy in Elizabethtown who sat on a nail keg and ate country sugar. Most likely, Lincoln had enjoyed something of a similar experience in Kentucky, as that of his step-brother John D. Johnston, and he went along with the Judge so as not to spoil his reminiscence or appear discourteous to his host. Consequently, the story not being denied by Lincoln, grew in detail with the telling, until it found its way into print in both histories and biographies. Of course, Lincoln

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**GAZETTE-EXTRA.**

FORT WAYNE, APRIL 15, 1865.

**ASSASSINATION**

OF

**PRESIDENT LINCOLN**

AND

**Secretary Seward.**

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Our citizens were startled this morning, by the terrible announcement in the following dispatch from Secretary Stanton, that President Lincoln and Secretary Seward were assassinated last evening at Washington. We cannot now comment on this dreadful calamity to the country, Every loyal heart is bowed in sorrow, and a profound gloom envelops the land.

WASHINGTON, April 14—8 P. M.

This evening President Lincoln and wife were at Ford's Theatre occupying a box in second tier, listening to the play of Our American Cousin, when a man came into the box and shot Mr. Lincoln in the head, the ball entering the back of the head coming out over the right temple. The assassin then jumped on the stage and flourished a dagger and shouted the motto of Virginia, "Sic Semper Tyrannis" and then left the stand. Mr. Lincoln fell forward, and Mrs. Lincoln fainted. Mr. Lincoln was carried to a house opposite the Theatre, and when the Surgeons came they pronounced the wound fatal. He was alive at 3 o'clock, but would not live an hour.

LATER.

Mr. Lincoln died at 7 o'clock this morning.

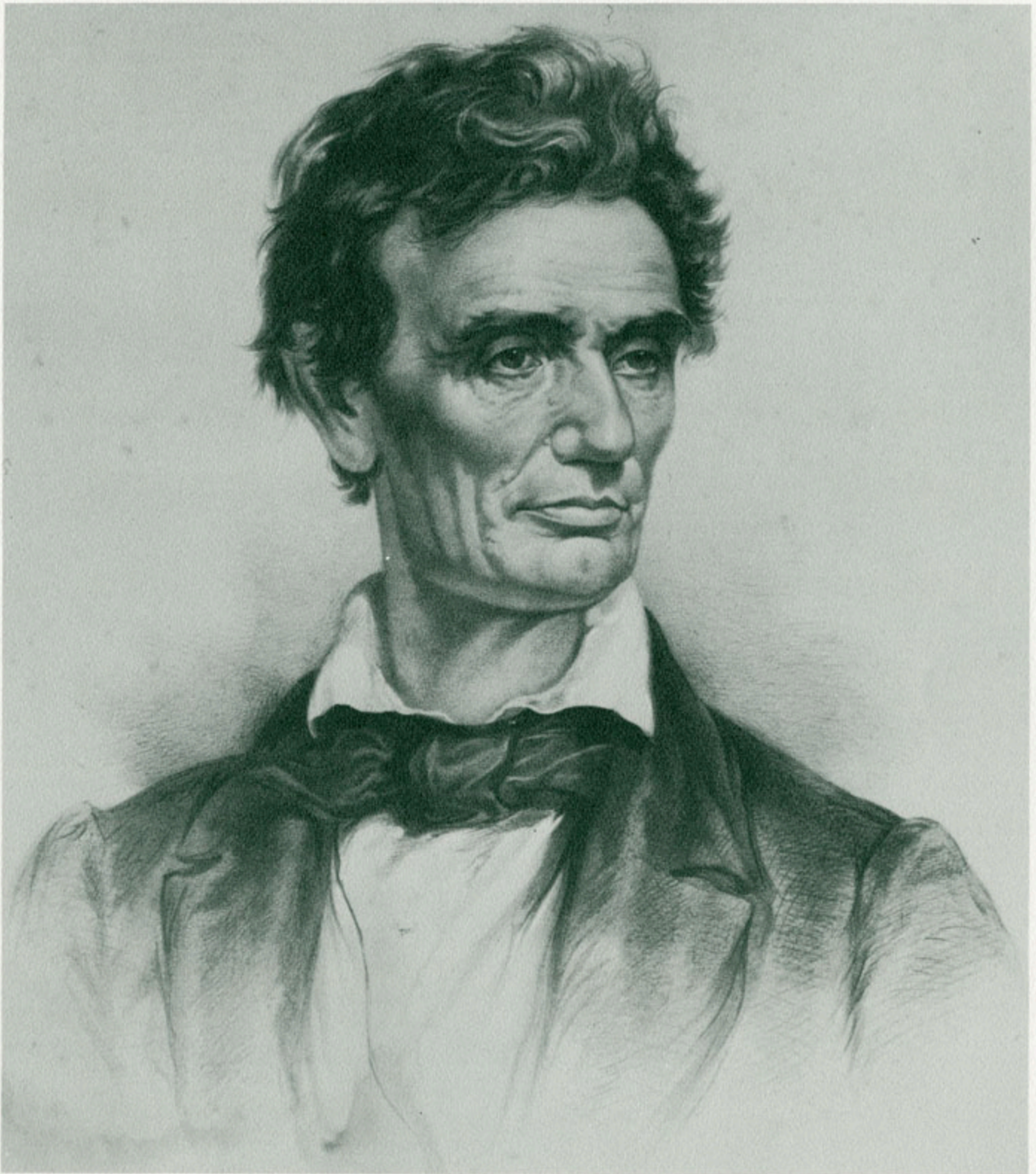
Secretary Seward had his throat cut and Frederick Seward had himself stabbed in the neck and breast while defending Secretary Seward. has since died.

(Signed) E. M. STANTON.

As this month marks the one-hundred and first anniversary of Lincoln's assassination, it is a timely date to publish, for the first time, a *Gazette-Extra* broadside printed by a Fort Wayne, Indiana newspaper dated April 15, 1865.

A careful reading of the broadside indicates that some of the details of the assassination of Lincoln and the attack on Secretary of State William H. Seward and his son, Frederick Seward, are garbled. Then, too, the name and identity of the assassin is not divulged.

The publication of this broadside, which is of great significance to the Foundation's library-museum at Fort Wayne, will also serve as a preliminary announcement of the topic of the May, 1966 issue of *Lincoln Lore*. That issue will be a pictorial number featuring many of the broadsides printed throughout the United States in regard to Lincoln's funeral.



**"The Greek God"**

On Saturday, June 30, 1860 Charles Alfred Barry, a Massachusetts artist, arrived in Springfield, Illinois to do a crayon drawing of Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate. After ten days of sketching, the original crayon drawing was exhibited in Chicago and New York City. The location of the original picture is today unknown. The portrait was published in 1860 by J. H. Bufford of Boston in a larger-than-life size print. The lithographic stone was engraved by J. E. Baker. Only a few of the large folio impressions of Barry's crayon portrait were struck off, due to the breaking of the lithographic stone. Apparently, less than a dozen of the original large folio prints are extant today. Because of the print's "Byronic" character, many collectors have designated the study, "The Greek God."

This original larger-than-life-size print is now the property of the Lincoln Library-Museum of the Lincoln National Life Foundation. It is displayed on an easel in the museum along with Thomas Hicks' print, "The Youthful Lincoln," which was taken from the portrait dated June 14, 1860. These two prints constitute the first two portraits of Lincoln painted from life.

## CUMULATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY 1965-1966

Selections approved by a Bibliography Committee consisting of the following members: Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Road, Garden City New York; Carl Haverlin, 8619 Louis Avenue, Northridge, California; E. B. Long, 708 North Kenilworth Ave., Oak Park Ill.; Ralph G. Newman, 18 E. Chestnut Street, Chicago, Ill.; Kenneth A. Bernard, Boston University, 725 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass.; Clyde C. Walton, Jr., Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Ill.; Judge Warren L. Jones, U. S. Court of Appeals, Jacksonville, Fla.; Hon. Fred Schwengel, 636 Union Arcade, Davenport, Iowa. New items available for consideration may be sent to the above addresses or to the Lincoln National Life Foundation.

## —1965—

**THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN HISTORICAL CENTER** 1965-59

(Lincoln Portrait) / Abraham Lincoln / 1809-1865 / His Words and Wisdom [Cover title] [Copyright by The Abraham Lincoln Historical Center, Lincoln Savings and Loan Association, Sherman Oaks, California. Reproduction Rights Reserved December 1965]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 14" x 10 1/4", (12) pp. plus three loose inserts.

**ANDERSON, LA VERE** 1965-60

Stories About/Abraham Lincoln/To Read Aloud/By LaVere Anderson/Illustrated by Tony Tallarico/(cut of Lincoln)/Wonder Books New York/A Division of Grosset & Dunlap, Inc. [Copyright 1965]

Book, flexible boards, 8" x 5 1/4", 127 pp., illus., price 39¢.

**BARTON, WILLIAM ELEAZAR** 1965-61

Abraham Lincoln/and/Walt Whitman/By/William E. Barton/Author of The Life of Abraham Lincoln,/The Women Lincoln Loved, Etc./Illustrated/Kennikat Press/Port Washington, New York. [Copyrighted 1928 by William E. Barton; copyright renewed 1955 by Bruce Barton; copyright reissued 1965 by Kennikat Press by arrangement with Bruce Barton]

Book, cloth, 9" x 5 1/4", fr., 277 pp., price \$6.98.

**CARY, BARBARA** 1965-62

Meet Abraham/Lincoln/By Barbara Cary/Illustrated by Jack Davis/(device)/Step-Up Books Random House/New York. (Cut of Lincoln portrait). [Copyright, 1965, by Random House]

Book, 8 1/2" x 6 3/4", hard boards, 86 (1) pp., illus., price \$1.95. For juvenile readers.

**HYMAN, HAROLD M.** 1965-63

Abraham Lincoln Memorial Lecture/Lincoln/and the Presidency/by Dr. Harold M. Hyman/(device)/Lincoln College/Lincoln, Illinois. [Cover title]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8 1/4" x 5 1/2", 31 pp.

**ILLINOIS, DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION** 1965-64

Abraham/Lincoln/In/Illinois/(cut of Lincoln on horseback)/Illinois, the/Land of Lincoln. [Cover title]

Folder, 9" x 4", (11) pp., illus.

**JENNISON, KEITH W.** 1965-65

The Humorous/Mr. Lincoln/Keith W. Jennison/(cut of Lincoln)/New York/Thomas Y. Crowell Company/established 1834. [Copyright 1965 by author]

Book, cloth, 8 1/2" x 5 3/4", xii p., 163 pp., illus., price \$4.95.

**KUNHARDT, DOROTHY MESERVE & PHILIP B. KUNHARDT** 1965-66

Twenty Days/A Narrative in Text and Pictures/of the Assassination of/Abraham Lincoln and the Twenty Days and Nights/that followed . . . By Dorothy Meserve Kunhardt and Philip B. Kunhardt Jr./Foreword by Bruce Catton/Harper & Row, Publishers, New York. [Copyright 1965. Printed by the Murray Printing Co. First edition.]

Book, cloth, 12 1/4" x 9 3/4", frd., (2) 312 pp., illus., price \$11.95.

**LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY** 1965-67

Lincoln Memorial University Press/Fall, 1965/Vol. 67, No. 3/*Lincoln Herald*/A Magazine devoted to historical research in the field of Lincolniana and the Civil War, and to the promotion of Lincoln Ideals in American Education. Published by Lincoln Memorial University Press, Harrogate, Tenn.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 7 1/2" x 10 1/4", pp., 111-148 illus., price \$1.00.

**LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY** 1965-68

Lincoln Memorial University Press/Winter, 1965/Vol. 67, No. 4/*Lincoln Herald*/A Magazine devoted to historical research in the field of Lincolniana and the Civil War, and to the promotion of Lincoln Ideals in American Education. . . . Published by Lincoln Memorial University Press, Harrogate, Tennessee.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7", pp. 149-196, price per single copy \$1.00.

**LUDWIG, CHARLES** 1965-69

Nancy Hanks:/Mother of Lincoln/by/Charles Ludwig/Baker Bookhouse/Grand Rapids, Michigan/1965. [Copyright 1965, by Baker Book House Company]

Book, cloth, 8" x 5 1/2", 88 pp., illus., price \$1.95.

**MITGANG, HERBERT** 1965-70

Prairie trail to Lincoln reprinted from Venture the Traveler's World February 1965/Copyright 1965 Cowles Magazines and Broadcasting, Inc. [Cover title] Pamphlet, paper, 11" x 8 3/8", (8) pp., illus. (This reprint courtesy of Tourism and Area Development Commission, Dept. of Public Affairs, Municipal Building, Springfield, Illinois.)

**DE REGNIERS, BEATRICE SCHENK** 1965-71

The Abraham Lincoln Joke Book/by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers/Illustrations by/William Lahey Cummings/(device) Random House New York. [Copyright 1965 by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers]

Book, cloth, 9 1/4" x 6 3/4", 92 (1) pp., illus., price \$2.95.

**SIMON, JOHN Y.** 1965-72

Lincoln and/Truman Smith/By John Y. Simon/Reprinted from Fall 1965 Issue of *Lincoln Herald*. [Cover title]

Pamphlet, paper, 10" x 7 1/8", (7) pp.

**SIMON, PAUL** 1965-73

Lincoln's /Preparation / for / Greatness / The Illinois/Legislative Years/(device)/by Paul Simon/University of Oklahoma Press: Norman [Copyright 1965 by University of Oklahoma Press. First Edition.]

Book, cloth, 9 1/4" x 6 1/4", xv p., 335 pp., illus., price \$6.95.

**TEMPLE, WAYNE C.** 1965-74

Lincoln and the Burners/at New Salem/By Wayne C. Temple /Reprinted from Summer Issue, 1965, *Lincoln Herald* / [Cover title]

Pamphlet, paper, 10" x 7 1/8", 13 pp., illus.

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**HOSTICK, KING V.** 1966-1

Original Letters/and/Documents Pertaining/to/Abraham Lincoln/Offered by/King V. Hostick/55 East Washington Street Chicago, Illinois 60602/Dearborn 2-3799. [Cover title]

Pamphlet, 11" x 8 1/2", (10) pp. (List of 93 Lincoln items, offered for sale.)

**ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY** 1966-2

Illinois/History/Volume 19/Number 5/February 1966/ Abraham Lincoln/Father Abraham - Two/Lincoln Letters-/Award Essays-A/Lincoln Bookshelf/(Cut of statue "Lincoln, the Lawyer") [Cover title] Published by the Illinois State Historical Library for the Illinois State Historical Society, Centennial Building, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7 1/4", pp. 99-119, illus. Price per single copy, 20¢.

**LAMBERSON, TOM** 1966-3

A/Directory of Collectors / of / Books, Autographs, Prints/and other/Historical Material/relating to/Abraham Lincoln/ (device) 1966 Edition/\$2.00/Published by Tom Lamberson - 1966/Printed in Richmond, Indiana/By Igelman Printing.

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 6" x 4", 60 pp., illus. by Lloyd Ostendorf.

**MC MURTRY, R. GERALD** 1966-4

Fort Wayne's Contacts With/Abraham Lincoln/By/R. Gerald McMurtry, Director/Lincoln Library-Museum/of/The Lincoln National Life Foundation, Inc./Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County / 1966. [Cover title]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 8 3/8" x 5 3/8", 19 pp., illus.

**MOCHIZUKI, MASA HARU** 1966-5

Tokyo Lincoln Book Center/Report No. Seven/February 12, 1966/ . . . [Printed in Japan by Japan Publications Trading Co. Ltd., 3, Sarugaku-cho 1-chome, Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan] Printed in both Japanese and English languages.

Pamphlet, paper, 10 1/4" x 7 1/4", 7 pp., illus.

**SUAREZ, JOHN M.** 1966-6

Mary Todd Lincoln: A Case History/John M. Suarez, M.D./ [Reprinted from The American Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 122, No. 7, January, 1966]

Pamphlet, 10" x 7", pp. 816-819.

**A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY**

(Continued From Page 2)

could have originated the story and in all sincerity confused John B. Helm with some other Elizabethtown store clerk.

Little else is known of Lincoln's visit to Hannibal. Incidentally, Lincoln arrived home from his western trip the evening of December 8, 1859.