



Lincoln Lore

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A Tree Grew In Springfield

An elm tree once stood next to the sidewalk in front of the Lincoln home in Springfield. It was located very near the corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets. Local tradition relates that the tree was planted by Abraham Lincoln sometime before he was elected to the Presidency.

The Lincolns moved into their home in the Spring of 1844. The future President purchased the property from the Reverend Charles Dresser, an Episcopal clergyman, who constructed the house in 1839. There is every indication that there was some refurbishing of the property in 1844. However, if Lincoln did not plant the tree at the time he purchased the house, he may have done so in the early months of 1856, when the one and one-half story building was converted into a full two-story structure.

While the elm tree never achieved an exceptionally large growth, it did successfully weather the elements of nature for a period of some fifty or sixty years; and today portions of its branches have been sawed up into picture frames, and from its wood there have been carved innumerable souvenirs.

For awhile, its stump was in storage at the Illinois State Historical Library, but it has since been lost or destroyed. The following statement concerning the tree stump, signed by a custodian of the Lincoln home, has been discovered on the back of a photograph of the Lincoln home which prominently featured the elm:

Lincoln Home
430 South 8th Street
Springfield, Illinois
February 1, 1922

To Whom It May Concern

This is to certify that this stump was taken from an elm tree which stood in front of the Lincoln Home, 430 South 8th St., Springfield, Illinois, as shown in the attached photograph, and according to information received from relatives and others who were personally acquainted with Mr. Lincoln, the tree was planted by him before he was elected President. This tree, then a small sapling, is shown in the photograph of the Lincoln Home



Photograph distributed by Osborn H. Oldroyd, the first custodian (1887-1893) of the Lincoln home.



Photograph bearing rubber stamp "Oldroyd."



Photograph by J. A. Whipple, Springfield, Summer, 1860 (0-39)



Oldroyd wrote on the back of this photograph: "Abraham Lincoln purchased this house in 1844 and lived in it until 1861."

taken before Mr. Lincoln was elected President and the photo is now on exhibit at the Homestead.

Mary Edwards Brown

Custodian of Lincoln Home

Lincoln liked trees, and on one occasion in his public career he mentioned in an address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, (September 30, 1859) "... trees, shrubs, fruits, plants, and flowers — the thousand things of which these are specimens — each a world of study within itself."

An anonymous author has expressed very vividly Lincoln's interest in trees:

"Trees were friendly things. As a youth, everywhere he (Lincoln) went were the trees of the primeval forest ... tulips, sycamores, oaks, elms, maples, beeches and walnuts.

"Trees made the flatboats that gave him passage down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

"Trees made the cabins that gave him shelter in bleak weather.

"Trees fed the fire that gave him warmth and lighted the pages of his books.

"Trees made for him a bed of leaves.

"Trees gave him the sugar of the maples, the brown nuts of autumn.

"Trees drove out the mosquitoes with their pungent log-fire smoke.

"Trees drove back the wolf and the panther with their glowing pine knots.

"Yes, and trees made for him crude chairs, tables, beds, axe-helves, ox-yokes, cradles, coffins.

"Trees gave him the rails of walnut and black locust.

"His companionship with trees is attested by the fact that it was his title, 'The Railsplitter,' which helped to carry him to the White House in the presidential campaign of 1860."

Lincoln, while President, told a visitor to Washington that he could remember but two landmarks in Kentucky, the State of his birth, when he left there at seven years of age. One was an old stone house, and the other, "a great tree somewhere on Nolin River."

It is believed the old tree Lincoln remembered so well was a Lunderner poplar, located near an old mill site at Buffalo, Kentucky, on one of the branches of Nolin River. In the 1920s there were still living in Larue County a few old residents who remembered hearing of this famous giant tree, the name being a local term used to designate the English black poplar.

While Lincoln always remembered the great Lunderner poplar in Kentucky, his favorite tree was the hard maple. To Lincoln, the hard maple had a quality of beauty that was always a gratification to his concept of what constituted a triumph of nature. It was Charles F. Mills, Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture, Springfield, Illinois, who inquired of Lincoln's son regarding the President's favorite tree. Robert T. Lincoln, on March 30, 1888, wrote Mr. Mills: "In reply to your favor of yesterday, I remember having heard my father speak more specially of the hard maple as a tree which gratified him by its beauty."

Yet, Lincoln selected an elm for his Springfield home, and the December 3, 1899 issue of the *New York Tribune* published a tribute to the "Noble Tree Lincoln Planted:"

You stand within the shade of a tree at Springfield, Ill. It is, somehow, different from any other tree, and yet you may have stood within the shade of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other trees.

You put your hand gently upon that tree. It is far different from any other tree you may have touched, and yet you may have touched hundreds, perhaps thousands, of other trees — trees of the same species of wood, trees similar in size, and trees much larger and those much smaller, but you never touched a tree as gently, as reverently, as you did this one.

You look at the tree and study it. You have seen thousands of trees of natural origin and growth and those planted with human hands — trees for surpassing this one in their beauty in architecture or more queer in the manner in which nature had fixed their trunks and branches.

It is a fruit tree. It bears the year round and every day. Fruit has been gathered from it by many thousands of people, and its quantity has never been diminished. The supply is inexhaustible. The fruit is of a kind that does not satisfy the hunger but increases it. You cannot see the fruit, but you can gather it.

It is grandly inspiring to look upon that tree, and yet it has not a single element of the majesty we hear spoken of trees. It would be a tree without an admirer did it stand unknown in the forests or in some orchard or favorite park. If it were like other trees it might be cut down, but not for the value of the lumber to be gotten out of it; it would be for its use as fuel, or for the purpose of replacing it with one more beautiful — and yet no man will ever be so mean as to cut this tree down, nor a man, woman, or child be so unthoughtful

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Osborn H. Oldroyd standing near the elm before the Lincoln home. On the back of this photograph he wrote, "I moved (1883) into this house (the home of President Lincoln when he was elected President) with my collection of Lincoln memorials relating to the martyred."



This photograph bears the date of June 8, 1889. The branches of the tree indicate that it has undergone considerable trimming.



The excessive trimming of the elm tree, as indicated by this photograph, would lead one to believe that it would not have long to live.



Following the storm of August 17, 1906, the stump of the elm tree was allowed to stand for a short period. This photograph was taken in 1907.

Lincoln's elm in its various stages of growth has furnished a proper measuring rod for a chronological arrangement of the many photographs that have been taken of the Springfield home. Illustrating this article are eight photographs, taken from the Foundation's files, which depict the elm tree. Some can be dated.

Some Correspondence Between John Hay and Helen Nicolay

(Continued from the February issue)

Part 3

It would naturally be expected that the author would submit the manuscript to her old friend, Colonel Hay.

On December 19, 1904 Hay wrote Miss Nicolay:

My dear Helen:

I read your book yesterday with the greatest interest. I have only one fault to find with it, and I imagine that is entirely an imaginary one. It is well enough written for grown folks, and your publisher may possibly — though I hope not — feel that this is an objection in a book written primarily for young people. But, as I have said before to you, I do not consider that quality in the least objectionable. I know the books that I enjoyed the most when I was a child were books written for grown ups. I have no criticism to make and no changes to propose. It seems to me an excellent piece of work.

Yours faithfully

John Hay

To give some authenticity to "The Boys' Life" The Century Company suggested to Miss Nicolay that a "little preface" by Mr. John Hay would be most appropriate. This idea was incorporated into a letter dated January 28, 1905.

Dear Miss Nicolay:

We have had the manuscript of your boys' "Lincoln" carefully read, and it is very much liked here. I think we all agree in respect to a few changes or condensations in some of the earlier chapters, which we believe would not be difficult for you to make.

I am writing now to inquire whether you are likely to be in New York shortly, so that we might have a conference. It is so much easier to talk over a matter of this kind than attempt to arrange it by correspondence, but if you are not coming here possibly we might send some one to Washington to meet you there.

Our idea would be to bring the book out for next autumn's sales. To do this it should soon be put in type, so that we might have dummies for our traveling salesmen to show during the summer months at the time they visit the booksellers.

Do you think you could get Mr. John Hay to write a little preface, however brief? His doing so would be a great help to the sale of the book, in the beginning, at least.

Believe me

... Chichester

After receiving Mr. Chichester's letter, Miss Nicolay wrote Colonel Hay on "Wednesday morning":

Dear Colonel Hay:

Do you remember the paragraph about the preface in Mr. Chichester's note I showed you the other day?

Of course it is needless to say how pleased I would be if you would write a few words; but I haven't the least idea that you want to do such a thing. Indeed I think you told me once that you made it the rule of your life never to write preface's for other people's books. I can imagine the avalanche of MSS. that would descend upon you if you once broke that rule, and how you would have to scratch away with your pen fifteen hours a day to keep from being totally smothered. And what would Diplomacy do then?

Seriously, the suggestion seemed so far-fetched that I did not give it a moments thought, and absolutely forgot to say anything about it when we were talking about the matter of the letter.

It is borne in upon me that Mr. Chichester will not have forgotten however, and that he will ask that particular question before all others — and that Mr. Scott will also ask it if I see him. So would you mind scribbling a word on this to let me know if I am right as to your position? I would not for the world bring woe upon you — but if you are just looking for trouble — behold — the Boy's Lincoln — at your feet.

Sincerely yours

Helen Nicolay

In rather shaky handwriting John Hay answered Miss Nicolay's letter with a pencilled note, written in bed from his residence at 800 Sixteenth Street, Lafayette Square:

Dear Helen:

I can't do it — and you are so sweetly reasonable about it that I do not suffer much in refusing

Yours

J. H.

In the early months of 1905 Helen Nicolay made some tentative plans to visit Mexico, and before Colonel Hay made his last trip to Europe in search of health, she related to him her desire to visit that country. From Naples, Italy on April 5th he wrote her as follows:

Dear Helen

I was so worthless during my last days in Washington I did nothing I ought. But I have addressed a letter to our Ambassador in Mexico telling him to look out for you and do everything for you that he would for the Queen of Hearts herself. That will avail you, if you go, and this will let you know the letter has gone, whether you go or not.

We have had a wonderful voyage. The ship is steady as a church. Mrs. Hay has been on deck every day — a wonderful record. Such a thing has not happened since she was a child.

She sends her love

Yours faithfully

John Hay

Miss Nicolay was unable to make the trip to Mexico and on April 25th she wrote Colonel Hay as follows:

Dear Colonel Hay:

Yours of April 1st came to me last night. I feel so reproached! Mrs. Hay's little note was received and I was much touched at her taking time to write it before the ship sailed, when you were feeling so ill and wretched. My impulse was to answer it at once, but on reflection I concluded that since you had run away from folks you would probably rather not have them reaching after you with letters. So I planned to have a note waiting for her on your return. She gave me your message to Mr. Babcock. It did not occur to me that you would do anything more about the letter to Mexico. Today I learn that you have had the miserable thing on your mind! I am so sorry. Thank you a thousand times — and please do not have such a tender conscience any more.

As it turned out, we were unable to go. Miss Fletcher fell ill and the weather jumped into midsummer — two reasons for abandoning it. We may go in the fall — but I doubt it.

Do you care for the latest Boy's Lincoln news? I'm invited to let St. Nicholas print it as a serial — beginning next November — \$500.00 for that, and what fate wills for the book, later. This makes me chuckle, as I happen to know it was considered "too instructive" in February. It must be woefully demoralized by those changes I made after coming home from New York.

At present the Spoffords and I are living in a world of blossoms out at the country place. Everything that can bloom is doing it — all at once. And I am planning to go to Holderness about May 15th to enjoy the spring all over again.

The tulips are gay in front of your house. So is the gold-tipped iron fence. But the tulips, like the Yanks get "a little the best of it!"

People are very much gratified at the news of your improvement. I overhear conversations about you on the street almost every time I go into town. Some of them pretend great intimacy. Others are frankly speculative. All are kindly. This morning one woman remarked to another that she hoped you'd come back soon — you were "such a nice man to have around"

Please give my best love to Mrs. Hay — and come back — not too soon — much as we like to have you "around"

Sincerely yours

Helen N.

These last two letters may have ended the correspondence between Colonel Hay and Miss Nicolay. The Hays returned to the United States on June 15th and the ailing Secretary of State went directly to the State Department. On June 24th Hay went to his summer home, "The Fells," at Newbury, on Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire. After his arrival in New Hampshire, his physical condition grew alarmingly worse, and he died about three o'clock in the morning of July 1, 1905. He was buried in the Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio.

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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 —

BACHELDER, LOUISE 1965-78

Abraham/Lincoln/Wisdom/& Wit/(device)/Edited by Louise Bachelder, with/Illustrations by Jeff Hill/The Peter Pauper Press/Mount Vernon, New York. [Copyright 1965 by Peter Pauper Press]

Brochure, stiff boards, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 61 pp., price \$1.25.

GRUBER, MICHAEL 1965-79

Abraham/Lincoln/A Concise Biography/by Michael Gruber/Series Editor: Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht/American R.D.M. Corporation/Publisher New York. [Copyright 1965 by Michael Gruber]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, fr., 72 pp., illus., price \$1.00.

— 1966 —

ALEXANDER, MARDA 1966-29

Pictorial History and Guide Book/The Lincoln/Home/Springfield/Illinois/(picture of home)/With Historical Text by Marda Alexander. (Cover title) [Copyright 1966 by Curt Teich & Co., Inc., Chicago, Ill.]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", (18) pp., illus.

BERNARD, KENNETH A. 1966-30

Lincoln and the Music/of the Civil War/By/Kenneth A. Bernard/Professor of History/Boston University/(device)/Illustrated with Photographs/(device)/The Caxton Printers, Ltd./Caldwell, Idaho/1966. [Copyright by The Caxton Printers, Ltd. 1966]

Book, cloth, 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", xix p., 333 pp., illus., fr., index, price \$6.95.

MILLER, NATALIE 1966-31

The Story/of the/Lincoln/Memorial/By Natalie Miller/Illustrations by Tom Dunnington/(sketch of memorial)/(device) Childrens Press, Inc. [Copyright 1966, Childrens Press, Inc.]

Brochure, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", cloth, 30 pp., illus., price \$1.95.

WILEY, BELL IRVIN 1966-32

Lincoln and Lee/By/Bell Irvin Wiley/Harmsworth Professor of American History/An Inaugural Lecture/Delivered before the University of Oxford/on 19 January 1966/Oxford/At The Clarendon Press/1966. [Copyright Oxford University Press 1966. Printed in Great Britain]

Pamphlet, paper, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 18 pp.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 1966-33

Lincoln Herald/Index/Vol. 65/Spring, 1963 through Winter, 1963/Compiled by/Gary R. Planck/Edited by Wayne C. Temple/Lincoln Memorial University Press/Harrogate, Tennessee/1966. [Cover title]

Pamphlet, paper, 10" x 7", 15 pp.

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Pamphlet, paper, 10" x 7", 13 pp.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY 1966-35

Lincoln Memorial University Press/Fall, 1966/Vol. 68, No. 3/Lincoln Herald/A Magazine devoted to historical research in the field of Lincolniana and/of Lincoln Ideals in American/Education. [Harrogate, Tennessee]

Pamphlet, flexible boards, 10" x 7", pp. 107-166, illus. Price per single copy \$1.00.

SPRINGFIELD ASSOCIATION OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY 1966-36

Map of Central District/Springfield/Illinois/Welcomed to Springfield! (sketch of Lincoln Tomb) The Springfield Association of Commerce and Industry is the . . . /Convention and Visitors Council/Springfield Association of Commerce and Industry/325 East Adams Street [Cover title]

Folder, paper, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", (3) pp. (Map of Springfield with list of places of Lincoln interest)

ILLINOIS — DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION DIVISION OF PARKS & MEMORIALS 1966-37

The/Lincoln/Tomb/(picture of tomb)Oak Ridge Cemetery Springfield/(state seal) State of Illinois/[Cover title] (Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois.)

Folder, paper, 9" x 4", (3) pp., illus.

ILLINOIS — DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION DIVISION OF PARKS & MEMORIALS 1966-38

The Home of/Abraham/Lincoln/(picture of Springfield Home)/Crowds of well-wishers were greeted at his doorway by Abraham Lincoln during the 1860 campaign./A Memorial Maintained/by the/State of Illinois/Open Every Day of the Year Except Thanksgiving, Christmas/and New Years from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m./Guide Service always available [Cover title]

Folder, paper, 9" x 4", (5) pp., illus.

ILLINOIS — NEW SALEM STATE PARK 1966-39

Lincoln's/New Salem/State Park/(cut of Fairbanks Statue of Lincoln)/Abraham Lincoln From Lincoln's New/Salem/Statue by Avard Fairbanks at the entrance to the restored New/Salem Village. Gift to Illinois from the Sons of the Utah Pioneers./State of Illinois/(State Seal) [Cover title]

Folder, paper, 9" x 4", (10) pp., illus.

A Tree Grew in Springfield

(Continued from page 2)

as to mar it, for it is a tree that was planted by Abraham Lincoln in the front yard of the only home he ever owned, the old home place in Springfield, Ill.

Lincoln's elm tree was destroyed on Friday, August 17, 1906 when it was blown over by a fierce storm that struck the Illinois Capital city. Newspaper accounts of the storm that destroyed the tree indicate that Lincoln's neighbors and friends considered this a great loss and were shocked that this living relic would no longer be a feature attraction for the city's visitor.

Once the stump and roots were removed, another elm was planted in the exact spot; but it soon withered and died, and no further efforts have been made to replace Lincoln's tree.

Today, there are still living many trees associated with the Lincolns, be they corner oaks, Indiana cedars, (Illinois elms), White House maples, portrait trees (due to some peculiar growth in root, branch or leaf) and even a giant Sequoia in California. This redwood tree named "Abe Lincoln" is located on the Alta Meadow Trail in Giant Forest, and is about 270 feet tall and 31 feet in diameter. (Recent measurements are not available).

Correspondence Between John Hay and Helen Nicolay

(Continued from page 3)

Helen Nicolay died in Washington, D.C., on September 12, 1954. In addition to her *Boys' Life*, she was the author of *Personal Traits of Abraham Lincoln*, and *Lincoln's Secretary*, published as late as 1949 when she was 83 years old. She also wrote numerous other books not related to the Sixteenth President. During her life-time she was the author of twenty-one volumes. She had a very pleasing lecture on Lincoln which she gave before many audiences up to the period of her last illness.